

WISPPA
Women Involved in South Pasadena Political Action
September 12, 2015 Minutes

Date: September 12, 2015

Location: Cavalry Presbyterian Church

Present: Lela Bissner, Dollie Chapman, Betty Emirhanian, Barbara Sinclair, Ellen Wood, Ellen Daigle, Janet Braun, Becky Thompson, Ron Rosen, Gary Pia, Nancy Wilms, Judith Harris, Dana Farrar, Kim Hughes, Lynda Sullivan, Debby Fox, Gretchen Robinette, Kathryn Compton, Peter Milio, Florence Nelson, Sally Kilby, Marty Wetzler, Lisa Boyd, Vicky Bartlett, Suzie Abajian and John Primuth.

Betty Emirhanian called the meeting to order at 9:05 and introduced our Speaker, Mayor Bob Joe, who presented what he called "A Preview of the Mayor's State of the City," because he and staff are still working on it. He broke it down to four areas: health and financial; vitality of the City; viability of our community; milestones and memories of this past year and the outlook of our city.

Healthy and Financial Vitality

The City passed a balanced budget of June 17th, with an revenue of about \$24.7 million and general fund expenditures of \$24.6 million and continue to maintain a healthy reserve of 29.7% of the operating budget. The City is maintaining a high level of funding for street and sidewalk improvements at \$2.8 million, and water and sewer at \$18.9 million. Under Council direction the staff was asked to include the following in the budget:

General Plan Update - \$125,000 (to be added to the \$194,000 already designated;

Tree Replacement - \$75,000

Dog Park - \$220,000

Purchase of vacant lots from Cal Trans - \$700,000

EOC - \$100,000.

To assist in short and long term financial planning the City continues to maintain a 5 year cash flow model.

Vitality of the Community

Mayor Joe reported that the library has 33,600 registered borrowers and a circulation of 431,000 in fiscal year 2013-14. During the fiscal year 2014-15 the Senior Center served 14,995 meals to 310 people, plus additional special monthly lunches and special occasion lunches that were even larger. The recreation classes have had stronger participation with about 1,300 registered, and camp med with about 419. There have been two CERT classes and a third will be starting later this month. The library has presented about 24 free author and music events this year. Library had a very successful reading program this summer. Approximately 100 people have served as volunteers at the library this year.

Crime has unfortunately increased 43% this year, after a 17.8% reduction in 2014. Causes of increase in crime include AB109 (the prison realignment bill moving prisoners to county jails and early release), prop 47(enacted January 1st of this year reduced penalties on certain crimes and has led to the release of 30,000) and the difficulty in officer retention. While the budget authorized 36 police officers, there are only 29 on staff now with some working 18 hour shifts. The City is working very hard with the Chief and the Public Safety Commission to rectify this situation. On the other side, the Chief has implemented a predictive model so they can be proactive.

Milestones and Memories

- Over the past 4 months the City has reduced water consumption by 29%.
- There were approximately 300 attendees at this year's Colburn group concert at the library.
- The City's role as a host town for the Special Olympics.
- Beyond the 710 – The city council adopted a resolution on July 15 to reject all proposals in the 710 EIR draft and requested that Cal trans and Metro withdraw the draft EIR, requested that Cal trans as the tunnel alternative lead agency adopt no project and request that Metro conduct a thorough analysis of the transportation needs of the region and develop sustainable strategies. The other part of the 710 issue is the 5 City Alliance (Glendale, Pasadena, Sierra Madre, La Canada and South Pasadena) were able to share costs and hire consultants to point out the inadequacies of the EIR. Other agencies the EPA, AQMD and the County Health Department also deemed the study incomplete.

The Beyond the 710 Initiative – a special thanks to Marina for her tireless work. The plan was developed by the 5 Cities Alliance, the National Trust, the National Resources Defense Council and the No on 710 Action Committee to facilitate community collaboration to meet the transportation needs of all users in the region, improve mobility, reduce congestion and promote financial responsibility.

- The South Pasadena Convalescent Hospital has a new operator who has pledged to return it to a traditional business model. Thanks to our police chief and his department who really made this happen. Additionally, thanks to WISPPA and Janet and Ellen Daigle.
- Small businesses – The Mayor has attended 20-35 ribbon cuttings in the last 2 years. He has followed up with new businesses to see how they are doing. Has learned a lot and worked with businesses. Mayor Joe also mentioned the success of Mission Wines which has opened a new private room.

Outlook

The City is facing many challenges, but he thinks we are doing well.

- Continuing to improve customer service to citizens
- Killing the 710 once and for all
- The Rialto has had some movement. Property owner is planning to come up with their plan in the next 2 months for the Cultural Heritage Commission. Vintage Theatre has shown a lot of interest in restoring and operating the theatre.
- Starting the General Plan Update so we can start developing and shaping our future.
- Addressing senior housing needs
- Meeting the challenges of water delivery
- Working with property owners on development of vacant and under- utilized properties.
- Getting the right businesses into South Pasadena
- Adding new amenities such as the dog park, pocket parks, expansion of the library, a new community center and expanding the senior center. The Ad hoc committee on the community center is still undecided on a location.
- Addressing traffic and parking – the last council meetings members have tried to address the 5 hot spots for parking (3 elementary schools, Holy Family and the YMCA). Decision was made on the YMCA – to provide an unloading zone and permit parking for home owners on that side of the street.

He acknowledged how special South Pasadena is because of its volunteers.

In answer to questions:

The major challenge to police recruitment is salary.

There is a 2-3 hour parking limit on the west side of Fair Oaks to help with the problem of semis parking.

Blockbuster has a new property owner who is in discussions with Blaze Pizza. There is a need to spend time with property owners, it helps.

With regard to El Nino, that's why the City has a healthy reserve. CERT, police and fire will be working together.

Units on Mission next to the dry cleaners are due to be completed in January.

Covered storm drains will be opened.

The moratorium on massage parlors ends in April, but the council will pass ordinances prior to that.

With regard to transportation, the funds set aside for the General Plan Update will include transportation.

II. August meeting minutes were approved with no changes by the membership.

III. New Business

a. WISPPA Benefit at the Hendricks Burgess Gallery – Kathryn Compton and Peter Milio discussed the event scheduled for September 24th. A portion of all sales that evening will go to WISPPA. Peter noted that the gallery shows mostly women artists because they are underrepresented in other venues. Lori will be donating a painting to be auctioned with all proceeds going to WISPPA.

b. Election next month

Lela announced that the slate of candidates has been sent out. Only members attending the meeting may vote. It will be a 3 hour meeting.

Janet discussed changes to the by-laws which will be voted on next month prior to the election of officers. Changes to the by-laws will allow for delegation of responsibility to more people. The changes that require approval include the addition to the Board of Founding Advisor and the change from president-elect position to a vice president position. The Vice president position is not automatically the next year's president.

Additional changes include the addition of the following committees: political liaison; media; membership; and publicity. Also added to the Board will be a member-at-large position.

Nominating process – if 2 or more people were interested in the same position, the nominating committee would discuss with them and maybe find other positions they were interested in, but if not possible, there would be an election. Also nominations can be made from the floor. Unfortunately the issue of absentee ballots came up too late to be included in the bylaw changes, but this change is planned for next year. These changes and other changes to the corporate structure that will be considered in the future are all part of the growth of the organization.

c. Candidate Forum – for City Council

There will be no candidate forum for City Council this year. Because there are no challengers, having three current Board members at a forum was considered a violation of the Brown Act according to the City Attorney. A meet and greet was discussed, but there was not buy in from all candidates. A discussion ensued.

There was a suggestion made that WISPPA put together questions for all candidates to answer and then publish information in The Review. Another member suggested that since we heard from Mayor Joe today, we should invite the other two candidates to speak at our meetings as well, not necessarily before the election.

Another member expressed concern that no one else was running and stated that WISPPA should encourage people to run.

d. City Council/Antonovich Meeting

Lela attended and reported that the five topics that were discussed were the Fair Oaks ramp project, predictive policing and prison realignment(SB 109), storm water, potential measure R-2 and senior housing.

Lela also announced that WISPPA in conjunction with the League of Women Voters will be doing voter registration at Vons on September 22 and requested volunteers. Also there is a handout with key votelection information and Diana Mahmud has requested help working on measure L.

e. Upcoming Events

Candidate forum for School Board

Suzie Abajian is having a kick-off event on the 19th

John Primuth is having an event tomorrow

Marina is having a meet and greet on Sept. 20th

f. Food for next meeting will be provided by WISPPA.

IV. Reports

a. Public Safety – Janet Braun

Big kudos to the police department for their work on the convalescent home. In January Art found out that the LA District Attorney wasn't going to bring charges, and he and the department went to work on it.

Janet noted that there was a great article in the Review by Dana Farrar.

Janet also announced that the Bluto bandits were caught.

Police salaries have got to be raised and full time people hired.

Police and Fire Depts. Open house is Sunday Sept.20th. The third CERT training begins on September 19th.

Also a self defense class for women was held by the police dept.

Barbara Sinclair suggested WISPPA write a note of thanks to Art. It was agreed that Janet will write it and forward it to Lela and Betty for review.

There are four candidates for the joint Fire Chief position. Janet is a member of the citizen interview committee.

b & c. Treasurer and membership report – Dollie

We have \$6,150 in the bank, and no debt.

77 members, 16 not yet paid up. Dollie is following up. Annual meeting will be the cut off for unpaid members.

d. NREC Update – Kim Hughes

There was no August meeting.

Congratulations on water reduction, the City has done well.

They are still encouraging lawn replacement.

Rain barrel rebates are still available.

e. City Council Liaison Report – Nancy Wilms

August 19th meeting – There was a presentation by Art on the Convalescent Hospital. The Council approved an expedited permitting system for rooftop solar. The big issue at the meeting was whether South Pasadena wants to remain a member of the San Gabriel Valley COG (Council of Governments). The issue is the 710 freeway. The Council was upset when the SGVCOG refused to remain neutral and endorsed the 710 tunnel by a vote of 16 to 7. There is an issue of whether South Pasadena and the like minded communities of Burbank, Pasadena, Glendale, La Canada should move out of the SGVCOG and start a new Arroyo Verdugo COG. But this process is going to take time and a joint agreement needs to be made. Ultimately the Council voted 3 to 1 with 1 abstention to remain in the SGVCOG for the next year but express their displeasure with the 710 stand. The Council voted 5 to 0 on exploring the Arroyo Verdugo COG and expressed support to move the R-2 money into the new COG.

September meeting attended by Judy – not much to report. The Council Members met with the School Board and Superintendent to discuss their concerns about the building project. School Board members report that the environmental, safety and traffic issues are still being studied. A request for an Edison representative to attend a council meeting to discuss the recent black outs was made. There were 3 black outs of multiple hours in two weeks.

f. Legislative Affairs Committee – Betty

Attended meeting last Wednesday, a lot of what was discussed has already been reported. There is going to be an Amgen bike tour next May. City Hall is going to be closed the day before Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving weekend for IT system update.

SB 87 re fuel efficient trucks is in suspense in the assembly and not going anywhere for the moment.

Ribbon cuttings will be posted on website

g. Development Committee - Becky

This committee started a few months ago in concern for the Rialto. They felt maybe somebody from WISPPA should be thinking about how this is going to be handled, citizens need to be aware of the design proposals. The group decided that the Rialto issue is problematic for the owner because there is so much red tape, also problematic for us as citizens because we don't know what's going on so maybe its development in general to the Development Committee. Members of the committee are Becky, Gail, Gretchen, Janet, Ellen Daigle, Clarice Knapp, Dana and Judy Harris. Becky stated in her view that development is really important, people get upset about density but development will keep the city vital and mentioned the Chamber's Red Carpet not Red Tape Committee has a website for people trying to start a business on how to cut through the red tape. Maybe developers need to feel welcome. [Judith Harris commented that the committee agreed that its purpose is to be informative and educational, not to present their own individual views] added by BE.

Member comments:

Gary Pia announced that there will be a report at the next City Council meeting on the City's investment portfolio.

Meeting Adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Ellen Wood 9/17/2015

Minutes revised by Betty Emirhanian 9/26/2015