

briefs

Beverly Hills Weekly attorneys receive \$40,000 from the Courier



Ronald Richards

The Beverly Hills *Courier* paid an attorney fee motion on Monday of \$40,000 to the *Weekly* that was awarded Friday.

“It was an unbelievable victory for [Beverly Hills *Weekly* Publisher] Josh [Gross] and the *Weekly* that all those legal fees were awarded by the court,” *Beverly Hills Weekly*’s attorney Ronald Richards said.

The *Courier* sought thousands of dollars in compensatory damages that they claimed were lost as a result of the *Weekly*’s business practices. The Los Angeles Superior Court ruled in favor of the *Weekly* in a SLAPP motion (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) last December on two of the three causes of action. The *Courier* is appealing on two counts (prospective economic relations and negligent interference) and the *Weekly* is appealing the third cause of action (unfair business practice).

“The previous lawsuit was just an attempt to muddy the *Weekly*’s name in front of the City Council, which instead turned into the *Courier*’s worst nightmare, where they [were] instead ordered to pay \$40,000 in legal fees,” Richards said. “The *Courier* has no evidence that the *Weekly* is engaging in any competition against them and they have never been able to produce any evidence that they’ve lost a single piece of business as a result of the *Weekly*’s business practice.”

The case is stayed pending the appeal, which will be ruled on in a year and a half to two years.

Rec and Parks Commission discusses open leash dog park

The Recreation and Parks Commission reopened discussion at Tuesday’s meeting on placing a public, open leash dog park at Roxbury Park.

After a City Council study session in November 2012 discussing possible off-leash dog park locations, city staff was not given further direction to pursue the topic.

“From a staff perspective, I think we have pretty much exhausted our understanding of publicly-owned areas that we’re giving consideration to,” Community Services Director Steve Zoet said.

Issues brought up at the time for pos-

sible locations that were brought to the City Council included sufficient space for dogs, noise levels and parking. Possible locations suggested were the Orange Grove, La Cienega Park’s athletic field, Coldwater Canyon Park, and Roxbury Park’s Croquet Green area.

“[Roxbury Park] seems to be the best choice from what I’ve seen, so if this square at Roxbury is not going to be acceptable to the community, I don’t even know if we have any other choices,” Vice Chair Simone Friedman said.

Though city staff has not received any public requests or comments concerning a dog park, commissioners Robbie Anderson and Susan Gersh proposed spreading awareness and gaining community support at the upcoming “Woofstock” event on Sunday.

“The land is certainly the major component,” Gersh said. “We would then have to form a support group within the community to really police, clean up, and manage this because staff is not really able to do that. It would require a strong support group within the community.”

Zoet said that if the commission would like to consider a dog park to be placed at Roxbury Park, the item would be formally placed on a future agenda for further in depth discussion. Recreation Services manager Brad Meyerowitz also suggested that Roxbury Park’s renovations and construction should be completed before the Commission brings anything to the City Council. During that time, the Commission can gather community support and work out details for the dog park.

Beverly Hills residents can visit www.beverlyhills.org/directory and e-mail the community service department to express their opinions on having a public dog park.

Lack of enforcement on signage violations, Architecture Commission says

The Architecture Commission continues to take action on signage issues that have not been resolved in the City and opened discussion on possible solutions at their Feb. 19 meeting.



James Blakeley

“Most of us sitting on the commission feel that the sign and the building are one and they should be part of the package to enhance the building,” Architecture Commission Chair James

Blakeley said in the *Weekly*’s cover story issue #721. “We would like to have some sort of oversight to all of the signs that are going up in the city.”

After meetings with Mayor John Mirisch and City Enforcement in the past month, Blakeley took a few steps forward in ameliorating signage issues in the City.

“I walked the city in less than an hour and there [were] 128 violations relating to the sign program, which is ridiculous,” Blakeley said. “There is no way that [enforcement] can take care of that.”

Business owners who receive a citation

and do not fix their signs within the first month are fined \$106. If the sign is not fixed within a year, they are fined \$212. If the sign is still not fixed after another year the business is fined \$530.

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Public Hearing on Proposed Fare Changes

Metro Briefs

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL

Public Hearing on Proposed Fare Changes

To continue reliable service of LA County’s expanding transportation network, Metro must consider gradually increasing fares. Metro’s approach to changing fares would also increase transit access by including free transfers on a single fare paid with a TAP card. A public hearing to gather comments will be held on Saturday, March 29 at 9:30am at Metro Headquarters; sign up in person by 11:30am to speak at the hearing. More information at metro.net/newfares.

Upcoming Sepulveda Boulevard Lane Closures

Individual lane closures on Sepulveda Boulevard are expected soon in the Sepulveda Pass as part of the freeway improvements project. For the latest information on closures and construction schedules, check metro.net/405.

Track Installation For Expo Phase 2

The Expo Construction Authority is in the process of laying more than 30 miles of track in West LA and Santa Monica for the second phase of the Expo Line. Phase 2 will extend west from the Culver City Station to Santa Monica. For more information and construction schedules, visit buildexpo.org.

Wilshire BRT Breaks Ground

Work recently began on the remainder of the Wilshire Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes. The \$31.5-million project is adding 7.7 miles of peak hour bus lanes to sections of Wilshire Boulevard between downtown LA and Santa Monica. More information at metro.net/wilshire.

Regional Connector Gets \$670 Million in Federal Funding

Top federal officials have awarded a \$670 million grant and an additional \$160 million in low-interest loans to the downtown Los Angeles Regional Connector Transit Project. The two-mile underground route will connect the Metro Blue, Gold and Expo Lines. Learn more at metro.net/regionalconnector.



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