

WISPPA
Women Involved in South Pasadena Political Action
May 2, 2015 Minutes

Date: May 2, 2015

Location: Calvary Presbyterian Church

Present: Ron Rosen, Ellen Daigle, Betty Emirhanian, Lela Bissner, Kim Hughes, Diana Mahmud, Becky Thompson, Wayna Kato, Marina Khubesrian, Judi Barhdt, Suzie Abajian, Barbara Sinclair, Palmira Najarian, Dana Farar, Gail Maiorana, Clarice Knapp, Mary Urquhart, Kay Mouradian, Ara Najarian, Richard Helgeson and Polly Podewell.

- I. Meeting called to order by Lela Bissner at 9:10 a.m.

- II. Marina Khubesrian introduced the speaker, Ara Najarian, Mayor of Glendale. Mr. Najarian also served on the Metro Board. He is a passionate civil servant who has worked with Marina on a number of intercity issues. Both are on the C3 Council – Connected Cities Coalition.

- III. Ara Najarian spoke about his involvement regarding the 710. When he 1st got on the MTA board, he was pro 710. However he changed his mind after he got into the “nuts and bolts” of the process.
 - A. The problems he sees are:
 1. The cost of the proposed tunnel will be between 5.6 and 14 billion dollars
 2. There will most likely be a hefty toll of up to \$14/each way
 3. There are numerous safety issues. He wouldn't want his family driving through the tunnel. Fires and accidents will cost lives. Environs – too much smoke inhalation.
 4. The effect on people at the portals will be substantial
 5. Other tunnel projects have been problematic and the costs have ballooned such as the Boston big dig and the Seattle tunnel.
 - B. He feels that the support for the tunnel has been driven not by residents, but by the engineering/Industrial complex.
 1. They don't care if it is a good idea. There are billions of dollars at stake.
 2. They are actively lobbying for the tunnel
 - C. The EIR shows extremely modest improvements in traffic flow
 1. The traffic at Fremont and Valley will improve by only 7 seconds.
 2. The tunnel will save 2 ½ minutes travel time each way for cut through traffic
 3. One reason that traffic will not improve is that there will be a 4% grade in the tunnel slowing down trucks.
 - D. The proposed tunnel doesn't just affect South Pasadena, but all cities are affected by increased traffic.
 - E. Due to A. Najarian's stand against the tunnel, he was targeted for removal from the Metro Board.
 - F. Some things we can do:
 1. Be vocal at the hearings

2. Support the C3 council
3. Support light rail alternative
4. Support freight on rail
5. Vote against any future transportation bonds that include funding for the tunnel.

IV. Lela read the Treasurer's Report - \$3,734 in the bank and the Membership report - 72 members as of 4/29/15

V. City Council Liaison Committee Report – Judi Barhydt

- A. Reminder about the Special Olympics. For three days this summer, our city will host 100 Special Olympics athletes and their coaches from Morocco and Paraguay, welcoming them to experience the best of South Pasadena, as well as light training, rest, and lots of fun.
- B. UUT – There are legal inadequacies of the initiative according to the Council to South Pasadena. It is unconstitutional and unenforceable as the initiative takes away the right of citizens to make decisions about future taxes.
- C. The mayor directed staff to return with a resolution that will reflect a decision to forego placing the UUT repeal petition on the ballot at our next general election. The resolution will be heard at the next meeting and will identify the petition's legal defects.
- D. Water Issues – South Pasadena has been asked to reduce their water consumption by 28% over 2013 usage.
 1. The City discussed the golf course overwatering, how to identify high water users, the need to water trees to keep them from dying.
 2. The City has already reduced their water usage by 11%. It was unclear whether the 28% includes the 11 % or is on top of the 11%.
- E. Kim Hughes said the Debbie Figoni needs more help. Also that people should go visit LaFrance street to see how water saving landscapes can be beautiful and fit in with the South Pasadena aesthetic. It is going to be very difficult to balance water use and the high summer temps. Check website re watering trees.
- F. Dianna Mahmud said that Stage2 water conservation will go into effect May 7th. The final regulations will come out on May 7th. The City also needs to amend its ordinance to reflect the State mandate of 28%. No enforcement or fines at this time. Residents will have to follow odd/even watering days – can only water twice per week.

VI. Public Safety Commission – Mary Urquhart

- A. There has been a decrease of 37% in robberies and 12% in aggravated assault. The predictive policing has been effective.
- B. CERT Training
 1. Refresher training is coming up – June 13th 8 – noon
 2. CERT Amateur Radio Training will take place on Nov 4.
 3. The next CERT training is in September
- C. Neighborhood watch – the city has a newsletter on its website including a map where Neighborhood watch groups that have been set up. It is very important for disaster preparedness for every neighborhood to have a Neighborhood watch group.
- D. There is already \$100,000 in the city budget for an Emergency Operations Center. Another \$100,000 will likely be included in this year's budget and possibly next year as well for a total of the \$300,000 needed to set it up.

- E. Ellen Daigle talked about some of the issues regarding the Convalescent Hospital in South Pasadena. They have lost their license, but are still operating. There has been a shift in types of patients – more mental health patients. Situation is atrocious. The police and city officials have been working on this. Owner of property runs 71 other hospitals

VII. NREC Update – Kim Hughes

- A. 17 trees have been removed and 5 planted. Need overall tree plan: Right tree in the right place at the right time
- B. Water conservation:
 - 1. Looking at water saving programs for restaurants and businesses
 - 2. Water enforcement is a big problem. i.e. Arco and Panda waste a lot of water at night.
 - 3. Need an app to allow people to report water waste
 - 4. Looking at ways to use grey water
 - 5. Would like to see water saving tips be shared in the South Pasadena Review.
- C. A new commission will soon be created: Renewable Energy Commission

VIII. Website Updates – Suzie Abajian had to leave early. Betty Emirhanian encourage members to go to the website home page for the latest news and the Key events page for upcoming events. Also, the website has info regarding the water restrictions. Be sure to “like” WISPPA on facebook.

IX. New BUSINESS

- A. Many thanks to Gretchen Robinette for bringing such great breakfast items, coffee and juice to the meeting. Kim Hughes offered to bring the goodies for the next meeting.
- B. The WISPPA cocktail party is scheduled for June 22nd and will be held at Janet Braun’s home. Ellen thanked Mary Urquhart for her past contributions. WISPPA members will be asked to provide the appetizers for the party.
- C. Betty Emirhanian discussed the possibility of having a “WISPPA connections page” on the website listing all the organizations that WISPPA members are involved in. There was moderate support for the idea.
- D. Lela Bissner mentioned some important events coming up such as the 710 hearings, the League of Women Voters meeting, etc.
- E. The next meeting will be held on June 6

X. The 4-11-15 minutes were approved. Kim Hughes made the motion to approve and Becky Thompson seconded.

XI. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00