

**WISPPA**  
**Women Involved in South Pasadena Political Action**  
**August 6, 2016 Minutes**  
**Cavalry Presbyterian Church**

**Attendance:**

Dollie Chapman, Betty Emirhanian, Sally Kilby, Marcela Hawk, Mary Jane Juranek, Ron Rosen, Lisa Reynolds, Stephanie Molen, Brandy Gueavoor, Dino Kiddo, Regina Edelmann, Howard Spector, Marianne Reyes, Barbara Sinclair, Ellen Wood, Deborah Fox, Carolyn Flemming, Joe Bob Smith, Zahis Robb, Suzie Abajian, Jonathan Primuth, Joy Knapp, Lela Bissner, Vicky Kirkwood, Pamela Jensen, Dana Farrar, Vicky Bartlett, Lynda Sullivan, Becky Thomson, Diane Crum, Kim Nguyen, Judith Harris, Marty Wetzel, Marina Khubesrian, Michael Cacciotti, Diana Mahmud, Dick Helgeson, Gail Maltan, Diana Mahmud, Ellen Daigle, Bianca Richards, Clara Richards, Camille Leve, Kim Hughes

Ellen Daigle and Lela Bissner welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. The guest speaker, City of South Pasadena Public Works Director Paul Toor was introduced.

**Guest Speaker Paul Toor**

Mr. Toor has been with the City of South Pasadena for five years. He has a very extensive background in managing public works operations. He shared that since he arrived in the city that there has been “nothing but excitement.” There have been major challenges as the city addresses major infrastructure projects.

When he first arrived the city had taken on the 2009 water bonds for the repair and replacement of the water system reservoirs and the projects need “to be delivered.

The City of South Pasadena is a full-service city, which means the city provides the key services, such as police and fire. The city also manages the city’s water system. One of the major challenges facing the Public Works team is repairing the water system, while still delivering water to the residents..

Because the City of South Pasadena is an older city, it is in a position now where many of its infrastructure systems are reaching the end of their life span and are in need of repair or replacement. These projects include the city’s roads, sidewalks, sewer system, water system and the city’s urban forest.

The city is taking on these challenges and over \$60 million of projects are in the works.

## Water System

The City of South Pasadena has its own Water System and this system includes a series of water reservoirs and water pumping stations. Our reservoirs include the Garfield, Wilson, Grand, Graves and Westside reservoirs. The Grand Reservoir has been completely re-built, as was the Wilson Reservoir. The new Garfield Reservoir is under construction.

The Wilson Reservoir is located in the City of San Gabriel and includes three water wells that pump groundwater up. The water is treated and pumped from the Wilson Reservoir, to the Garfield Reservoir. The re-construction of the Garfield Reservoir is about 50% complete and the project will be completed by June 2017. Design for the new Graves Reservoir is in the works. There is another water pump at this site.

Right now the funds to re-build the Graves Reservoir are not budgeted and the costs would need to be addressed with new bonds, grants or loans. The goal would be to be able to start construction of this reservoir in June 2017.

One of the future goals of the water system is to replace customer water meters with more advanced meters, so they can provide more real-time information. The city is also working on water line repairs and replacements. It is important to note, that the water system is an independently funded operation and the cost to operate the system is covered by the revenue that comes in from the water sales. In order to make sure that there are funds to address repairs and operations, loans and grants would be needed, as current operations revenue is not sufficient to pay for the needed water system upgrades..

A future concern regarding water utility revenues to operation expenses is that due to drought, the city has been mandated to reduce water use, which resulted into a decrease in revenues needed for the operations and debt service.

## Sewer System

The city maintains its sewer system, which connects to the County of Los Angeles Sanitation District. Due to past sewer spills; the city was mandated to make repairs to its sewer system. The City of South Pasadena has addressed the issue by slip lining the sewer pipes. Older pipes are lined, causing less street and property disruption and having in essence, equivalent to brand new sewer pipes. 20 miles of sewer lines has been repaired after the regional board order. The city is utilizing a state loan for \$11 million to assist with the payment for the sewer lines repairs.

In order to address any future sewer spills, the city has acquired a special response vehicle that cost \$400,000. The equipment is powered by natural gas

and pulls up any spill materials, so they cannot flow down the line or into the storm drains.

At the end of the four-year sewer project, 70% of the city's sewer lines either will be replaced or slip-lined. The remaining 30% of the sewer collection system is in good shape.

### Parks and Trees

Environmental Programs are also an important part of the Public Works Department and this includes the city's parks and the urban forest. The city maintains the parks and all of the trees in the parks as well, as public rights of way.

### Street and Sidewalks

The city has old and aging streets and sidewalks which need repairs. The City Council has been addressing this issue. Five years ago the City Council began earmarking funds for street and sidewalk repairs. Approximately \$2 million a year has been allocated for street and sidewalk repairs. To maintain the streets to its current condition and do not let it deteriorate further, funding of \$5 to \$8 million a year is needed.

### Monterey Road

One question which is on residents mind is ultimate configuration of Monterey Road from Fair Oaks to Pasadena Avenue.? Should the street be re-designed so there are less vehicle lanes to make it more pedestrian friendly? Should the medians be wider and landscaped? There are various options. One of the key concerns from a Public Works viewpoint is the condition of the street paving itself and the potential for claims filed against the city, due to the condition of the street. Right now, the city is taking first step to address the immediate problem and will be re-surfacing the street at a cost of approximately \$3 million. The contract for the first phase paving will be presented to the City Council at August 17, 2016 City Council meeting. The phases would be from Fair Oaks to Meridian and then Meridian to Via del Rey going west

There is a plan to fix the light at Via del Rey and to add a new traffic light at Orange Grove. The new traffic light is funded in the current budget.

There is still the on-going concern over the sidewalks, lamp posts and ADA access. A concern was raised about the safety of the street during the construction for students walking to and from school. Mr. Toor said that Public Works and the construction team would be working with the City of South Pasadena Unified School District on the issue.

## UUT

Mr. Toor voiced grave concern that many of the projects underway or in planning would be negatively impacted if the city lost the UUT tax. The approximately \$3.6 million would be lost and would cause projects to be cut or eliminated.

## Urban Forest

One issue that came up was sidewalk repairs and trees. Many sidewalks are being impacted by tree roots. The city strives to find a balance between the trees and sidewalk safety.

There is an issue as to who is responsible for the City of South Pasadena's urban forest? The Public Works Dept. is responsible for all public trees and these include the parkway trees and the trees in our parks. There are about 10,000 public trees in the city and they are aging. The drought has also taken its toll on the forestry. City staff has noticed a lot of tree branches snapping due to the continued drought, falling on cars and sidewalks. This past year there were five claims for falling tree branches causing damage.

All the cities are seeing the same trend with trees and branches failing due to the on-going drought. Our trees need to be trimmed, pruned and watered. All of these services are resulting into cost increases. In addition, labor costs are also going up due to the new minimum wage requirements. The outside contractors providing services for trees and landscaping are all asking for contract increases in the range of 30%.

## Lighting and Landscape Maintenance District

The city has had this special district and associated fee in place for decades. The fees cover the costs of maintaining the city's trees, parks and street lights. The same fee structure has been in place since 1997. Currently the revenue from the fee totals about \$900,000 a year, yet the actual costs for maintaining the trees, landscaping and lights are over \$1.1 million. The extra \$200,000 has been coming out of the general fund and this shortfall will continue to rise.

Because of this growing shortfall, the city would like to re-visit the district fee and propose a modest increase to help address the shortfall and rising costs. The city will look at a ballot election, where property owners will receive a ballot to vote in favor or against adjusting the fee. The fees cover only expenses related to trees, landscaping and street lights.

The fee adjustment would be approved if the ballots come in and there is a majority of ballots supporting the fee increase. A public meeting will be held to help explain the fee and the ballot process.

The timing would be that ballots would go out in September subject to approval by the City Council and the results would be in October. There needs to be 45 days for residents to respond.

A question came up about undergrounding power lines. Mr. Toor said that this is very expensive proposition but there is a process underway to underground a transmission line near Garfield Park

Another question came up about private property trees. Mr. Toor said that if there is a safety issue the city's arborist can inspect the tree and advise the property owner accordingly.

Mr. Toor introduced the new Manager of Public Works Operations, Kristine Courdy.

### **City Council Liaison Report**

Councilmember Cacciotti provided the information that the lease and operation of the San Pasqual Stables was under review. The lease was reviewed in 2006 for 12 years and the renewal period is coming up again in 2018. There are questions as to do we want to change or improve? We want to come up with a plan so we can go out to bid.

The Renewable Energy Council provided a report to the City Council recommending that the city look into putting solar on a parking lot and the Wilson Reservoir.

The County of Los Angeles is going to move forward with a transportation tax that could help with the Gold Line expansion.

The City Council reviewed two options for the design of a new community center and decided to explore both options. The new center would be the current location of the Parks and Recreation facility and the field yard next door. If the center is built, the Senior Center and their activities would move to the new facility and the library would expand into the existing Senior Center site.

The City Council is exploring options in updating the General Plan for the city. The new Dog Park, located near the batting cages will be opening very soon.

## **Legislative Affairs Committee Report**

Betty shared that there are a lot of coming issues including a \$98 million bond measure for the South Pasadena Unified School District that will be on the November ballot. There is also a 1 ½% proposed tax for parks.

Edison is concerned about possible blackouts due to the natural gas shortage in conjunction with the Aliso Canyon situation. Information can be found on the Edison web site.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Commission is looking at a Styrofoam ban for the city.

Assemblyman Holden is proposing legislature that would provide transit passes for students. The Assemblyman is looking for support and Betty has a draft letter that will be on the WISPPA web site. Members are encouraged to send in letters of support of the bill.

There is also a possible proposal for property owners to be able to pay their property taxes in monthly payments.

## **Membership Report**

There are currently 84 members in WISPPA. Yearly membership dues are now due and notices will be going out to members to remind them to submit their yearly dues.

## **Finance Committee Report**

Ellen Wood shared that there is currently an organizational balance of \$6,892.00. The recent cocktail party realized a positive revenue of \$2,196.39 with \$825.00 of the revenue coming from the raffle. The only regular expenses that the group has, is the \$50.00 a month for the meeting location and for the "South Pasadena Review" ads that help to attract new members.

There was a suggestion that for the next cocktail party, we might consider purchasing food from a local vendor, as a way to promote local businesses.

Ellen also reminded the membership that August 26<sup>th</sup> is "Equality Day."

## **Development Committee Report**

A report will be at the next meeting.

## **Public Safety Committee Report**

The Police Department is offering self-defense classes for women on August 13, 2016. It was mentioned that it would be good to make sure that the schools, particularly the middle and high school are made aware of when these classes are offered. There have been recent situations where students have been approached by strangers.

## **Amendment to Bylaws**

A revision to the bylaws was shared with the membership. The revision to the bylaws in relationship to elections was reviewed by the membership.. A motion was made to for approval was made by Gary Pia and was seconded by Bianca Richards. However, Betty Emirhanian pointed out that the bylaws state that there needs to be a 30 day notification period and the vote cannot take place until the next meeting. The motion for approval was not valid. The vote will come up again at the next meeting.

## **Minutes**

A motion was made by Gary Pia to approve the minutes with one date change. The motion was seconded by Bianca Richards and approved by the membership.

## **Equality Day Sponsorship**

The membership agreed to the sponsorship of the upcoming film screening. The film will be screened on Wednesday, August 24 at 7:00 pm at the Calvary Presbyterian Church in South Pasadena. It is a entitled "A Simple Matter of Justice" documenting the first ERA convention in 1977 will be shown. The film is narrated by Jean Stapleton, and includes interviews with Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisolm and Rosalyn Carter.

## **4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade**

A brief review and it was shared that everyone had a great time.

## **Nominating Committee Report**

Lela shared that the committee will be sending out a list of positions and responsibilities. All those interested should send in information about their interest in a position and the upcoming election. Possible candidates should send in a bio and that there is an interest in a particular position.

## **Events**

It was mentioned that the South Pasadena Women's Club will be hosting their popular Fall Fashion Show on September 24, 2016.

The next meeting is planned for Saturday, September 10, 2016

Meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kim Hughes.