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Westwood Neighborhood Council

WRAC LUPC MINUTES

Meeting date: July 10, 2023

Via Zoom

- 1. Call to order** – The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM
- 2. Roll call** – The Chair certified that there was quorum (cautioning that NC’s recently had elections and not all NCs had appointed LUPC Reps. No action was being taken in this meeting.)
Members Present: Steve Twining, Travis Longcore, Kay Hartman, Larry Watts, Michael Jensen, Drew Ruesch, Jay Ross, Julie Ross, Barbara Broide, Eric Coested, Steve Sann, Debora Huston.
- 3. Welcome & announcements** – The Chair introduced Robert Schlesinger to give a presentation on the proposed Bulgari Hotel in benedict Canyon. The Chair made clear we will not be taking a vote on a position on this, since a motion was not agendised, but we are happy to hear from Robert: a friend and a former long-time WRAC member. We will learn more today and decide if we wish to agendise and discuss at a later date.

Robert introduced Robert Mann as a co-presenter. They advocated for opposition to the Bulgari Hotel project, proposed on 97 Oak Pass Road in Benedict Canyon. They urge member councils to recommend rejection of the permit.

The impact of the project, we were told, would have a “catastrophic impact” on the residential neighborhood surrounding the site, from Mulholland Drive to the Beverly Hills Corridor. It would require extensive grading and the removal of over 700 protected trees, and present significant traffic and noise issues, with a profound negative impact on the Canyon. Furthermore, the development would be entire within the VHFHSZ zone, which would pose a fire risk to the entire region.

4. Approval of minutes

- 4.1. The June 12 Meeting minutes were approved

- 5. Presentations/guest speakers** - Robert Schlesinger regarding the proposed development of a Bulgari Hotel in Benedict Canyon. Members were urged to oppose the Bulgari Hotel project proposed in Benedict Canyon (see above).

Presenters, Robert Schlesinger and Robert Mann informed members of the various areas of adverse impact this development would cause to the surrounding residential, VHFHSZ and wildlife area.

They further noted that the developer has circumvented the zoning grading and construction restrictions imposed by the current residential zoning, BMO and Overlay District is contrary to established policies and good zoning practices. This will be an irreversible precedent that will negatively impact construction for projects to come.

This represents an existential threat to Benedict Canyon as well as the SM mountains. The approval of this project is rife with ethical violations and conflicts of interest. The developer retained the services of a lobbyist who was the wife of an instrumental planning deputy. The Chair asked about this violation as did other board members, including Westwood CC Representative, Steve Sann. The LUC decided they would not oppose a letter written by the officers of WRAC, to insist in scrupulous adherence to zoning regulations and ethical standards, per the guiding principles upon which WRAC was founded.

The members of the committee thanked the two presenters.

6. Old business - none

7. New Business - none

8. Member or Public Comment/Open forum – Barbara mentioned the upcoming hearing about digital advertising on metro assets and asked the public to oppose these additional distractions on our roads, that are designed to take attention off the roadway, causing accidents. She announced a meeting coming up on Wednesday (in two days from the meeting) and asked members to connect to the call and speak in opposition. She informed members that the city is investing \$300M in their digital shelter program and expect a revenue stream that may misguide this policy. There was commentary that there may not be enough time for WRAC to act, but members should galvanize community voices and submit comment in opposition.

Steve Sann announced that the IKE program (interactive kiosk) proponents are pushing ahead and will be presenting at Westwood BID to convince Westwood to allow two sided 8-foot-high billboards in Westwood Village. The westside is a huge target for the advertising lobby, and we need to stand united against the onslaught of advertising in our communities. The Tourism Committee of the CC will be instrumental in these decisions. Traci Park Chairs that committee, so we need to interface with her office. Chris Spitz, WRAC VP said she would follow up with CD11.

Kay Hartman asked for a group to be formed to discuss and prepare a position regarding Metro routes (six options on the table) and bring the Valley and the Westside together around a consensus position to bring metro to the Westside and into the Valley. Steve Sann cautioned against acting too soon.

9. Adjournment - the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM