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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Steven Meeks - President
Yolanda Davis-Overstreet - Vice President
Brian Piatek - Treasurer
Dorsay Dujon - Secretary
Sean Curley - Parliamentarian

BOARD

Jace Dawson - At Large Representative
John Ma - At Large Representative
Thomas Murray - At Large Representative
Kristyn Yancy - At Large Representative
Clint Simmons - Homeowner Representative
Phillip Wiley - Youth Representative
Connie Thomas - Community Interest Representative
Richard Williams - Business Representative
Vacant - Business Representative



West Adams Neighborhood Council

BOARD OF THE WEST ADAMS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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West Adams Neighborhood Council
Meets Every Third Monday of the Month @
Vineyard Recreation Center, 2942 Vineyard
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DRAFT MINUTES

General Board Monthly Meeting Zoom Meeting online or by telephone January 24, 2022 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

1. Call to order and Roll Call

A meeting of the West Adams Neighborhood Council (WANC) was held on January 24, 2022 over Zoom, Webinar 959 3661 2418.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Steven Meeks (President), who made welcoming remarks.

Sean Curley (Parliamentarian) called the roll. There were six (6) board members present at roll call (Mr. Meeks, Brian Piatek (Treasurer), Dorsay Dujon (Secretary), Ms. Curley, Jace Dawson, and Thomas Murray). Quorum is eight (8) and was not met. Yolanda Davis-Overstreet (Vice-President), John Ma, Clint Simmons, Phillip Wiley, Connie Thomas, and Richard Williams arrived later. Kristyn Yancy was an excused absence.

While the board was without a quorum, Item 3 was taken up.

2. Government Representatives

Herman Jones (herman.jones@asm.ca.gov), Field Representative, CA Assembly Member Isaac Bryan reported. He described a “successful 2021,” which included the passage of AB-1043, and a successful Christmas drive. For “Christmas in the Park” in Leimert Park, their office had paid the vendor fees at \$6,000/week and gave each of 10 vendors \$250. In 2022, similar community events would be supported.

In response to a question from Mr. Piatek, Jones said Assemblymember Bryan did not vote on SB-10 and had voted “no” on SB-9. He continued that the 54th Assembly District was one of the most diverse in the US with “greatest disparity of haves and have nots.” Their office had received hundreds if not thousands of calls regarding the bills. Bryan was committed to is putting a huge dent in this homeless crisis and getting affordable housing for those who may not qualify for low-income housing, which, he noted, AB-1043 addressed. Their goal was to prevent people from being evicted and put out on the street.

Responding to Ms. Thomas said there was an overwhelming response to a survey that had closed earlier in the month and was available online and in paper form. The #1 topic “hands down” was homelessness, and police reform, SB-9, and SB-10 were “off the reservation.”

Ms. Davis-Overstreet asked where Bryan stood on the “Our Neighborhood Voices” initiative. Jones invited her to follow up with the District Director by email.

At this time (6:50 p.m.), Item 3 was reopened.

3. General Public Comment: non agenda items

This item was taken up after roll call.

Herman Jones said he was Field Representative for CA Assembly Member Isaac Bryan’s office.

Andrea Jackson wished everyone a happy new year. She said she owned a triplex on Chesapeake between Obama and Exposition. She expressed concerns about multistory apartments being built on her block of Chesapeake. In December, the triplex across the driveway from hers and another to the north were demolished, leaving a “big open field.” A carport structure that had been attached to her garage was demolished, compromising her garage’s structural integrity, and it was now exposed to the elements. She was in the process of writing letters to the owners, and she requested guidance as to whom else she could contact to ensure future activities would not adversely impact her property or her tenants.

At this time (6:37 p.m.) Yolando Davis-Overstreet, Connye Thomas, Clint Simmons, and John Ma were present. There were now 9 present. A quorum was now present.

Ms. Curley suggested that Ms. Jackson contact Mr. Piatek.

At this time (6:39 p.m.), Item 2 was resumed.

Item 3 was reopened at 6:50 p.m.

Ernest Moore said he had requested a letter supporting his being placed on the LA County Sheriff’s Oversight Commission as a Commissioner at a previous meeting, and he had sent emails to the [WANC] president and to others but had received no reply. He requested support from the Council.

Mr. Meeks said they could not provide such recommendations for appointments.

Ms. Jackson gave an additional public comment. For two months, there was no street lighting on her block of Chesapeake between Obama Bl. and Exposition, but nor were they working along Exposition from the Farmdale train stop “to at least Potomac.” This was a huge safety concern, she said, and she highlighted an “uptick in crime.” Jackson said she had sent a notice to Kimani Black (CD10) asking for assistance and had called 3-1-1. She had been informed that the City was severely backlogged “because of COVID.”

Ms. Davis-Overstreet agreed to look into it.

4. Secretary’s report: Discussion and possible action approval of November and December minutes

Mr. Starr noted that the November 2021 minutes had been approved.

Mr. Meeks said it was appropriate to approve the minutes in the absence of the secretary.

Ms. Curley moved that the December 2021 minutes be approved. Mr. Simmons seconded.

Richard Williams was present at 6:59 p.m. 10 members were now present.

The motion carried with all 10 eligible members voting in favor. Dr. Dawson was ineligible. Two members were absent (Yancy, Wiley).

5. Monthly Expenditure Report: Discussion/no action

Mr. Piatek announced there was “plenty of money” to allot to Neighborhood Purposes Grants (NPG) or Community Improvement Projects (CIP).

6. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment: Octaviano Rios

Mr. Rios was not present. Dr. Dawson said he had emailed Rios with screen shots showing the City’s Cornerstone training platform had indicated that Dawson’s trainings were in fact complete and no new trainings were needed. He wanted to speak with a DONE rep to find out “what was going on” and move forward. Dawson said he wanted the community to be aware that the issue was out of his control.

7. Standing Committees, Ad-Hoc, City Liaison and NC Alliance Reports

Mr. Ma reported that the Ad Hoc Arts and Culture Committee Meeting had as an invited guest Krishna Patel from Empathy in Action, who reviewed the WANC design survey for a future logo. She had agreed to submit designs after a week.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet gave the Public Safety Committee Report. They had not yet met in January. Future areas of focus would include tree planting in areas in need of shade and an education/outreach/enforcement approach to traffic congestion in the Adams Blvd. corridor. A “consultant ally” working with the street vending program would present on educating vendors on the required permits to avoid fines and to ensure safety and sanitation protocols were met. Business Improvement District manager Moises Gomez would be engaging with the committee around ways to work collectively with WANC to share information between businesses and the NC. The next meeting was scheduled for February 3rd.

Mr. Meeks said the Land Use Committee had met in January and that the property at 4410 Jefferson had asked for an endorsement. The applicant had not yet shared an information packet with the board in response to Mr. Meeks’ request, therefore it was not agendized.

Mr. Meeks said he had reached out to the City Attorney and had received guidance regarding Mr. Ma’s participation with the Eayikes, who had provided a revised NPG application that day. The City Attorney had provided rather straightforward instructions on how to recuse oneself from participation. Meeks suggested that the matter could be codified in the standing rules.

8. Presentation: There were no presentations.

9. Old Business

- A. **Discussion and possible action on formulation of a document/letter on NC letterhead to developers requesting a good faith effort for but not limited to local (WANC area) hire such as, laborers, contractors, materials/equipment procurement, crafts people, low costs start up space/business and NGO incubator’s, low cost/free meeting space, displaced resident applicants given first opportunity for low cost rental units**

Ms. Curley read the above. The issues were discussed, including the need for residents of West Adams displaced by developments to be offered comparably priced rental housing in their neighborhood.

Mr. Meeks asked for suggestions to be included in a letter to speculators and developers.

Mr. Murray said he had shared the following suggestions: 1) to apply a percentage goal to the local hire number, such as 20% of the workforce being local hires and 20% being subcontracted to local firms; 2) 20% for minority-owned, women-owned, small business, and/or disadvantaged business participation in construction projects; 3) for developers to go above and beyond the workforce housing requirements, especially on larger projects with at least 25% low income or very low income housing, and that any housing units that will be replaced by a new project be replaced by an equal number of very low income units at a minimum.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet and Ms. Thomas spoke to the importance of gaining the attention and support of elected officials. Thomas said those who were currently listening to developers should understand the need to cooperate with the community, for they would be held accountable at the polls.

At 7:31 p.m., board member Phillip Wiley's name appeared among the Zoom attendees.

Mr. Piatek spoke in favor of adopting Mr. Murray's replacement ratio, "regardless of [Transit Oriented Community (TOC)] rules.

In public comment, Mr. Moore brought up the issue of reparations to Black Americans displaced by the construction of the 10 Freeway in the 1960s. Mr. Murray and Mr. Meeks said such reparations should come in the form of housing.

Ms. Jones offered that she knew attorneys who could help with the wording of the letter.

Coach Williams referred to statutory relocation rules for tenants with fixed payouts of \$20,000 to \$25,000. He said most new buildings had authorization from the State, and so the conversation should be not with the City but with the State.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet referred to the "Our Neighborhood Voices" initiative to collect signatures to take to Sacramento.

Mr. Meeks said a letter regarding local hires, contract procurements, architectural styles, and the planting of native flora could be "something official that's on the record." The Land Use Committee should bring something to the board. The item was then postponed without objection.

B. Discussion on Board Member attendance at Monthly and Standing Committee Meetings Standing Committee Meetings scheduled and held as being Brown Act compliant and Board Member participation in NC programs and activities.

Mr. Meeks said some standing committees were not meeting at least quarterly, which was required. Furthermore, being on the board was "more than just coming to a meeting" but involved "active participation in the community." He cited recent

board member participation in CicLAvia and the Adams Safety Project as examples. “If you’re not actively participating in the progress and future of our community, how can we expect change within the intellectual boundary” of the WANC, he asked.

Meeks added that the bylaws addressed board meeting attendance; for a member to leave before the meeting was over without letting the board know in advance constituted a “mark against [the member]” unless it was “some kind of emergency.” Quorum had been lost at the previous meeting and the board could not continue with its business. He said several board members had 3 absences [within a 12-month period] and therefore would receive a letter stating that on the fourth such absence, their seat would be declared vacant.

Coach Williams noted that board member Phillip Wiley was trying to unmute. Ms. Curley announced to Mr. Wiley that she had called his name multiple times and that if there were technical difficulties, he needed to address them before the meeting.

Williams said the last member who had been removed had been decided by Mr. Meeks without the Executive Committee weighing in. Ms. Curley countered that it was the bylaws that dictated such removals, and that she or the secretary might simply be the “messenger.”

No motions were made on the item.

C. Discussion and possible action on hiring an entity to promote WANC in general and for events and activities specifically on social media not to exceed \$1000

Mr. Meeks spoke to the need to promote the NC both generally and in terms of its specific activities; and to “pay someone to add content to social media or whatever it takes” was to be “more realistic than idealistic,” given that board members were not taking such initiative. An intern had been suggested previously, but the individual had “completely flaked out.” Meeks clarified that the \$1,000 proposed in the agenda could extend through the fiscal year.

Mr. Ma supported the idea and to reconsider the amount. Empathy in Action was a possible group to engage with. City college and high school students could also be recruited to help.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet suggested that Denise Shiozawa could share her advice, and a call for assistance could be shared on Instagram and Facebook for students and interns whom Shiozawa could train.

Ms. Thomas spoke in support and cautioned that individuals providing such support be vetted for ability and professionalism, and that a matrix and tracking system should be used.

Ms. Dujon said as Secretary, the tasks currently fell to her.

Mr. Ma proposed that Ms. Shiozawa could get things started and Ms. Dujon could reach out to the community. Each committee chair could share information on events, resources, festivals, job fairs, and the like with Shiozawa to post on social media, noting this was already being done on the website.

In public comment, Tracy Weisert spoke in favor of the proposals and added that it had been previously discussed to enlist the help of a student at Dorsey High School who might receive class credit. The individual should be bilingual in Spanish and English as well.

Mr. Piatek moved to hire an entity to promote WANC in general and for events and activities specifically on social media not to exceed \$1000. Mr. Simmons seconded.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet moved to amend by replacing “an entity” with “Denise Shiozawa, as a business, to promote.” Mr. Ma seconded.

In discussion, Mr. Piatek noted that Shiozawa’s current scope of work did not include posting on social media.

After a discussion of parliamentary procedure, a vote on the amendment failed with six (6) opposed (Curley, Piatek, Simmons, Murray, Thomas, Williams) and four (4) in favor (Davis-Overstreet, Dujon, Ma, Meeks (by abstention)). Dawson and Wiley were ineligible. Yancy was absent.

The main motion passed with nine (9) in favor (Curley, Dujon, Ma, Meeks, Piatek, Simmons, Murray, Thomas, Williams) and one (1) opposed (Davis-Overstreet). Dawson and Wiley were ineligible. Yancy was absent.

D. Discussion on the possible need to revisit the terms of low-income affordability percentages based on previous WANC action on November 15, 2021 - joint public/private mixed use development Crenshaw Crossing - Case No. CPC-2019-5425-DB-MCUP-SPP-ZAI-SPR-PHP; (Related Case No. ENV-2019-5426-SCEA)

Mr. Piatek explained that WANC had provided its endorsement based on the 100% low-income residences, and that subsequently, Crenshaw Crossing developers and CD10 had reached a deal for 80% low-income and 20% market rate.

Mr. Simmons suggested that since it was county property, the City had no business striking the deal.

Ms. Thomas requested to schedule an appointment with the County Supervisor and then moved to place the item back on the agenda for discussion and possible action.

Mr. Meeks said the item could be placed on [a future] agenda without the need for a motion.

In public comment, Ms. Weisert recalled the developers’ being “very proud of the 100% low income.” She suggested it was a case of “bait and switch.”

Mr. Wiley said he had been trying to “get on all night.” He said he had been present the “the whole night” and was using his same device “under another name” since he wasn’t being allowed to unmute previously.

Mr. Murray clarified that the developers had been targeting 100%, pending a subsidy they had applied for. It should be an agenda item at the next Land Use Committee meeting, he said, and the developers should be invited to speak. The [committee] could then rescind its endorsement or reapprove it.

No action was taken on the item.

10. New business:

A. Discussion on the possibility exploring a change in name for the West Adams NC

Mr. Meeks said a name change would need to be a change in the bylaws and would need to be approved by the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC).

Meeks expressed that the neighborhood was being “sold out” as West Adams, and he proposed “Crenshaw West Adams” or “Obama West Adams” as alternatives to help preserve neighborhood identity.

Mr. Piatek said he was concerned about displacement and certain types of development was supportive of the “West Adams concept.”

Mr. Simmons said from his conversations with developers that the area was being “sold as West Adams” because of its proximity to Culver City. The area south of Jefferson used to be called Baldwin Hills, he said, but was changed to West Adams a couple years prior.

Ms. Davis-Overstreet was open to discussing adding another landmark to the NC name. The area was not West Adams from the 60s to the 90s, she said. “The city has controlled how we are viewed and how we are either not invested in or invested in,” she added. Adding onto the name would be to take a stand, she said. Adding “Obama” would bring the name to “the current day.”

Dr. Dawson Mr. Simmons announced they would be leaving the meeting.

Ms. Dujon offered that John Quincy Adams was the lawyer who had handled the Amistad and was linked to helping people who were enslaved. Dujon said she had lived in the neighborhood since she was a child, and any decision should take the entire neighborhood into account. She wondered if the business improvement district (BID), which was focused on the area west of La Brea, was “eliminating” everything to the east. A slogan could accompany the WANC name to further identify it, but to change the name could be to “lose something,” and any such change should have taken place 10 to 12 years prior.

Ms. Thomas felt the West Adams name held the history of an area where African Americans were first able to buy property, including “some of the most beautiful homes” on the West Coast on St. Charles, and a place where “our art, creativity, and entertainment,” were allowed to grow and be shared with visitors to the area. It was a source of pride, and she wanted to “hold onto our legacy.”

Mr. Meeks said that having grown up in the neighborhood, he too loved the history of the “Crenshaw community” as he knew it.

No action was taken.

11. Agenda setting: future Monthly or Special Meetings

Board members requested the following be placed on the upcoming agenda: Crenshaw Crossing, Eayikes, and bylaws revisions.

Mr. Meeks said the bylaws question could go to the Rules Committee, and any proposed changes needed exact wording to be voted on. Changes to standing rules was another possibility.

Meeks said that the board's action regarding social media promotion did not preclude Ms. Shiozawa from doing the work. Mr. Piatek offered to contact her; however, other board members warned this was not allowed due to the Brown Act.

Ms. Thomas provided her email address for board members to propose changes to the bylaws.

12. Adjourn

Ms. Curley moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully Submitted by Conrad Starr