

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Carolyn Jordan called the meeting to order at about 5:30 p.m.

Council members present:

REPRESENTATIVES

Alkov, Georgia
Aronson, Michelle
Binder, John
Brown, Pamela
Howard, Thomas
Hulett, Judie
Jordan, Carolyn
Klein, Raymond
Krell, Marylin
Lador, Orit

Shaloo, Andrea
Simmons, Sheila
Watts, Larry

ALTERNATES

Adomian, Jerry
Arbour, Elyse
Davis, Jane
Freedman, Nancy
Lo Buglio, Carolyn
Rosen, Jaqui

*Note: Only those Representatives and Alternates who are present at the meeting will be listed; late arrivals are asked to announce themselves so the Board can recognize them and list them as present.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded the draft August 10, 2022 Minutes as corrected were approved.

Guest Speaker

The Chair recognized Pineniece form the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Services who gave an extensive review and explanation of how the new National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline operates. She explained that although the 988 number itself is new, suicide and mental crisis help has been available for many years on the national 999 emergency line. However, reaching via 999 was often difficult for people in a mental health crisis. A major difference between 999 and 988 is that the former is serves as a way to dispatch EMS, fire department and police emergency services to the location of the emergency, 988 relies upon the telephonic delivery of emergency mental health services. The system is programmed to connect persons in distress with a mental trained person near them based upon the telephone area code of the person in crisis.

Guest Speaker- Tess Banko, Community Collective Director at GLA VA

The Chair next recognized Tess Banko, Community Collective Director at GLA VA. Ms Banko is herself a disabled veteran and recipient of VA services. She provided a broad overview and status report concerning the rehabilitation of existing buildings on the WLA campus through an adaptive reuse process, as well as planned new construction. She explained that work must be consistent with historical preservation laws, which at time may cause delays. The VA's goal is to transform the campus into a true community of approximately 1700 individual housing units, not simply a collection of buildings. The existing Building 207 will house 60 senior (62+) veterans, The existing Building 300 is being transformed into a Wellness Center. During Phase two, a new mixed Town Center will be created with 470 housing units and stores providing goods and services to veterans. During the Q & A following her presentation there were a number public comments directed more generally to the operation of the VA, rather than questions concerning the planned veterans community of which she is the director and which she had described.

Government Representatives

Janet Turner, Area Representative, Congressman Ted Lieu gave a brief report that his office has called on the FBI to launch a formal investigation into the anti-Semitic flyers that were recently distributed to homes in Brentwood and Pacific Palisades and wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray, urging the FBI to do more to address the recurrent acts of antisemitism committed in and around Los Angeles County. She also reminded the community that those interested in appointments to a service academy should write to Member Lieu's office.

LAPD Crime Report.

The Chair recognized Senior Lead Officer Matthew Kirk. SLO Kirk reported an overall modest increase in 2022 year to date crime in Brentwood over 2021. However there were larger increases in certain categories of theft.

BCC Committee Updates and Announcements

The Chair next presented a recommendation from the BCC LUC concerning submission of a community impact statement concerning a digital billboard motion currently pending before the LA City Council. Thereafter, upon a motion duly made and seconded and following discussion the following motion was adopted:

RESOLVED, BCC should submit a Community Impact Statement opposing the Council vote (Council File 22-0392 -digital off-site signs) to prepare an ordinance as recommended by PLUM allowing installation of "digital off-site signs" associated with the Transportation Communication Network Program.

BCC has opposed such digital advertising/display in the past. BCC continues to oppose it in view of a number of serious concerns, such as (for example):

- the risk of data collection from passing pedestrians and motorists;
- the effects of light pollution from these installations;
- the danger of driver distraction.

In stating its opposition, BCC second the position of a number of other community organizations (including the Central San Pedro NC, the Sunland-Tujunga NC, the Woodland Hills-Warner Center, the Sherman Oaks NC, and the Westside NC) in finding this proposal dangerous, short-sighted, and ill-conceived. In brief, as one of these statements put it, there are simply too many unanswered questions associated with this proposal.

There were no other committee updates or announcements.

Board Member and Public Comments

The Chair noted that the BCC was advised after the fact that a permit for the operation of a cannabis dispensary in the 13000 block of San Vicente Blvd. had been issued and will open under the name Cookies. This resulted from the fact that the applicant was entitled to a permit as a matter of right and did not require discretionary action by the City. She noted that while the operator of Cookies has indicated an interest in cooperating with the BCC, to date this hasn't occurred. Although it doesn't appear that BCC can prevent Cookies from opening, BCC intends to closely monitor the situation once the store opens. She also indicated that the opening has been delayed following a recent break-in and recognized SLO Kirk to explain what happened.

SLO Kirk first noted that extensive misinformation has circulated concerning the incident on social media. He renewed his recommendation that residents should be cautious when reading descriptions of incidents on social media because there is a tendency for these reports to greatly exaggerate what occurred. For example, some descriptions of the Cookies break-in described it as armed robbery involving a shootout that resulted in the theft of the store's inventory of cannabis. In fact, no weapons were involved and the only items stolen were some Cookies T-shirts. He said the operator is not related to a cannabis dispensary operating on Melrose Blvd. and will have an unarmed security guard present at all times. He assured the community that the LAPD intends to carefully monitor the location for any indications of criminal activity and in particular, to avoid any spillover activities from the Cookie's operation upon the neighboring residential street of Avondale.

There followed a lengthy discussion of this topic among the board and including numerous public comments. Among the points noted were: the landlord has been insensitive to community complaints, perhaps due to community opposition several years ago to his application to construct a 3-story building on his property; the store is adjacent to locations where private and public busses load and discharge many dozens of school students; it is also located near the Country Mart where children visit daily for meals and snacks; questions why more dispensary locations were allocated for Brentwood than the Pacific Palisades; and a fear that the store will attract criminal activity.

The Chair next recognized James White who represents Friends of Kenter who are opposed to a proposed 4 story, 28,000 sq. ft. mega-mansion above Kenter Canyon consisting of 14 bedrooms, 26 bathrooms, bars, nightclub, 80' infinity pool, etc. He urges residents to write to Councilman Bonin requesting he introduce a 425 Motion to assume jurisdiction over the WLA Planning Commission and veto the denial of the Friends of Kenter appeal of Building and Safety's issuance of permits for this project.

Adjourn.

Following a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at about 8:20 p.m.

Next meeting: October 12, 2022, time and location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Watts,
Secretary