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Westwood Community Council  
Westwood Neighborhood Council

### Minutes

WRAC Meeting of the Board of Directors  
July 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 – 6:30pm

**Webinar link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85804559642>  
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*Items on the Agenda may be taken in any order at the discretion of the Chair*

1. **Welcome/Introductions:** Chair Wersinger called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm, and called the roll. Quorum was met. **Present:** Matt Wersinger (WRAC Chair) (DRNC), Maryam Zar (PPCC) Robin Greenberg (WRAC Secretary) (BABCNC), Jane Wishon (WNC), Steve Sann (WCC), Michael Lynn (SORONC) Lisa Chapman (WWNC), and Randell Erving (PalmsNC) who left prior to actions being taken and quorum was lost; Andrew Lewis (NWWNC) arrived at 7:39 pm, quorum was reestablished. **Nonvoting Alternates** and WRAC officer, Barbara Broide (WNC), Ravi Sankaran (DRNC) and Christina Spitz (WRAC Vice-Chair, who co-hosted this evening’s meeting).  
**Also Present:** Janet Turner, from the Office of Congressman Ted Lieu, Armine Sargsyan from the California Department of Insurance, Michelle Persoff, Field Representative for Assemblymember Isaac Bryan District 54. Jarrett Thompson & Noah Fleishman from CD5, and Debora Hong (LADWP).
  - a. **Chair Updates:**
  - b. **WRAC Board Elections** – September: While awaiting quorum, Chair Wersinger noted that he will not be running for Chair again. He suggested that the board look for candidates, and he welcomed anyone. There will be open nominations at the September meeting.
2. **Government Reports –**
  - a. **LAFD Chief Kristin Crowley** – Chair Wersinger welcomed Chief Crowley, the new Fire Chief for LA City, who introduced herself and spoke on her goals for the department. Chief Crowley noted that she wanted to make sure that the LAFD is meeting various communities’ needs, to understand your goals. They are into the third rendition of a strategic plan in many years. The department will continue to build the needs of the community into their plan. Wersinger asked about plans in the future to green the LAFD, to which she noted that they secured their first fully electric fire engine. We are one of the first in North America, and they will be piloting the program, they have it assigned to Fire Station #82 in Hollywood. They had it under warranty, had to send it back and have just received it back. She was really impressed with the flexibility

that the electric fire engine gives them. All the infrastructure is in place and ready to go, and they need to allow their members to understand it and trouble shoot it. They will put it to the test and see if it will be something the LAFD will continue to purchase.

Further questions were asked and answered, including by Member Broide (WNC), who asked about the issue of increased density in the City, without infrastructure needed to support that development, such as getting enough water to the developments and fight a fire, and what we can do to be sure there is a link between development and infrastructure. Chief Crowley explained that “Standards of Cover” is a metrics-driven assessor that looks at the City in regards to density, response times, operational capacity to provide emergency services on the fire side and EMS side. LAFD hired the company who conducted the assessment and they have the draft report and can now leverage that to address needs for additional resources, including staffing and infrastructure. This will be utilized during the budget cycle. This study included travel time, increased density, and capacity to help them understand the potential and current gaps. Vice Chair Spitz asked if their strategic plan will take into account the high-fire and very high fire hazard severity zones in the hillsides. The Chief noted that this is the type of question she is looking for to build into their plan the unique needs of our communities in a timely manner.

Chief Crowley introduced **Chief Drake** [john.drake@lacity.org](mailto:john.drake@lacity.org) who is in charge of their Strategic Plan, and Assistant Chief in the Emergency Operations Bureau. Chief Crowley noted that we can call him “Dr. Drake” or “Chief Drake” as he just completed his Ph.D. at USC in strategic planning. He noted that the goal today is to be the premier public safety and emergency service agency in the world. They are reaching out to us to find out some of the gaps in our game. He noted that they have done analyses and want to know from the many NCs represented here, what they can do to better serve us.

Member Greenberg (BABCNC) asked several questions, asking if the LAFD has been part of the Wildlife Ordinance that is currently being written by the Planning Department. Chief Drake answered that “yes, they have.” Several deputy chiefs have been looking at their fire code, brush and abatements, noting that they have enforcement of brush codes for that reason. They are working on the Wildlife Ordinance issues currently, even today, vetting those issues, and want to make sure they are not compromising public safety foremost. Member Greenberg asked if they have driven through our hills, to which Chief Crowley noted that she has driven through, and noted the importance of understanding access and egress, and that preparedness and prevention are key to safety as much as the LAFD being ready to respond upon getting the call. She encouraged our connectivity with the local fire stations and up the whole chain of command, noting that they want to make sure that they continue to do what they do well but wanted to test their perspectives to know what else can the LAFD do to grow and evolve, organizationally, in the direction of what is unique to particular neighborhoods.

Member Sann (WCC) welcomed the new Chief. Sann noted that he is Co-Chair of the Annual Westwood Homeless Count and asked if Chief Crowley could comment on how we as community and neighborhood council leaders can help address this issue. He related that he called the LAFD about one homeless individual on the street who appeared to be dying. LAFD came and informed him that this was at least the fourth or fifth time that day that they came to

address this individual and that they are trying to be agile with all types of calls. As to dealing with the unhoused population, Chief Crowley noted that they have piloted a therapeutic transport van, with behavioral health specialists from LA County that they partner with. She noted that they were having someone with a potentially medical emergency or behavioral emergency, whom they would take to the ER who would be released, in a vicious cycle, and that the therapeutic van has been of great value; however, that it takes a village, it is a very complex issue, and they want to make sure they are creating the tools needed, from the City-family perspective, to build around housing strategies, so the City can enforce local ordinances.

Member Zar (PPCC) noted that she previously asked her local station about evacuation routes in the hillsides and was told they weren't sure about having the perfect evacuation routes. She asked whether to go back to them again. Chief Crowley noted that the local stations are responsible for their districts but they have higher level and multiple levels of staffing to address the choke points that update and upgrade their evacuation plans. She noted that is why we have Chief Drake on this call, and would recommend to make sure we are connecting the dots; if you see any gaps, that's what we need to talk about, for specific areas.

Chief Drake noted at the command level, they work in concert and coordinate with LAPD with the Emergency Management Department, (EMD), and with NotifyLA, a wireless emergency alert, in preparation for evacuations. They also address the disability access and functional needs community and leverage technology to get there too.

Chair Wersinger thanked both of the Chiefs for coming, hopes for follow up with them, and encouraged the NCs to invite them. Chief Drake provided his email address (as noted above). Chair Wersinger acknowledged their importance in this City, and hopes that we can see them again in the next half year or year. The Chiefs thanked us as well.

- b Mayor's Office** – Vishesh Anand was not present
- c Council Reports** – Noah Fleishman, CD 11 & Jarrett Thompson CD5 were both present. Jarrett was called and gave a brief update: Council is in recess and he was available for questions.
- d Janet Turner from Congressman Ted Lieu's office** gave a brief update, stressing that it is important that people who want to travel abroad immediately check their passports as there has been a great demand for emergency passport appointments but now can only be gotten for life-and-death situations. It takes at least seven days to get these appointments. The passport has to be good for six months from the time of your return. She'll keep us updated on this. She related funding amounts that were approved by the House (awaiting Senate approval), including but not limited to funds to transform a 12,200 square foot building into an interim shelter site in MDR, funds for Wallis Wildlife Crossing, and that UCLA will be given funds for streamlining carbon sequestration.
- e Armine Sargsyan with the California Department of Insurance** gave an introduction as to the department. Don't hesitate to connect with the experts on the department's consumer hotline, 800-927-4357, who can answer your questions (answering phones M-F) or go to their website:

<http://www.insurance.ca.gov/>. They have the responsibility to be sure insurance companies do not overcharge consumers, and they investigate possible fraud, etc. As to wildfires, Ms. Sargsyan noted that in the last 10 years we have seen increase in wildfires in the state of California; many of us are in high fire hazard severity zones (HFHSZs) and that the Department of Insurance and Emergency Response as well as readiness agencies have been working together to help bring down insurance costs and expanding access. She noted that they have come up with a new framework called “Safer from Wildfires,” where every single policy holder should show a decrease in their homeowner’s policy.

<https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/200-wrr/saferfromwildfires.cfm#:~:text=Safer%20from%20Wildfires%20is%20an,businesses%20by%20reducing%20wildfire%20risk>.

Ms. Sargsyan noted that she is available to come to your CCs & NCs to speak about this program. Contact her at [Armine.sargsyan@insurance.ca.gov](mailto:Armine.sargsyan@insurance.ca.gov). She also mentioned the California Low-Cost Auto Insurance Program, with liability coverage at low cost for low-to-moderate income residents.

3. **Board Member Updates – Member Broide (WNC)** related that at the end of June, City Council’s PLUM Committee, followed a week later by the full City Council, authorized the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the Metro Transit Communications Network Program. PLUM didn't discuss it for one minute, it was on a consent calendar. The scoping process was not well announced. If your Neighborhood Council did not know about the scoping process, this public comment period ended June 1<sup>st</sup>. She suggested you write to Metro and tell them that you think they should reopen it for comment and participation because there are freeway-facing and non-freeway-facing digital billboards that will appear under this program and no Community or City Council member will have any say as to whether or not they go in where they want them to go or not. Let her know if you need more information. This is part of what's going on with signage.

The other half is the STAP street furniture program. The recommended contract is currently at the CEO’s office for their report, which will then go to three City Council committees: Public Works, Finance and Personnel. The Council File for the STAP program also includes a new LA Municipal Code provision that would allow any advertising structures to be placed in the public right of way anywhere in undefined and unlimited numbers. Member Broide explained that this new provision is not needed because there already is a dedicated LA Municipal Code provision that permits advertising structures for transit shelters. The City should be doing a lot better in terms of covering more transit stops with shelters and having less advertising. The vendor that the City selected plans to have over 6,500 ad faces on our streets and almost 2,000 that Member Broide thinks will be digital.

4. **Committee Reports – Limited to 5 minutes total**
  - a. **Elections Forum Committee** – virtual forum wrap up & discussion / motion possible for future forums.Chair Wersinger asked if we want to do this in the future. Member Sann (WCC) feels it would be very important for WRAC to step up, if we have the ability to do it. He thinks a forum with the two candidates for Mayor, as well as the candidates for City Attorney and Controller (since we didn't do a forum for the Controller's race in the primary) would be important, as those are the three citywide races. However, he feels that without question, as we were not able to do

the CD11 forum previously, it is imperative that we do so now that the CD11 race is whittled down to two candidates; he also thinks we should consider a forum with the two candidates for CD5 as well as for the candidates for County Supervisor District 3. Member Sann noted that we need to decide if in-person or Zoom. He'd seen some unfortunate incidents of disruption at mayoral forums, one in the Valley, which was shut down; however, when USC did their forum, with five mayoral candidates, they did not have disruption problems but were very careful about who they let into the room. Member Wishon (WNC) agreed that in-person event(s) would be cost-prohibitive for us. Chair Wersinger opened the floor for a motion to reformulate. Sann noted that though he identified six fora to consider, we don't have to do six, and that given that this coalition works closely with CD11, he feels we would be remiss if we didn't do at least that one.

Member Broide noted that we should contact the candidates to find out which debates are planned and if there are any gaps for the number of engagements and/or whether we would consider co-sponsoring with another group already planning something. The board discussed possible events, including but not limited to one at the Hammer Museum, per Member Lisa Chapman (WWNC) and another possible one in Brentwood sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, per Vice-Chair Spitz, dates to be explored by the committee.

**Motion** to reformulate the committee with a task to do what the committee wishes to proceed with, and to choose as many forums as they see fit was moved by Chair Wersinger, seconded by Member Wishon and approved unanimously. [Prior to this vote being finalized, quorum was lost and attention was turned to item 4.c. until Andrew Lewis arrived at 7:39 pm.] **Attention was next turned to Item #5.**

**b. WRAC Emergency Preparedness Committee discussion** – Judie Hulett to discuss concept of forming committee / motion possible

Chair Wersinger introduced Judie Hulett who noted that she has a degree in public health and how disasters affect communities. She is the CERT commander for Battalion 9 for the whole Westside, a proponent of RYLAN, and a ham operator sworn in with Auxiliary Services which backs up LAFD when they need ham radios. She is also a sworn member of CPAB. Ms. Hulett noted that she is deep into Emergency Preparedness (EP), but wonders whether a WRAC Public Safety/EP Committee would want to include crime. She noted that WRAC deals with important issues that the Westside faces, and if we have an earthquake or fire it will be a big event, so is worthy of our time. She noted that the Westside is woefully ill prepared, we will all become first responders. Being prepared is knowing what to do as well as what to have, e.g., a go-bag is fine except then what do you do? A good question to ask yourself is what exactly do you do during that first hour after an earthquake, what is the plan, who do you go save, as well as questions that are part of readiness. The distribution of knowledge and skills and how we survive an event is very uneven across the community. She noted that we can do better, and an EP committee would bring focus and emphasis for a disastrous event. She believes that WRAC would be the perfect forum to be ready and prepared; the committee would be useful. She referenced Chief Crowley's comments on being prepared.

Board comments were offered and questions were asked and answered. Chair Wersinger noted that we have a Public Safety/EP standing committee in our bylaws, which never was instituted, and he welcomed Ms. Hulett for further discussion on having this committee. Vice-Chair Spitz mentioned

concerns of Pacific Palisades as to EP & Public Safety, particularly with respect to fire protection and evacuation. Member Chapman noted her husband would be interested in this. Member Greenberg mentioned that the BABCNC has had an EP committee for years, and she recommended the CERT training. *[Andrew Lewis arrived and quorum was restored at 7:39 pm.]*

**Motion** to nominate Judie Hulett as the Chair of the WRAC Public Safety & EP Committee, **passed** unanimously as **moved** by Chair Wersinger and **seconded** by Member Chapman.

**[Attention was returned to the earlier motion #4.a. for a vote.]**

**c. WRAC Mobility & Transportation Committee:** Chair, Selena Inoyue gave a brief update, and welcomed attendance at the committee. **(Attention was next turned to item 4.b.)**

**5. Public Comment** – Tony Torres with Outfront JC Decaux Furniture, noted that he is echoing Barbara Broide as to the STAP program. He related that the new system will have a cost to the City as high as \$200+ million, and that they are hoping to recoup the cost by the signage, some as large as 64 square feet. He thinks the process is moving without a lot of public input.

**6. Approval of Minutes** —

**a. Motion (Chair Wersinger)** – The April 2022 meeting minutes were **approved** as **moved** by Chair Wersinger (DRNC) and **seconded** by Member Wishon (WNC), with **7 yeses** & **one abstention** from Member Zar.

**7. New Business**

**a Motion (WRAC MTC)** - \_\_\_ NC/CC supports the following position in regards to the recent adoption of Ordinance 187427 regarding speed limit reductions:

**i** \_\_\_ NC/CC supports the action taken by the LA City Council on March 7, 2022 in passing Council File 21-1223 regarding Speed Limit Reductions.

**ii** \_\_\_ NC/CC has reviewed the streets on the Westside slated for speed limit reductions at their March 16, 2022 meeting and supports the efforts to reduce the speed limit by 5 MPH on streets that were recently identified for 5 MPH speed limit increases. (See the attached Ordinance number 187427 with the complete list of streets effected.)

**iii** Moving forward, it is the suggestion of \_\_\_ NC/CC that future speed limit reductions be discussed and planned as neighborhood or regional traffic improvements rather than individual street improvements. These improvements should be coupled with measures to minimize vehicle traffic being redirected onto adjacent neighborhood streets. For example, we would like to see LADOT incorporate traffic calming measures and active transportation elements. Traffic calming measures might include compact traffic circles/mini roundabouts, restricted turns, curb extensions/bulb-outs, speed humps and tables, and diagonal diverters, half closures, full closures, and median barriers to reduce cut-through traffic.

**iv** In addition, the \_\_\_ NC/CC requests that the Council Offices engage the local Westside Councils in ongoing discussions about what additional streets should be considered for speed limit reductions as well as establish a method whereby Council and stakeholder feedback on this issue can be submitted directly to LADOT.

**Moved** by Wersinger, **seconded** by Lewis.

Discussion was held with Vice-Chair Spitz suggesting that paragraph #2 is not needed. Member Zar asked for confirmation that the ordinance has already been adopted, and that WRAC is supporting this, which Chair Wersinger agreed to, noting that you are adding something about the vision for this moving forward (with other streets, etc.). He noted that you could probably take out or remove some of the subsections. Member Lynn noted that the council file was more about speed limits, not about traffic calming measures. He questioned whether we are misdirecting this, since everything has been passed, and if we should rather redirect this to a more applicable file.

Chair Wersinger asked Ms. Inoyue about this, to which she noted that she had looked at the council file system and doesn't see another motion without final council action on it as to protective measures regarding cut-through traffic. She noted that this is a request moving forward to please include us, please think about all these other measures, in addition to just simply reducing speed limits, because we are concerned that if you reduce the speed limits it's going to cause cut-through traffic. She noted that the MTC had both CD5's and CD11's transportation deputies at their last meeting, and the streets chosen were those which had a speed limit increase. Moving forward we want to make sure we have say in how these streets get chosen.

**Amendment** that paragraph iii reads "Moving forward, it is the suggestion of \_\_\_ NC/CC **that City Council open a Council File to consider that** future speed limit reductions be discussed..." **Passed** unanimously, as moved by Lynn/Wersinger.

**Amendment** that paragraph ii reads \_\_\_ NC/CC ~~has reviewed the streets on the Westside slated for speed limit reductions at their March 16, 2022 meeting and~~ supports the efforts to reduce the speed limit by 5 MPH on streets that were recently identified for 5 MPH speed limit increases. (See the attached Ordinance number 187427 with the complete list of streets effected.) **Passed** unanimously as moved by Zar/Wersinger.

**Vote on the main motion as amended twice passed unanimously.**

**Motion (WRAC MTC) - \_\_\_ NC/CC supports the following position in regards to the recent adoption of Ordinance 187427 regarding speed limit reductions:**

- i** \_\_\_ NC/CC supports the action taken by the LA City Council on March 7, 2022 in passing Council File 21-1223 regarding Speed Limit Reductions.
- ii** \_\_\_ NC/CC supports the efforts to reduce the speed limit by 5 MPH on streets that were recently identified for 5 MPH speed limit increases. (See the attached Ordinance number 187427 with the complete list of streets effected.)
- iii** Moving forward, it is the suggestion of \_\_\_ NC/CC **that City Council open a Council File to consider that future speed limit reductions be discussed and planned as neighborhood or regional traffic improvements rather than individual street improvements. These improvements should be coupled with measures to minimize vehicle traffic being redirected onto adjacent neighborhood streets. For example, we would like to see LADOT incorporate traffic calming measures and active transportation elements. Traffic calming measures might include compact traffic circles/mini roundabouts, restricted turns, curb extensions/bulb-outs, speed humps and tables, and**



diagonal diverters, half closures, full closures, and median barriers to reduce cut-through traffic.

**iv** In addition, the \_\_\_ NC/CC requests that the Council Offices engage the local Westside Councils in ongoing discussions about what additional streets should be considered for speed limit reductions as well as establish a method whereby Council and stakeholder feedback on this issue can be submitted directly to LADOT.

**b Motion (WRAC MTC) - \_\_\_ NC/CC** supports CF 22-0002-S58, which in turn supports AB 2336 which allows the City of Los Angeles to create a pilot automated speed enforcement program which includes fine alternatives for low income drivers and privacy data protections was moved by Chair Wersinger (DRNC), seconded by Member Lewis (NWWNC); discussion was held and the motion passed unanimously.

**c Motion (Mover TBD) - \_\_\_ NC/CC** supports the motion in Council File 20-1376-S3 (Buscaino) for an ordinance amending LAMC Sections 41.18 and 56.01 to prohibit sitting, lying, sleeping, and storing personal property in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public-right-of-way within 500 ft. of a library. Moved by Member Sann (WCC); seconded by Member Lynn (SORONC).

Member Sann noted that this motion does not cover the library property itself and that City Council doesn't have jurisdiction over libraries. He noted that libraries are dealing with very serious issues. This is so that there is a buffer zone around the library, so everyone can feel safe at the library, and the library can continue to function for the community. He asked for support on it. Vice Chair Spitz noted this is moving along among community & neighborhood councils. The motion passed by 5 yeases; 2 noes from Members Wishon (WNC) & Chapman (WWNC), and 1 abstention by Member Lewis (NWWNC).

## 8. Old Business

**a 22.25 Request Use of "Cool Asphalt" for Paving** – Feb. 21, 2022 (passage deadline May 2022); 9 councils adopted: DRNC, NCWP, NWWNC, PPCC, VNC, SORONC, WLASNC, WNC, WWNC\* (*\*modified version*) – *Passed by majority of Member Councils*

**b 22.26. Requests for Consideration re CF 22-0158** – March 21, 2022 (passage deadline July 2022); 8 councils adopted: BABCNC,\* DRNC, MVCC,\* PPCC,\* WCC, WLASNC, WNC, WWNC (*\*modified version*) – *Passed by majority of Member Councils*

**c 22.27. Request for Dwelling Unit Capacity Calculations** – April 18, 2022 (passage deadline July 2022); 7 councils adopted: BABCNC,\* BCC,\* NCWP, PPCC, WLASNC,\* WNC, WWNC\* (*\*modified version*).

Motion to extend item "8c" for one more month passed as moved by Wersinger/Lynn.

**9. Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm as moved by Chair Wersinger, to meet again on August 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 6 pm. Member Broide noted that on November 13, 2022 there will be an Emergency Preparedness event held at Exposition Park; contact Cynthia Sapir.