

# MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TWEEDY MILE ADVISORY BOARD

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2019

- CALL TO ORDER** The regular meeting of the Tweedy Mile Advisory Board was called to order by Carmen Avalos, City Clerk at 5:02 p.m.
- ROLL CALL** Carmen Avalos, City Clerk
- PRESENT** Chairperson Melissa Alvarado, Vice Chairperson Joshua Barron, Board Member Maribel Chaidez, Board Member Minerva Rodriguez and Jackie Acosta, Director of Administrative Services
- ABSENT** Board Member Jan Hicks
- 1**  
**BYLAWS** The Advisory Board reviewed and discussed the Tweedy Mile Association Bylaws.
- Vice Chairperson Barron questioned if the bylaws that are before the board are the most current. He claims to have received bylaws by other board members dated 2013/2014 and the ones provided are dated 2007. He also questioned the validity of a hand written note added to the 2007 bylaws stating that the Street Fair and Car Show is an annual event and does not require board approval for reimbursements.
- Director Jackie Acosta informed the board that these bylaws were provided by Laverne Bates, Treasurer for the Tweedy Mile Association (TMA). She asked if a member of the TMA Board would like to respond to this question.
- Laverne Bates, Treasurer for TMA, stated that to her knowledge these are the only copies of the bylaws that were presented to the City. The copy that was provided was certified by herself and the board president.
- Director Acosta requested that Vice Chairperson Barron provide a copy of what he has received and she can follow up with the Tweedy Mile Association.
- Vice Chairperson Barron also questioned that according to the bylaws the president, vice president and treasurer are the only three members on the board that can sign checks and the checks require two signatures.
- Laverne Bates answered that it was the case unless it is voted on that for some other reason a different signer is necessary. This action would need board approval.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked how many current board members are there.

Ms. Bates responded that there are 12 board members.

Director Acosta asked Ms. Bates if there are any vacancies on the board.

Ms. Bates stated that she believes there can be anywhere from 9 to 15 board members.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked if any board members receives compensation from the Tweedy Mile Association.

Ms. Bates responded absolutely not. If they put out funds then they get reimbursed.

Sylvia Masushigue, 8416 Beechwood Avenue, stated that she was the former president of Tweedy Mile last year. During her time as president she never once signed a check or never once saw a checkbook. She went to the City Manager to request this audit because she didn't feel comfortable with the way that the Tweedy Mile handles the City's funds or the dues they collect from the member of the boulevard.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked Ms. Masushigue if when she became president was she provided with bylaws.

Ms. Masushigue stated yes but not the ones that were provided to the City.

Greg Martinez, Board Member of Tweedy Mile Association, stated that he can see there is a discrepancy. His copy does not have the handwritten comments and the one given to the City was passed out by Angel Colon when he was president.

Director Acosta asked Mr. Martinez when his bylaws were dated.

Mr. Martinez responded that his does not have a date. It ends on page 16. He believes it was given to him in 2015.

Director Acosta stated that there is clearly a discrepancy with the bylaws. She requested a copy of what Vice Chairperson Barron had received and then she will work with the Tweedy Mile Association to figure out which is correct and maybe check the minutes that can help document any changes.

Vice Chairperson Barron does not feel comfortable receiving and filing the bylaws due to all the discrepancies.

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**BYLAWS CONT'D**

Director Acosta suggested if it is the consensus of the board we will move to continue this item to see if we can resolve the discrepancies.

Veronica Gardea, Co-Treasurer of Tweedy Mile said that she was brought on two years ago to take over the position because Ms. Bates was going to step down. She never received bylaws.

Claudia Vidaurri, past Board Member of TMA stated that she received bylaws from Ms. Bates and they had no hand written comments on them.

This item was continued to the next Tweedy Mile Advisory Board meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup> by motion of Vice Chairperson Barron and seconded by Chairperson Alvarado.

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**BUDGET & FINANCIAL  
REPORT**

The Advisory Board received and filed the information currently presented by the Tweedy Mile Association's FY 2017/18 Budget and Financial Report and continued the item to a future meeting to discuss any additional information by motion of Board Member Alvarado and seconded by Vice Chairman Barron.

Jackie Acosta, Director of Administrative Services, provided a brief presentation on this item.

Greg Martinez, Tweedy Mile Board Member explained the receipts that were turned into Director Acosta on March 4<sup>th</sup> in regards to BID money collected by the City of South Gate.

Laverne Bates, Tweedy Mile Treasurer stated that the expense of \$407.00 is for one of the merchants that take care of the sidewalk sales.

Director Acosta clarified this item by stating that this item is taken in three checks. \$300.00 is provided to the City and then is returned the following year when a new check for the Street Fair is submitted.

Chairperson Alvarado asked if they can provide bank statements for this account and copies of the cashed checks.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked why there are two accounts in two separate banks.

Ms. Bates responded that the Wells Fargo account is not being used but is being held in reserves.

Ms. Bates explained that the BID money is kept in the same account as the Tweedy Mile Association non City money. She would be able to provide the checks but doesn't feel that it is warranted to provide bank statements.

After the City Attorney review, she will make a formal request to the Tweedy Mile Association. She will also request receipts for the requested items that have not been provided by the time of the meeting.

Director Acosta will confer with the City Attorney to see what is allowed to be requested and what is appropriate for TMA to provide.

Sylvia Masushigue, 8416 Beechwood Avenue, questioned some of the bills that were provided by Mr. Martinez today. She stated that the bills are not from this year but the year before. There should be bills for this current year.

Vice Chairperson Barron explained that they are currently reviewing the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Veronica Gardea was concerned about Car Show receipts prior to July 2017 to June 2018.

Board Member Chaidez inquired if the Christmas light charges are for rental fees, a purchase or a fee for installation.

Mr. Martinez responded that Tweedy Mile and the Chamber used to put up the Christmas lights. The Chamber then stopped funding their portion so all TMA could afford was the darker colored lights. TMA signed a multiyear contract that includes installation, taking them down and service of the lights. This is not the lights that go around the trees, these are the lights that are suspended from light pole to light pole. This is an ongoing fee of \$8,000.00 to provide the lights.

Director Acosta asked if the lights belong to the Tweedy Mile Association or do they belong to the company.

Mr. Martinez said that he is not sure but can verify. He believes the contract is that the lights belong to somebody else and we contract the service out.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked why City Employees cannot put up the Christmas lights.

Mr. Martinez responded it is not so much the installation but the cost of the lights and the storage. TMA is limited to how much money it actually has. TMA receives between \$21,000 - \$23,000 from the BID and TMA allocates 40% to Christmas lights alone. If limited revenues funds just one item then it is hard for TMA to do promotional events.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked what the process is for receiving the BID funds.

Mr. Martinez explained that it is a portion of the fee you pay with your business license for businesses on Tweedy Boulevard. You pay for your license and then an assessment fee. He explained that the Car Show, Street Fair, Backpack Giveaway, Pageant of the Trees and several other activities that are outside of the scope of these funds.

Director Acosta stated that the three items that are set forth in the South Gate Municipal Code are decoration of public place, promotion of public events, and general promotion of general businesses.

Director Acosta understands that the Advisory Board has concerns and questions but recommends that we start by focusing on what we do have control over which are the BID funds (levy assessments). We should get further information from the Tweedy Mile and clarify with them all the questions that came up today, bring it back to the next meeting and if you still feel like you want to do more, we would then take a request back to the City Council.

Mr. Martinez passed out copies of minutes that show how during the Posada two banners were purchased. One banner had the approval of the board and the second did not. Since both banners were started Tweedy Mile was responsible for the purchase.

Vice Chairperson Barron asked why the minutes are not signed.

Mr. Martinez did not know why they are not signed as they were generated by the past president. He said that they were voted on by the board and approved. He continued to explain to board members for a step-by-step accountability of Day of the Dead/Posada.

Director Acosta said let's take all the information that they have given, the board members can take it back and look at it in further detail. If you have any further questions, you can send your questions to me. As Mr. Martinez said as going forward they are trying to do the right thing. Ms. Acosta has heard from the Tweedy Mile Association that they have been getting a lot of questions either from other people or directly from the Tweedy Mile Association Board but as far as Board Members are concerned they need to address their questions and requests through her.

Carmen Avalos, City Clerk, informed the Board Members that at the next meeting we are going to provide a training on the rolls and responsibilities of each of you and then how the Brown Act applies to this board so you have a good understanding on your responsibilities.

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MINUTES

The Advisory Board approved the meeting minutes of February 4, 2019, as amended by motion of Vice Chairperson Barron and seconded by Board Member Alvarado.

Carmen Avalos, City Clerk, amended the minutes to include the term expiration dates for the board members.

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COMMENTS FROM  
THE AUDIENCE

Beto Baez, member of the Board and resident, stated how shameful the association is with the constant animosity between Tweedy Mile Association Board Members and feels the Association is not in order.

Juliano Jarquin, 10606 McNerney, requested that the Pledge of Allegiance be added to the beginning of the meeting. As a grant writer he would like to support and have a conversation about his services.

Rene Ornelas, South Gate resident and business owner, stated that he has been in business for 28 years and has known Laverne Bates all these years. His personal opinion is that Laverne has spent a lot of personal hours working with TMA and is always open to all the businesses to help. He has worked with TMA and we are volunteers that just want our business to survive. The City is spending resources in other areas of the City but Tweedy Mile is being ignored.

Jovanna Laborin, 3152 Sequoia, stated that members of Tweedy Mile were told not to talk to her. She knows that there is division in TMA and is hoping that as a community we can help each other out.

Adolfo Varas, 3375 Wisconsin Avenue, spoke on the process of bylaw adoption. He has concerns about transparency since the TMA receives funds from the City and as such he feels that all financial reports and meetings should be open to the public.

Sylvia Masushigue, 8416 Beechwood Avenue, thanked the Advisory Board for requesting the financial records.

Laverne Bates, Treasurer of the Tweedy Mile, stated that at each meeting the Board Members receive a financial report with all monies accounted for. The reason that the Advisory Board received this information from TMA was because this is what was requested from the City.

Director Acosta addressed Adolfo's comments stating that he should have made his comments when the item was open for discussion, he was allowed to share his comments but the oral communication at the end of a meeting are for matters not on the agenda. Specifically, the request made of TMA was related only to the budget and the expenditures of the Parking and Business Improvement Area (BID monies).

**COMMENTS FROM  
THE AUDIENCE CONT'D**

At the moment this is the only purview that this board has. There has been discussion on requesting Council to give them a bigger purview to look at, but for now we are going to start with what their authority is.

Vice Chairperson Barron stated that the Advisory Board needs to keep to the current process of reviewing the budget and BID monies before requesting to expand their authority.

Greg Martinez, TMA Board Member, found it interesting that the first speaker, Beto Baez, talked about the car show. Mr. Baez was the chairman last year and the event took a \$4,000.00 loss. Then Claudia Vidaurri made unfair comments about the street fair. There have been many personal attacks on Social Media and Adolfo Varas has also called him on his personal number to harass him. He was attacked and slapped at a board meeting. This is the kind of behavior that TMA members have had to be subjected to as volunteers. TMA members are volunteers and we make mistakes but it has never been done with intent to do anything wrong.

Rene Ornelas, South Gate resident and business owner, feels that he has also been harassed and wants the harassment to stop. At TMA, we are not politicians we are merchants.

Evan Greenspan, TMA President and business owner, feels that he has also been harassed for being a member of TMA. This needs to stop.

Claudia Vidaurri, business owner, thinks that Laverne was not willing to fix her business window due to several various reasons. She believes that people were threatened to vote her out of the board.

Bash Chaudhry, business owner and board member, stated that the finger pointing has to stop. He agrees that there are mistakes but the board is made up of volunteers and is always willing to take help.

Veronica Gardea, stated that she sees a lot of comments on social media and noted that there is a conflict of interest when you have a political sign on a business where a board meeting is being held. It should be held at the TMA office.

Carmen Avalos, City Clerk, reported that she received an email from Mary Johnson to be addressed to the board. Before reading it into the record, she reported that it was received on her personal email. Hence, as it pertained to City business, she forwarded it to her City email. The letter was read into the record.

To South Gate Mayor, Council members

My Name is Mary Johnson

Address; 9534 State Street Apt C South Gate, California

Re: Concern Resident On Tweedy Miles Association

I am sorry I couldn't attend tonight meeting regarding The Tweedy Miles. I am at an educational conference for the week. I have much concern about the activities that are being reported on the lack of transparency and lack of organization being aligned with the State Policy that governs Non-profit.

- 1) Tweedy Miles Association doesn't have proper by-laws that govern the non-profit. The allegation is that the updated by-laws were created in secret by a few, there was never an ADOC HOC committee created or membership aren't asked to make a suggestion for changes to the Bylaws.
- 2) Tweedy Miles Association is working within a top-down model excluding the voices of many members.
- 3) Financial Records are not open to the public or members on request, which is a part of State Of California requirement for non-profit.
- 4) Tweedy Miles Association is reckless in writing checks and lack transparency on showing invoices and receipts to all members on expenditure.
- 5) Tweedy Miles Association is now attempting to get into the politic campaign, by putting Our Council Woman Denise Diaz banner up, as you know that this would be a violation for non-profit to do.

As concern resident of South Gate, I am asking this board to freeze the \$100,000 of city monies, until Tweedy Miles Association put their house in order and become transparent on how the money is spent and invoices and receipts are given for comparison for accountability. I truly believe that South Gate City Council must take action to protect the interest of money that comes from the South Gate Fund and to the residents of South Gate. Upon returning back to the City I will be requesting under The Record Act, for all documents, email, memo, the financial documents with The City Clerk Office For Tweedy Miles. Association.

Respectful,

Mary Johnson

Director Acosta stated again that clearly there is some dissenting opinions, animosities, and hard feelings among people but the Tweedy Mile Association is its own non-profit organization. The City can't dictate what it can do or not do but what we are here to do as an Advisory Board is to follow the scope that has been set up by City Council and do our due diligence to this matter. This is our starting point and we will do the best job we can do. Then we can go from there. You all have your right to comment during oral communications and everyone has done that tonight which is appreciated. Moving forward she is hoping we can focus on what the task at hand is and hopefully get through this in a professional and appropriate manner.



Vice Chairman Barron said that based on the information that we received today he does understand that Director Acosta would like to see the board focus on the given scope of work. It may be premature to request further action from the City Council at this time. However, he believes that it is better to put in the request to expand the review sooner rather than later because the questions and concerns are still going to be there. As a Board Member he wants to see it get done as soon as possible so everyone can move forward. He is requesting to go before Council to request that they broaden the scope of the Advisory Board to review the complete financial records of the TMA beginning with FY 2017-18.

Carmen Avalos, City Clerk, stated that you do not need to take a vote on the request. The request has been made and as long as more than three board member want to discuss the item it is not a problem. She cautioned the board that before we move forward with all the financials that we get guidance from the City Attorney and possibly request that he attends the next meeting as well. This will allow him the opportunity to provide information on the Advisory Boards roles and responsibilities and on what the board should or should not be doing as it will provide a clearer picture. She recommended that the board hold off on this item until guidance is received from the City Attorney. If after they hear the recommendations of the City Attorney, they still feel that they should move forward they can do that. Just to be mindful that as a non-profit they also have their own rules and regulations that they have to follow.

Director Acosta stated that if the board is in agreement, we should follow the City Clerk's suggestion and get more information from the City Attorney and invite him to our next meeting so he can answer these questions directly.

City Clerk Avalos stated that at the next meeting we will discuss:

1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Advisory Board
2. Brown Act Training
3. Non-Profits Rules and Guidelines
4. Type of information that the Board can request

Vice Chairperson Barron requested to receive information on the different Committees that TMA has in place, who is in each Committee, what are their positions and how do they receive that position.

Board Member Chaidez is concerned about the Financial Statements.

Director Acosta again stated that we will probably hear from the City Attorney on this but they are their own separate association. We might be able to provide suggestions but she does not believe we have control to mandate how they keep their records. As we have heard from some of the TMA Board Members they are open to suggestions and guidance so they can make themselves better.

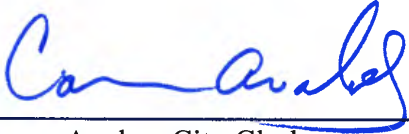
**ADJOURNMENT**

Before the adjournment Juliano Jarquin led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Melissa Alvarado motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Tweedy Mile Advisory Board will be on April 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

**PASSED** and **APPROVED** this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2019.

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Melissa Alvarado, Chairperson



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Carmen Avalos, City Clerk