

Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts Board Meeting Minutes --APPROVED
October 11, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.
2709 Media Center Drive L.A. 900290

BOARD MEMBERS:

Present: Karin Newlin, George Abrams, Michael Bishop, Marta Alcumbrac, Gabrielle Samuels, Marissa Chibas-Preston, Robert Greenberg, Linda Johannesen (via phone)

Absent: Verna Dauterive, Sharon Sutton, Elise Buik

Quorum? Yes.

Also Present: Mary Gallo, Nancy Martorelli, John Vargas, Bruce Newlin, Cyrice Griffith, Susan Lee, Candace Cain, Helene Loremy, Carrie Wagner, Louise Manuel, Wayne Choi

PROCEEDINGS:

- Following the showing of a short DVD about LFCSA, Marta Alcumbrac called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.
- George Abrams moves to approve the minutes from March 26, June 12 & July 17, 2009 Board Meetings. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Alcumbrac, Abrams, Gabrielle Samuels, Marissa Chibas-Preston, Linda Johannesen, Michael Bishop. Motion carries.
- Alcumbrac asks that Karin Newlin speak about the opening of the 09/10 school year.
- Newlin reports that the school opened smoothly & that the team teaching is going very well. She adds that this group of teachers is among the very best. Newlin notes that Vice Principal Nancy Martorelli has taken over much of the day-to-day duties & asks her to speak. Martorelli gives a brief overview of first month of school.
- Newlin points out that they are functioning well enough without an executive director for now but will inform the Board if that needs to be reconsidered.
- Alcumbrac asks about support staff. Newlin says that administrative interns, Audrey Fann and Patricia Galli, are helping to pick up slack.
- Newlin speaks about meetings with leaders in the Glassell Park neighborhood. She believes she is making good connections within the community.
- Alcumbrac asks John Vargas to address the budget issues. Vargas introduces his colleagues from ExED, Carrie Wagner and Louise Manuel.
- Vargas says that we are short by 58 students, which leads to major losses in revenue.
- Alcumbrac adds that it is due largely to LFCSA's having increased spaces available.
- Vargas distributes the budget & adds that the burden of dual rents is also great. He notes that cuts must be made & revenue streams must be found.
- Alcumbrac discusses the status of the CUP and EAF. She also talks about pursuing a "mitigated negative declaration" (MND) which often goes with existing structures rather than an EIR which is more typically for a new build. LFCSA's consultants believe that an MND is appropriate here.
- Alcumbrac adds that the traffic study report suggests minimal impact. She also notes that they are submitting rail-line study, pipeline study, and utility line study with no problems anticipated for any of them.
- Alcumbrac says that the air quality testing revealed that the air near the Media Center site consistently blows away from the site, carrying the pollutants. She adds that the air is typical of Los Angeles air quality.
- Bob Greenberg joined the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

- She says that there will be a meeting before the full planning commission in mid-December and that the CUP will be ready in mid-January.
- Brief discussion of construction leads to Louise Manuel's explanation of ExED's loan. They would be willing to loan up to \$300,000 at 1.5% with no fees if LFCSA can prove that they can come up with the remainder of the money and finish the project.
- Carrie Wagner talks about the cash flow situation. Distributing a document with recommended cuts, she says the first place to make cuts is typically with personnel.
- Various ideas about addressing the enrollment issue & its impact on the budget are discussed. Newlin emphasizes that while she recognizes it is something that sometimes has to be done, she would like to avoid cutting teachers if at all possible.
- In response to a question from Linda Johannesen about potential revenue, Alcumbrac talks about renting out the Media Center site for film shoots and short-term rentals.
- Alcumbrac introduces Wayne Choi who is a banker and a parent at the school.
- Choi asks about LFCSA's operating income. Michael Bishop says it is the 18% state budget cuts plus the enrollment shortfall that has led to current financial situation.
- There is a general discussion about finding alternatives to releasing teachers.
- Vargas sets a deadline of November 1st to enroll a minimum of 20 new students.
- In response to a question from Newlin, Vargas says that aside from the CUP, no other work is being done on Media Center. Newlin adds that they have gone over budget in several areas of Media Center development based on the budget approved by the Board in May.
- Alcumbrac asks Gabrielle Samuels to speak about fundraising.
- Samuels discusses her efforts thus far, including interviewing several fundraising consultants. The downside of hiring a consultant would be the expense. One candidate, Joshua Chan, would work pro bono as he is interested in the school as a parent. Samuels asks for Board's input. A brief discussion follows.
- Samuels notes what a relief it would be to have some help in this area and asks that the Board consider making personal requests for gifts, adopting a give or get approach.
- Newlin mentions her recent tour of the school with Vargas and how she continues to be impressed by LFCSA's program. Johannesen points out the well-documented success of D.W.O.K., of which most other charter schools cannot boast.
- Referring to the issue of a "beer garden" at the school's Halloween Town festival, which was rejected due to a parent's complaints, Abrams asks that the subject be revisited at next Board meeting so LFCSA can craft it's own policy for future events.
- Vargas says that LFCSA needs to open a credit card with the California Credit Union to be used by Newlin and Martorelli.
- Alcumbrac moves to open a credit card account with the California Credit Union. Marissa Chibas-Preston seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Alcumbrac, Greenberg, Johannesen, Chibas-Preston, Samuels, Abrams, Bishop. Motion carries.
- Vargas says the credit card must remain at the school and go through the normal channels of approval.
- Abrams moves to adjourn at 1:10 p.m. Alcumbrac seconds. Ayes (via roll call): Alcumbrac, Greenberg, Samuels, Bishop, Abrams, Chibas-Preston, Johannesen. Motion carries.

Minutes submitted by Mary Ann Gallo.