

WEST LOS ANGELES SAWTELLE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING AGENDA MINUTES
Wednesday, March 7, 2018, 8:00 PM
Felicia Mahood Multipurpose Senior Center
11338 Santa Monica Boulevard – Community Room – Los Angeles, CA 90025

Attending: Jamie Keeton (Chair), Eric Nakamura (Vice Chair), Jay Handal (Treasurer), Desa Philadelphia, Danilo Torro, Ron Migdal, Jay Ross, Jennifer Gavina, Rosie Kato, Jean Shigematsu, Arman Ghorbani, Jian Kerendian, Partho Kalyani, Zana Glisovic

Absent: Naomi Kageyama

TIME BEGINS: 8:07 pm TIME ENDS: 9:59 pm
Community and stakeholder members present: count not taken

I. Call to Order

Keeton introduced Hannah Levien, the new field deputy for CD11. She started about a month ago, so if you have concerns, let her know who you are, if you want to chat, and she is looking forward to working with the West LA Sawtelle Neighborhood Council. Keeton began by saying that since she has become chair, and she hasn't been chair very long, there have been some interpersonal difficulties with board members. She has tried to mediate as best she can and received multiple requests for something to be done, and so this meeting is what can be done, and now they can discuss interpersonal issues in public. She has also received 3 emails regarding agenda item IV that she has been asked to read into the record, which she will do at the end of General Public Comment. Kato asked if she would get to see who she's being accused by and what of, and asked if there was no due process. The chair Keeton responded that the sections that are alleged to be in violation are on the agenda, and she assumes people who wish to bring forward the motion will lay out their reasons and grievances at that point in the agenda. It is not the chair's function to stomp for or against the motion. Kato again asked whether she doesn't have a right to know who her accusers are. The chair pointed out that they are not at that point in the agenda, and can discuss it when they are. She stressed that this meeting was not a court of law, but that she is sure the people who want Kato removed will comment on that agenda item.

II. General Public Comment

Michael Millman – Millman requested to reserve his time until he hears the charges and evidence. He did thank the chair for reminding those assembled that the meeting was not a court of law, but it is West LA that has a long tradition of fairness, justice, and due process. This is not a star chamber. He will listen to the accusers, listen to the evidence, then comment as stakeholder.

Carol – Carol requested to reserve her time until after the charges and evidence are heard.

Morris – Having worked with Rosie for a while, Morris felt confident in her abilities and her standing for democracy, and against any removal or censure of her, and he support Jay Ross in the same way. He would not like to be heard after the charges and evidence are presented.

Carrie – Carrie requested to reserve her time until after the charges and evidence are heard.

Greg Erickson – Erickson introduced himself as a resident for 10 years, a board member for 3 years. He explained that he resigned from the board because of Kato, and believes she has misused and abused her role as a board member to intimidate, harass and berate others to get her way. He alleges that she undermined the Council Board by sending thousands of frivolous emails that wasted the board's time and the city's time having to go through all of them. Finally, he alleged that Kato has alienated numerous stakeholders from this community because of her actions: church leaders, business leaders, residents, and volunteers because of her vindictiveness. He supports the board removing Kato.

Sam – Sam requested to reserve his time until after the charges and evidence are heard.

Brian – Brian said that he would be deferring until after the evidence and charges, but said that here we have two of the hardest working board members in Kato and Ross. People may not like her delivery, but she looks at things and scrutinizes things. And Jay Ross has probably the longest tenure on this board, and his knowledge has only grown. Brian questioned why would they want to throw that out.

Galen – Galen requested to reserve his time until after the charges and evidence are heard.

Sylvie – Sylvie requested to defer a comment or two, but said that she has been involved with the community and that Kato and Ross have been active in the community where other members of the Neighborhood Council haven't. They have done specific things for community, and maybe Kato's delivery as Brian said isn't the best, but she gets things done. She would be very worried if Ross wasn't on the board.

Alexa – Alexa requested to reserve her time until after the charges and evidence are heard.

John – John requested to reserve his time until after the charges and evidence are heard.

The chair, Keeton, said she would now read emails onto the record that had been emailed to her and asked to be read, in order of receiving them.

First email, from Galen:

Galen was hoping to attend meeting tonight, but wanted to email the chair in support of Jay Ross. He sees how dedicated Jay is to the neighborhood. Jay is extremely knowledgeable about land use and development, works hard at developer outreach and guides meetings for productive discussion. Galen feels that without Jay, the PLUM committee would not be productive.

Second email, from Gloria Campbell:

Addressing members of the West LA Sawtelle Neighborhood Council, Campbell saw the agenda item to remove Jay Ross from the PLUM committee chairmanship position. She does not know what the grounds are, but is in complete disagreement. His strengths are that his willingness to listen and his knowledge of city works especially zoning, planning, and building. He can evaluate with a great deal of knowledge and perspective, and always backs up statements with facts and quotes. With all the development scheduled for neighborhood, they need more people like Jay. Finally, she is always amazed by how hard he works and how much time he must be committing to this volunteer organization.

Third email, from Nancy Vescobo

Vescobo is writing in strong support of the removal of Rose Kato. She brings negativity and an insulting attitude, and has turned away stakeholders with her attitude. To have her waste their time with disrespectful and rude comments, Vescobo was embarrassed as a community member. Kato insulted the people from Our House grief counseling and turned the meeting into a dog and pony show, and at the same meeting insulted Eric for not photographing local events. She always asks developers stupid questions to waste time. Vescobo is tired of Rosie's display of "authority", and when Vescobo recently joined the outreach committee Kato tried to force them to commit to her own project that didn't have the support of the community. She also tried to lock them out once from a meeting.

III. Approvals (5 minutes)

- a. Outstanding draft meeting minutes (*Secretary Naomi Kageyama was absent but had submitted minutes*)

Moved by Migdal to approve, seconded by Kerendian.

Kato said that these minutes don't cover everything that happened on the agenda. Some agenda items are excluded: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Yet this is supposed to be a record of what took place. Jay Handal responded by explaining that all of those items say "not discussed" next to them on the minutes.

Motion to approve outstanding draft meeting minutes. 12 yes (Keeton, Nakamura, Handal, Philadelphia, Torro, Migdal, Ross, Shigematsu, Ghorbani, Kerendian, Khalyani, Glisovic. 1 no (Kato). 1 abstain (Gavina). Minutes APPROVED.

- b. Outstanding MERs reports (*Treasurer Handal*)

Moved by Migdal, seconded by Handal.

Kato pointed out that they were moving to approve \$4,000 for items, but there was no invoice attached to the MERs report and no attachment for the January request too. She's also concerned why they're paying \$500 every month for it instead of paying the whole thing off. Handal said that he thought they covered this last month, and Kato said that they did not, although she does not have last month's agenda so she cannot contest it. It merely says "outstanding expenses, general operations expenditure, outreach". But there is no invoice. She requested tabling this item until next meeting and that they have the invoices in front of them. Handal agreed, and Keeton thought it was appropriate.

Motion was TABLED.

IV. Discussion and possible Motion for Censure and Removal from the Board of Rose Kato pursuant to WLASNC Bylaws Sections 508 and 509

Moved by Handal, Migdal seconded.

Handal began by explaining that the reason for this motion is the board has ceased to be able to function with Rose Kato on it. They were forced to shut down two meetings last month early because of her disruptions. Last meeting, Kato was warned three times that she was violating rules of conduct, and warned that she was violating California criminal code for disturbing a public meeting. He explained that Kato is rude to people, to the board, and sends so many emails out to the point where he had to hire an attorney to send her a cease and desist letter for slander and intimidation. She cyberbullies board members, and talks smack about past board members and people in the community.

They do not come here as a board to get into fights, they come to do business of the community. And they do not get to do that, because when a meeting has to be stopped and seven agenda items have to be dropped because a board member is out of line and does not respect any of the rules they go by, including the last two weeks putting out a sponsorship of the Sawtelle Japan festival that this board never voted for, these are egregious offenses against the board and it has to stop.

Kato asked whether she would be given the opportunity to defend herself, and the chair Keeton said she would grant her six minutes, to which Kato responded that she would need at least an hour, and probably an entirely separate meeting after the current one.

Migdal then spoke, finding the entire situation terribly sad since Kato was the person who originally encouraged him to become a board member. He acknowledged that she has done a lot of good for the community, and spearheaded a lot of projects, which he respects and appreciates. His honest hope is that should she be removed from the board, she would continue in her good works for the community. However, he has had some of the nastiest, most acrid encounters with Rosie. For example, in a meeting in the other room, she was speaking and in a low voice he had a sidebar conversation with Jay and she attacked him with such acrimony for it. And that is not the only encounter of that type he has had with her. He thinks Kato lacks interpersonal skills pretty badly, and he thinks the way she interacts with people very often is totally inappropriate.

Vice Chair Nakamura began by apologizing that the everyone present had to come to this meeting AND that the situation has come to this. He had really hoped for the best when he was voted in, but after a year and a half, they have not been able to get anything done because the level of fighting is so high. He had wanted to resign in December 2016, but got told by people to stick it out, and it has been awful. For him, Kato has created a hostile environment, violated the code of conduct repeatedly with no learning or understanding. She has also been warned by DONE, been warned by the board and has not improved. And he has multiple examples of warnings that were not heeded. And it just happens over and over again, that there is no learning and no improvement. He has observed so many incidents of her basically cyberbullying him by ordering him to do things in emails while CCing public officials, and if he does not obey her and do it, it is like she is smearing my name in front of the public officials, who have no context for the emails.

Torro began by saying he has not been on the board that long, probably a year. He has not had any interactions with Kato, but has been observant of her behavior. She does bring a toxic environment to the board, and he has read emails sent out which are accusatory all the time. Sometimes she questions expenditures from Jay Handal, sometimes he thinks she insinuates that Handal is not being correct with laying out expenditures. Torro would hope Rosie would have some more manners in addressing the people on the board, and to have better bedside manners. He thinks that is a tall order for Kato, who acts like a Lone Ranger. She does a lot for the community, but gets upset when people and board members do not show up. There's nothing wrong with getting upset about turnout, but her attitude and actions become very punitive as a result.

Glisovic began by saying that she was more active before on the board, and was Treasurer, before being on the receiving end of Kato's accusations. At a certain point, she requested records of Kato's communications with the city attorney's office and councilman's office, and found something like 800 emails accusing her and other board members of saying things that she was never aware of. Kato accused her of misusing money, and started destroying her reputation and ability to perform as the Treasurer. Glisovic is a professional accountant, and she questioned every single thing in a way she wasn't able to answer. She was not aware of what was said about her and other board members, and Glisovic resigned after that and stopped being involved in many actions on this board to protect her reputation. So she supports this motion.

Ross began by describing Kato as the best board member they have, and said that people need to look at what she does. She holds him accountable, and he has the maturity to look at the big picture, and she does probably more than anybody on this board. She got their office secured after ten years of not being secured. She got their inventory straightened out after ten years of open inventory. None of the board helped. Who showed up to the Clean Streets event and the Sawtelle Flash Flood cleanups? Not many of the board. People need to suck it up and admit when they're wrong to work with her for the good of this community. He further asserted that the threat to remove her at the last meeting at January was for asking questions, and he was also threatened to be thrown out for asking questions.

Kerendian said that he befriended Kato since he got elected, and believed that some of us on the board tag along on her reputation in the community. If she is sometimes rude, it's not like she's a rude person, it's because she's emotional. If you care, you get emotional and start yelling, it does not mean she is a bad person or good person. She is a good asset for the community and the board.

Ghorbani said that when he first joined the board, he felt that he had a good relationship generally with Kato, and all their interactions have been positive. But what he has seen through the emails is negativity and accusations and paranoid tendencies. And it is difficult, he is on the fence: Kato is an asset. But he joined this board to bring a useful perspective, and he wants to see growth and change. They talked about a lot of issues in the last meeting, and then Kato sent that sick joke email because Eric set the wrong date. Proper channels are to go through the board with grievances about that instead of going straight to D.O.N.E. That email and kind of communication is not healthy or productive, and she cannot jump to these accusations. People are volunteers, it is a mistake, they are not trying to attack her or manipulate her. He knows Kato can add a lot if she reels it in and goes through proper channels. Philadelphia explained that though she's only been on the board since last summer, when she came on she noticed right away how well-known Kato was in community. She showed up at one of the clean-ups, and was kind of surprised that she did not see more board members there. She thought Kato did a remarkable job. But then she and Kato would talk about things, and she is speaking basically to testify about her observations. And Kato has tried repeatedly to draw her into conversations about conflicts with people, and she has always said, "I'm not interested. I just need to know about what actions I can take." But, on the outreach committee with Eric, she has been witness to bullying recently, and has had trouble reconciling the behavior with the Rosie she knew. She showed up to the first outreach meeting demanding some things which they could not get onto agenda because it was too late. Then Kato sent out these emails accusing Eric of things that to her observation just were not true. And she even said to her there just is not time for last-minute agenda items. Philadelphia does not know how she will vote on this issue, but as someone observing, it is disturbing to see the breakdowns.

Kalyani said that there is no doubt that Kato does a lot for the community, and she has her people, her friends that support her in community, she did a great job on Clean Streets project, and that is something they can all appreciate. But what all of the stakeholders may not appreciate is what she does to the people on this board, treating them with a demeaning attitude through emails and meetings. This is the only action they have; she sucks up all the air in the room, they spend all meeting answering her questions, and have to move on without getting their own questions answered. And it has been like this for the past year that he has been on the board.

Gavina explained that she was very new to the board. But when she thinks about the neighborhood council, it is not a welcoming environment when you come to these meetings. She is afraid to speak up because she is worried about being the next one to be

bullied or torn down. She does see the work that Kato does, but she is afraid to get highly involved because if she does something wrong, there is the fear that she will be bullied for it.

Chair Keeton said that like many of the stakeholders she agrees that Kato does a lot about the community. She has been the first person to say, "Rosie did this," and agreed that the Sawtelle Japantown Festival and the Clean Streets program were great. Kato clearly does care about the community, and no one is questioning that. But they need to have a way to work for the community. Keeton explained that there are reasons that people don't go and do things or show up at Kato's events, there are reasons she shows up alone. Whether the motion passes or does not, the board has to move on, and they needed to air their grievances at a public place where people can speak. She doesn't think anyone is interested in shutting down community involvement. And this agenda was not something that came lightly; Keeton received hundreds of emails from people on both sides of this personality issue, and it has finally come to a head. Keeton explained that she was trying to facilitate a community discussion so they can fix a problem. Brian, stakeholder, asked if Keeton could pull the bylaws up for the benefit of the stakeholders. Keeton said she would get a copy and read out those sections and asked Kato how much time she would like to respond.

Kato said that she would need at least an hour, possibly another meeting, and that she was still sick from last weekend, so it would be hard on her voice to spend all night responding.

After a pause to look up the bylaws, Keeton read from section 508, whereby Westlake LA can censure a board member at a board meeting by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the board.

Keeton then read from section 509, which provides for the removal of a board member for numerous reasons, for example, if they are no longer qualified as a stakeholder, unable to carry out their duties and responsibilities, there is sufficient cause due to ethics violations, they miss 3 meetings in a row without justification, they have obstructed the business of the board, or that they have committed unethical abuse of power (misuse of funds, failure to recuse from votes or discussion where there is a conflict of interest, etc.). Removal requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of the board, and Keeton explained that it required two-thirds of the entire board, not just those present, meaning it will require ten of fifteen votes to pass.

Keeton then read from section 701, for agenda item V: The board may remove a committee chair if he or she cannot perform their duties. That requires a simple majority of board members currently present to vote yes.

Keeton asked if Kato would like to be heard now, and Kato said she would like to hear public comments. Keeton then asked those who reserved their speaking time prior to the evidence and charges being read to speak.

Michael - She is not guilty of traversing over any ethics violation, she is guilty of being passionate, being effective, being rude, being controversial, and being polarized. But West LA doesn't have homeless incampments, they don't have illegally parked RV's, lanes taken away without legality, they have development, they have community, and she brought it. Michael suggested putting together a wellness group with Jay Handal to meet with her and get her up to speed. They need to commit to their sister to help her and not put her out.

Carol - Carol said that perhaps the board need to be reminded who all voted them to represent them. It is the stakeholders. They voted for the board's accountability, and that is what Kato is trying to do. She is trying to make you accountable for representing the stakeholders. Accountable like when Zana said a couple years ago, this is their money, they need to spend it as their own. So in that sense, hurrah to Kato for bringing that to the board. Also, they may not like her delivery. They're adults. Tell her.. Tell her to get them off her email lists.

Carrie - She just wanted to say that she has been in communication with Kato since before she has been on board. Carol hears from maybe one other board member, but does not really hear what the board is doing in general, so she appreciates Kato's efforts. There needs to be communication, and to have a motion to censure and remove without even a conversation is inappropriate.

Chair Keeton said that she would agree with Carrie, if that were true. They have had multiple board meetings about communication, and about guidelines. People know how to speak to people, it's been requested multiple times. If they start off more professionally and do not write emails accusing people in the middle of the night, things will be better. But she assured the stakeholders, those steps have been done.

Sam - He just came here to listen, but he has not heard anything other than comments of other people than Kato, and there are some emails obviously that the stakeholders do not have access to.

Galen - His comment was really more for the next item agenda, but he agrees with everyone that Kato is the most visible and vocal member of the board, and he hopes that Rosie is listening to co-board members that it is clogging up the works because she feels the need to be heard at length on everything, and as someone who serves on PLUM, he feels it makes them less able to get things do because of how she conducts herself.

Sylvie - She wants to say that she had her moment with Kato: she bullied Sylvie as well and she got over it. She sees what Kato gets done, and she supports her. They're adults here, and she is positive for community.

Alexa - Alexa introduced herself, and explained that she just joined the Outreach committee, they had their first meeting back in January and was hoping they would be a little bit further by now. And like a lot of people, she has had issues with Rosie, had to deal with her because she is her neighbor. Alexa has had to tell her, "Stop what you're doing." It took a couple times, but she did it. Now they have an amicable relationship. Her main thing is, number one, Kato does a lot of things, she keeps talking about being here for community, but where is the board going? Alexa wants to know, number one, what is their plan to move forward and get themselves out there? There are a lot of neighbors who know nothing about the board.

Keeton then read from a card from Joy who was present but had to leave: Joy wants to say she is against items IV and V.

Sarah - Sarah introduced herself as a member of community for about 7 years. She manages the farmer's market, and her relationship with Kato started out really well. But her mind was changed when Kato became very close with Sarah and her

coworkers at the market, then realized that she didn't want to work with them. She knew they were using storage in the Neighborhood Council office for years, then moved forward with changing the locks and never notified the farmer's market, and that was their main storage. She knew about it, when Sarah asked about it, Kato said to refer questions to Jamie. Sarah thought they could do more as a community if they had less hostility.

Brian – Brian said that he had listened to what they said about section 509, and thought that nobody really spoke to the bar set by the bylaw, they only talked about nastiness and being rude, and he thought it difficult to vote on 509 without stating specific incidents that violated 509. Generalizations are great, but it behooves the board to be specific. If it comes back on them, they have to defend their position. That is his issue with the discussion of 509, and he hopes this helps Kato to improve her delivery.

Keeton asked if Rosie would like to be heard. Ross asked Kato how much time she would like, and Keeton asserted that she had been given six minutes.

Kato began by saying that she was getting accused from so many directions, and would start with the accusations from Greg. On his assertion that he resigned from the board because of her, she heard he had a different reason for that. She addressed that the board said she sent thousands of emails. She said at the time, they were in the middle of exhaustive efforts because one of their buildings was found to be non-ADA-compliant in August of 2014. The City Attorney's office was directed to send a directive in May of 2016 to hold all meetings in the second floor of the building. There should have been more direction from EmpowerLA and D.O.N.E. to provide board training, workshops, so the board could also work together. This board and this community is very political, in case the stakeholders didn't know by now. So what happened is that the board members were fighting this directive, didn't understand why they were required under title 2 to comply with the accommodation request, and it was not explained by Department of Disability or D.O.N.E. or EmpowerLA.

Kato then addressed the stakeholder named Nancy who wrote the email, and said that it was not a dog and pony show, there were serious concerns from the neighborhood on how the Our House run was conducted. The neighborhood wasn't warned ahead of time that the run was taking place. She addressed some concerns to them because there was possible payroll fraud regarding sign postings about the time of the event. There were also public sidewalk access issues that were violated. People's driveways were blocked by tape, and there were other issues with people getting towed who are still trying to work out issues with parking enforcement. It is not a stupid question to ask about ADA disabled grants. This had to do with the Lumen project over at the Manatt; Kato thought it wasn't appropriate to force a disabled person to get off bus at Purdue and olympic and have them walk halfway down block to North and Purdue then all the way here to access the building. Her recommendation was that they should have a ramp along Olympic to make it more accessible to anyone on sidewalk and anyone on bus stop. And she has physical disabilities that prevent her from walking long distances, so she is sympathetic when a developer wants to address those issues.

Kato said that as far as the anecdote of closing the door on the outreach committee, she was attending a PLUM committee meeting, and didn't know the outreach committee was outside. She thought they had had their meeting, and didn't know that the members didn't have key access, because Eric was supposed to pick up a key to the building, but never did.

Last meeting, Kato said that she was asking questions, not being disruptive. She was asking questions of the MERS and an issue regarding her agenda item: the allocation of \$200 from Clean Sweeps award in Oct-Nov of 2017. She attended a reception in City Hall where the board was presented with a placard, the Overachiever's Award, and also also received a certificate for participation in Clean Streets challenge from the Department of Public Works DPW. In 2016 the board had four committee cleanups and received an award of \$2,500 for the program last year. She was going to present it here because it was a way to show that she didn't abscond with the money. Some of the stakeholders are aware of how contentious the election was in 2016, she was running for reelection with a slate of five others, called the Sawtelle six, and recruited Eric, Jian, Ron, and there was a hispanic-speaking member of the community that she wanted to include but was unable to. Kato then held out a sign that read, "Rose Kato has failed this community", and alleged that 50 signs like it were set up within a three-block radius of a polling station so that she wouldn't be voted in. She then began to address the Sawtelle Japantown festival.

Chair Keeton cut her off, explaining that she had given her six minutes to respond, and that Kato had taken ten, and wasted the first five minutes talking about things that happened before half of the current board was even elected.

Ghorbani expressed that he couldn't tell Kato how frustrated he was. She has board members telling her that they are on the fence, and she goes back five or three years to dredge up the past. He wanted her to take the time to quell his worries, but she keeps making the same mistakes. In her ten minutes not once did she acknowledge that she will do something to improve. But at this point, she is still talking about things that are not on the agenda and wasting time. And if he does not hear some acknowledgement, he will have to vote her out.

Migdal said that it was a heartbreaker for him, because he was on her slate on the Sawtelle Six. But Kato's response today, she was given six minutes, she took ten, which is kind of customary for her. She says that she was only asking questions, but he countered that there is an order to a meeting and a time for asking questions, and when it is done it is done. He did not hear anything acknowledging how nasty she is with everyone on the board, because he feels that she still does not get it.

Philadelphia just wanted to address some of the comments about the board not presenting salient examples of Kato's conduct. She would say the one thing she's heard from everyone on the committee is that they are not able to function, as Kato has just demonstrated. She showed up at their outreach meeting and presented something that they thought was a great idea, but the deadline for submitting had passed. That meeting had to be stalled because Kato took up all the time complaining why her items were not discussed. There are people on this board, and Alexa acknowledged this too, who would like to do more, but they can't.

Kerendian defended Kato, saying that she is not political, and that she answered their questions, but has her own way of speaking to people. If it were him, he would send people emails and negotiate, but that is not how she works. And that is why the board should keep her in: don't see the way she speaks, see the way she works.

Ross said that at their last meeting they said they should listen to their constituents when they approved that big bonds project; now, their constituents are saying that they like her. Maybe there's one or two that don't, but they elected the board. Ross said he has worked with her at the PLUM committee and the Bylaws committee, and if the rest of the board cannot work with her, that is as much their fault. Alexa learned to work with her, he learned to work with her, and Sylvia learned to work with her.

Torro said that they need all members to work within the scope of the rules of the committee and the board, not to be working as the Lone Ranger.

Gavina said she would like to start by saying that they are listening to the stakeholders. In the meeting, stakeholders have said that the board needs to be adults. Kato has acted consistently childish. It is really disrespectful how the board is being spoken to. Gavina explained that she deals regularly with middle school-age children as a teacher, and has come to expect that if people it past the age of 16 they should be talking with some kind of professionalism and courtesy towards their peers.

Handal agreed with Mr. Millman that there is no ethics violation with Kato, but disagree with Brian. The bar that they have met regarding 509 is disrupting the business of the neighborhood council. When they have to shut down meetings with 6 items undiscussed, that's the bar. The time has come to change this council to be functional. Kato talked about how they were out of compliance with ADA, and he has three letters from officials saying they were compliant. Kato called the fire department three times to get them out of that room. He said that this is the game she has played with the board for over a year and a half.

Vice Chair Eric pointed out that the West LA Sawtelle neighborhood council ~~logo~~ [note: the word 'logo' was removed per motion by board on 3/28/18] was on the flyer for the Sawtelle Japantown Festival when it wasn't voted on by the board, and that is an ethics violation. He explained that he thinks she picks targets, this time it was him, and that before him there were others. He believes she expects him to resign, but he is not going to resign. He tried to work with her on Clean Streets, and it has devolved since then. He warned new board members to be careful, it is going to happen to them too if she stays, just be ready for it.

Ghorbani said he would like to hear from Kato about her strategies for what she will do moving forward to make things better.

Kato began to say that Eric said he was going to resign in 2016 and 2017, and there is a reason for the breakdown in communication with Eric. She began to explain that the Outreach Committee had the information about the Clean Streets initiative on January 22nd, but it was not posted on the website until the Thursday before that weekend.

At this point, she began to be shouted down by stakeholders and board members telling her to explain how she would change her behavior, and finally Chair Keeton called for the vote by roll call.

Motion for Censure and Removal from the Board of Rose Kato pursuant to WLASNC Bylaws Sections 508 and 509. 11 Yes (Philadelphia, Handal, Keeton, Nakamura, Kalyani, Glisovic, Gavina, Ghorbani, Shigematsu, Torro, Migdal). 3 No (Kato, Kerendian, Ross). Motion PASSES, and Rose Kato is hereby removed from the West LA Sawtelle Neighborhood Council Board.

Handal moved to have the action happen forthwith. Migdal seconded. Ross asked if it isn't on the agenda, can Handal's movement pass?

Chair Keeton said that it would be improper for her to speak on the next agenda item. She can remain sitting up with the board, but cannot vote.

V. Discussion and possible Motion for Censure and Removal as PLUM Chair of Jay Ross pursuant to WLASNC Bylaws Section 508 and 701 (45 minutes)

Moved by Handal, seconded by Torro.

Handle explained that he was asked by the chair to investigate two claims that were formed against Mr. Ross and in the investigation, what has come up is the following. Ross has in some cases in sending his emails to his PLUM committee either omitted certain people who he was not happy with or in fact was scaring people on agenda items. At the same time he had meetings with no quorum, then had minutes for meetings that didn't have quorum, which is a Brown Act violation. One of the committee members filed a complaint about bullying regarding Ross, the PLUM committee chair, who allegedly demanded people to certain things certain ways under color of authority. So Handal's recommendation is that they do not remove him from committee, because he is a valuable asset who is knowledgable. But in interviewing PLUM committee members, they do not want to come any more because they do not want to be bullied and harassed to do things the way that Ross wants to do. Developers have also communicated to Handal that Ross yells at them, lies about them, and that they do not want to "be a pinata" for Ross.

Kalyani began by saying that they all appreciate Ross's work, that he does a great job on PLUM, and they are not trying to remove him from PLUM or the board, because he is a valuable asset. The main mission of board is to inform the public, and they need to stay with the facts. They need to make sure everyone who comes to the meetings are free of bias and they can be treated fairly when they show up. They all need to be open-minded. Kalyani said that board members cannot spread disinformation and stoke fear amongst the public, including by public social media messages on NextDoor or Facebook. These things need to be factual, and they cannot just scare people into swinging public opinion their way. Even if they're not putting messages out as a member of the committee. Six or seven messages Ross put out a couple months ago showed his true bias towards projects coming to the board, and who is going to come to them if they feel their project is pre-judged?

Nakamura moved to amend the motion into two parts, one dealing with section 508, one dealing with section 701. Handal seconded.

Motion to amend agenda item V into two parts: a motion to censure Jay Ross under bylaws, section 508, and a motion to remove him as chairperson of the Planning and Land Use Management committee under bylaws, section 701. 9 Yes (Philadelphia, Handal, Keeton, Nakamura, Kalyani, Glisovic, Gavina, Ghorbani, Shigematsu). 4 Abstain (Migdal, Torro, Ross, Kerendian).
Motion PASSES.

Chair Keeton said that they would be taking the PLUM chair removal discussion first. Handal said that they could take testimony on both, then vote separately.

Torro thanked Ross for taking up the position of Chair of the PLUM committee, which is a difficult job. But said that they have been questioning PLUM's leadership based on the information they have not been getting from the PLUM committee and the amount of paperwork they have been getting. The board cannot even get to all the paperwork they receive, which is the fault of the chair for not filtering that. Also, when some of the developers come to the board with projects, he feels embarrassed, because the building has been redesigned by the PLUM committee, which is not really their job. The PLUM committee needs to be evaluated to restate the mission and to have a chair that can filter and make information palatable for people who are not as well-informed. Philadelphia said that when she first started on the committee it was very apparent that Ross is passionate about development projects, so she was really happy when he took on the chairmanship. And she thought the community members on the committee were equally focused and passionate. However, as Torro said, they get so much paper from the PLUM committee, and frankly a lot of it is about redesigning projects. And the city has rules about projects, the developers have hired architects to study those rules, and so a lot of recommendations the board gets have nothing to do with whether the development is right for the community. What she is saying is she would like to be getting objective information about how these projects either benefit the community or do not, and that is not what they are getting. So she does feel like there is some misinformation; she feels like when she reads something the PLUM committee sends, she has to do her own research.

Ghorbani said that Ross was very knowledgeable, and he would hate to see someone be removed from the chair with Ross' experience. The information he submits is really dense, though, and the board are not all in the same field. A couple times they have asked for one or two key points about their presentations, and Ross has not been able to. If they narrow the focus they can get things done, but if they are drowning in suggestions, they cannot filter out what they really need.

Kerendian explained that he presents plans for a living as well as an architect, and has been to a bunch of different committees, and this is exactly what PLUM committees do. He said that if you don't have anybody on top of the developers, then it becomes easy for them to get paid and put things over the committees. On this board, there are members who are laughing at the PLUM chair because he is explaining what is going on and exactly what the developer has asked. There is nobody on the PLUM board but Jay Ross qualified to become a PLUM chair. He added that if they become nicer and easier and softer on developers, that is going to become the end.

Glisovic said that she happened to read the agenda for PLUM to help prepare for meetings next time, and had to say, she received a 10-15 page agenda about a project that was approved, and it seemed full of anything that Ross didn't like. They need to focus on the community plan, but Ross goes into this level of detail with everything. And in her opinion, it stops people from showing up. Maybe they should go over community plan again. For her as a board member, she is scared of a 15-page agenda. So they expect Ross to be considerate of that and explain that to them in the best way possible.

Chair Keeton then turned back to the comment cards, inviting those who had reserved their time to speak, as well as new speakers addressing the current motions.

Carol – She is here on behalf of Ross. She thinks they need somebody of his caliber to be the chair and guide the board. Maybe if he needs to cut back on something, she does not know if they have mentioned it to him personally, but he needs to be on PLUM.

Carrie – Carrie felt the same thing as Carol. She has heard from Ross before he was on the current board, and she appreciates his knowledge and his agendas. If it is too much, ask him to clarify, but she works in an industry where more information is needed than not enough.

Sam – Sam said that Ross has been around a long time, and that Sam himself has lived in the neighborhood for 17-18 years. He has seen developers come into meetings with big projects that get scaled down. They have the highest level they want to build, and they expect it to be scaled down. And if somebody has to be able to scrutinize these plans, provide positives and negatives, they need people like Ross. And nobody wants to be the chairperson in a board or committee, but nobody else has the commitment that Ross has.

Galen – Galen said he came to speak for Ross because he believes that Ross is unmatched in his credentials and what he's doing. They know he sends them a ton, but Galen reads as much as he can, and tries to learn. He also hoped that Ross was hearing what the board was saying as well, as the people on PLUM have said that they have wanted to be more streamlined. He also urged him to tell the committee members what he wants out of the committee and make it an official guideline.

Chair Keeton said that the vote would be postponed until the next meeting on March 28th at 7:00 pm because they would have to vacate the room by 10:00, which was in five minutes. She said that she would like to move through the remaining speaker cards as quickly as possible before then.

Sylvia – Sylvia thinks that the board has a big opportunity having a professional as a chair. They can learn from him, she has learned from him, and they need him as a chair.

Alexa – She said she was also here to support Ross because he is a professional, and she is trying to learn for herself and has been asking him a lot of questions to understand the process and become an active citizen. She also asked, if he is voted out, which one of the board will become the chair instead?

John – John introduced himself as an architect, and knows that the board is currently against one of the projects he did, but salute them and believes that Ross is a good chair. He added that knowledgeable pushback leads to better design by forcing developers to be more creative to address concerns. He said that most of the board seemed pretty good at whining and slander, particularly with regard to Kato.

Barbara – Barbara introduced herself as the WRAC chair of Westside Neighborhood Council, so she considers Ross a peer. She said it is a really technical field, and Ross is an exemplar of what he does. He needs to bring considerations to the board, they need him, and the community needs him. She added that committees like theirs do redesign buildings, and over time, they can find that they improve the community around them through it.

Brian – Brian said that Ross is doing what he’s supposed to do. Brian has also developed projects, and said that they come with the biggest fattest thing they can designed with no setbacks, and that developers get knocked down and build something that’s acceptable. He said that the board was failing him, especially since they have people on the board on the payroll of developers.

Chair Keeton motioned to adjourn, Kalyani seconded.

VI. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

None.

VII. Board Comment and Announcements

None.

VIII. Adjournment

Adjourned at 9:59 pm.

Minutes taken by John B. of Apple1, approved LA City vendor. Secretary N. Kageyama struck out the word ‘logo’ on page 6 per motion by the board on 3/28/18.