

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS
PRESIDENT: Quyen Vo-Ramirez
VICE-PRESIDENTS: Tammy Flores
and Rick Donnelly
TREASURER: Randall Kelly
PUBLIC RELATIONS: Nick Krall



SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
13515 1/2 Hubbard Street
Sylmar, CA 91342
Telephone: (818) 833-8737
Fax: 818 833-8707
Email: SylmarNC@verizon.net
Website: www.sylmarnc.org
Secretary: David Levin

Minutes of the
SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL (SNC) GENERAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, February 28, 2008
Hubbard Street Elementary School (Auditorium)
13325 Hubbard St., Sylmar, CA 91342

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

President Quyen Vo-Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano, Hiral Bhakta, Cheri Blose (late), Hector Cabrera, Rick Donnelly, Tammy Flores, Gene Gatmaitan, Fabian Garcia, Saul Gonzales, Randall Kelly, Nick Krall, Martin Laufer, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes (late), Jim Schopper, Quyen Vo-Ramirez, and Lynn Zekanis.

Manny Figueras, Constituent Services Representative for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; manny.figueras@lacity.org), led new Board Member Gene Gatmaitan in the SNC Pledge. Mr. Gatmaitan was introduced and welcomed to the Board.

Board Members absent were: Bonnie Bernard (excused), Esteban Tavares (excused), Jeanne Rowe (excused), and Jan Sandstrom (excused).

Seventeen of the 21 Board Members were present, which is a quorum, and the business of the Council could be conducted.

Also present were approximately 35 Stakeholders and Guests.

3. Adoption of 1/24/08 Minutes

Ms. Zekanis suggested and it was agreed to Table this Item until the next Meeting.

4. Housekeeping; explanation of Stakeholder comments and Speaker Cards; Timekeeper.

Ms. Flores explained the above and Mr. Ortega agreed to be the Timekeeper.

5. Public Officials, Community Representatives and Board Member announcements and presentations.

Mr. Figueras distributed a "News from Richard Alarcon" press release and reported that a couple of Sylmar locations received tainted beef from the Chino meat company that was in the news. March 1st from 10:00 – 1:00 the Sylmar Independent Baseball League Opening Day Ceremony will be held. Councilman Alarcon announced that on February 12th the City Council approved the nation's largest pet spay and neuter ordinance.

LAPD (L.A. Police Dept.) Senior Lead Officer Charles Chacon (818-838-9847) reported that he and a partner split Sylmar coverage, and that crime is down "tremendously" from last year. Stakeholders' calls are helping; you can call anonymously. Sometimes the police send an L.A. City Building and Safety Dept. (311; ladbs.org) Inspector, or Vice Squad Officer, to investigate a complaint. There'll be Job Fairs on March 29th from 10:00 – 2:00 at Sylmar High School with the State Employment Development Dept., April 5th from 10:00 – 2:00 at the Library, and May 17th. Around three weeks ago near San Fernando Road and Bledsoe Street a body was found; she could've died from a drug overdose and test results are awaited.

Mr. Ortega said that volunteer leaders are sought for a community meeting that the L.A. City Recreation and Parks Dept. will host. Mr. Krall spoke about the Sylmar Relay for Life cancer support walk that'll be held April 12-13 for 24 hours at Olive Vista Middle School. Volunteers are sought. Last year the Walk raised \$18,000. It's a lot of fun and there'll be entertainment with midnight movies. The idea is to have at least one team member walking on the track at all times and they'll close with a victory lap. Mr. Donnelly encouraged people to view and suggest changes to the NC website, sylmarnc.org.

Ms. Flores announced a Chamber of Commerce breakfast on March 6th at 7:30 a.m. at Denny's Restaurant at 13201 Gladstone Ave. On March 1st, State 39th District Assemblyman Felipe Fuentes' (818-504-3911; <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a39/>) office will provide tax preparation assistance. Also on March 1st, at 10:00 a.m., there'll be a DWP (L.A. Department of Water and Power) meeting. March 17th there'll be a St. Patrick's Day event in downtown L.A. March 22nd from 12:00 to 5:00 on Olvera Street will be the March of the Animals. The L.A. Department of Public Works wants people to take advantage of phoning 311 to report things such as abandoned cars and to make requests such as for bulky item pickups. There'll be art gallery openings in downtown L.A. on March 8th at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m., on March 22nd in Santa Monica from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., and at the L.A. Municipal Art Gallery through 20th.

[This report was given soon after Amelia Herrera-Robles, L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) Project Coordinator (818-374-9895; amelia.herrera-robles@lacity.org), arrived during the recess.] BONC (the L.A. City Board of Neighborhood Commissioners) will meet on March 17th at 6:30 p.m. at Dyer St. Elementary School [Auditorium, 14500 Dyer St.]; all NC Members are invited. BONC will present a Certificate to the NC honoring its five years of existence. Also, there'll be a self-assessment survey of NC Boards by Board Members and

Stakeholders, to be submitted to DONE by June; DONE will give the results to NCs. Finally, the citywide NCs plan has been revised and is available to see on the DONE website [www.lacityneighborhoods.com].

6. Public Comment on non-Agenda items

Stakeholder Risa Benny is offended by the lingerie ads along the 210 Freeway. She called the business owner, who asserted her rights. Ms. Benny stated that the ads poorly represent Sylmar and encourages people to call the owner.

Stakeholder Jeanette Rivalta wants the NC to check traffic signal synchronization.

Stakeholder Virginia Corbin-Marinovich of the Sylmar Recreation Center announced that the Spring Egg Hunt will be held March 22nd at Sylmar Park. It's free; last year more than 300 children participated and she's seeking NC financial support for it. She'd also like a Board Member to help with the Sylmar Independent Baseball League Opening Day Ceremony.

7. Committee Reports

Treasurer's Report / Budget Committee

Mr. Kelly reported that he completed DONE financial responsibility training and that he will have a complete report next month.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that Ms. Flores is addressing this during Board Members' announcements.

Beautification / Grants

Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that a Chair will be appointed. She and Mr. Laufer picked up 150 trees from Tree People (818-753-4600; treepeople.org) to give away at the next community cleanup. The trees are stored at the Ultra Green Nursery until the Mayor's Day of Service March 3rd and 4th.

Commercial / Business Interests

Volunteers are sought. Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that a Chair will be appointed.

Education

Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that a Chair will be appointed.

Land Use

Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that a Chair will be appointed. Mr. Krall reported that the Committee met twice. A Supplemental Fee Agreement discussion regarding the Las Lomas project will be held by the L.A. Planning and Land Use Management Committee. Our Committee is opposed to this Supplemental Fee Agreement.

Outreach

Mr. Donnelly will have a report at the next Meeting. Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that a Chair will be appointed.

Public Safety / Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that a Chair will be appointed.

Public Services

Mr. Schopper distributed a "Sylmar [NC] Community Appreciation Day October 6, 2007" brochure and reported that the Mayor's Day of Service will be May 3rd and 4th. Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that the NC participated in at least five cleanups last year.

Tabled Items

Ms. Blose was not present at this time.

MOTION (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Zekanis): to remove this Item (regarding Board Members with three or more unexcused absences) and send it to the By-Laws Committee.

MOTION APPROVED without objection.

8. Report of letters voted at the August 2007 General Meeting to be sent.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez reported that letters were sent last September to local grocery stores asking for quick abandoned shopping cart recovery; people can also call 311. Mr. Laufer reported that the traffic signal light at Yarnell St. and Foothill Blvd. has been half-constructed for more than a year because the original wiring is obsolete and needs to be replaced, and the sidewalk corner is non-ADA-compliant and will be re-constructed; the City Engineer and the DWP are addressing this.

9. Discussion and possible Board action regarding 912 Commission Report.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to Table this Item until the NC can review the 912 Commission Report.

MOTION APPROVED without objection.

10. Discussion and possible Board action to hire Mr. Levin as the NC's temporary / permanent part-time Secretary.

Ms. Flores explained that different employment agencies were consulted and ads placed for candidates, and that the Executive Board had chosen Mr. Levin.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Ms. Zekanis): to hire Mr. Levin on a temporary part-time basis as the Secretary for the Neighborhood Council.

DISCUSSION: Board Members questioned Mr. Levin about his qualifications.

MOTION PASSED, with 14 in favor and two abstaining (Ms. Arellano and Mr. Gonzales).

11. Discussion and possible Board action regarding Board Members' elections and terms.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez introduced the issue. Mr. Krall explained that the next NC election would be in 2010, according to DONE requirements; Members would have

staggered terms, and he recommends that positions scheduled to end in 2009 be extended to 2010, with half the Members terms' being extended until 2012.

MOTION (by Mr. Krall, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to adjust Board Member elections such that Board Member seats ending in 2008 would end in 2010 and seats ending in 2009 would end in 2012, to create four-year terms.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Zekanis voiced that it's not necessarily a problem to have a full-Board election. Mr. Schopper and Ms. Arellano prefer two-year terms, as is presently. Mr. Krall noted that the NC's By-Laws relating to elections would be rendered moot because the City will be taking over elections. Stakeholder Terri Croswhite voiced that the term lengths are flexible and that the Motion would require a By-Laws amendment.

MOTION FAILED, with 10 opposed, three in favor (Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Krall and Mr. Ortega), and three abstentions (Mr. Bhakta, Ms. Blose, and Mr. Cabrera).

MOTION (by Mr. Krall, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to have the entire Board up for election in 2010.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Krall explained that the NC would still have elections every two years; half of the current Members would still have four-year terms. This Motion is to extend all terms to 2010, then have elections every two years of half of the Members.

MOTIONS PASSED, with 15 in favor and one opposed (Mr. Ortega).

12. President to rescind appointment of By-Law Committee Chair.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that the Chair will be appointed later in this Meeting.

13. Discussion and possible Board action to establish an Ad Hoc By-Laws Committee.

MOTION (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to bring the By-Laws into compliance in order to meet the March 15th deadline for the election to be administered by the City Clerk.

MOTION PASSED, with 15 in favor and one abstention (Mr. Cabrera).

14. Discussion and possible Board action to have a March Retreat.

MOTION (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Flores): to have a Board Members Retreat at the Sylmar Library on a Saturday sometime in March, based upon availability.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that the Retreat would be moderated and cover such subjects as the Brown Act and setting NC goals and objectives, and help the Board to get to know each other.

MOTION PASSED unanimously, with all 16 in favor.

The Meeting was recessed for 10 minutes from 7:51 – 8:01 p.m.

15. Discussion and possible Board action regarding an Options for Youth event.

Stakeholder, Teacher, Student Council Advisor and sports Coach Javier Lujan and several of his students from the Options for Youth Charter School distributed an “Options 4 Youth” program “Youth 4 Unity Festival” event brochure, expenses list, and advertising card. Mr. Lujan expressed that the last such event provided life-changing experiences for many young people. Stakeholder and student Vanessa Perez reminded that the event gives students an opportunity to express their talent and that youths are the future now. Stakeholder and student Robin Bemvillas pointed out that students are making a lot of effort to make this a positive event, which will be held June 14th at Sylmar Park, and that arts expression is important for youth to show their intellectual capabilities, and avoid teen pregnancies and gang involvement. They are asking for the NC to allocate \$1,000 to the event, and she explained that the event would not only include a Benefit for Bands; there’ll be other art presented as well. Mr. Lujan indicated that they met with Councilman Alarcon’s Office regarding support. The NC could support the event by helping to pay for equipment and supplies.

MOTION (by Mr. Krall, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to support the “Options 4 Youth” program “Youth 4 Unity Festival” event.

DISCUSSION: Stakeholder Tony Dominguez’ daughter was helped by participating in the first “Youth 4 Unity Festival” event and we should support it. He showed a Certificate from State 20th District Senator Alex Padilla regarding the last such event and noted that the program has helped some students achieve [perfect] 4.0 Grade Point Averages. Board Member comments included that money is available to be allocated from the Budget Committee and that this event is a great opportunity to support local youth. The allocation wouldn’t be a donation, it would be to support expenses. Also, the NC needs the community to support the NC in return.

MOTION PASSED, with 13 in favor and three abstentions (Ms. Arellano, Mr. Kelly, and Mr. Ortega).

16. Discussion and possible Board action regarding the Sylmar Park Spring Festival.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Garcia): to support the L.A. City Recreation and Parks Dept. in the amount of \$200 for the Spring Festival at Sylmar Park.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Flores explained that this event includes the Easter Egg Hunt.

MOTION PASSED, with 14 in favor, one abstention (Ms. Arellano), and one recused (Mr. Kelly).

17. Discussion and possible Board action regarding the Sylmar Relay for Life.

MOTION (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Blose): to support the Sylmar Relay for Life in the amount of \$500 for electrical rentals.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Krall explained that this will be the second annual Relay for Life in Sylmar, and it's sponsored by the American Cancer Society. [See Board Member announcements, Item #5 above, for more information.] It started in 1986 and has raised lots of awareness and money for cancer research. The money would be used for renting stage generators and other electrical equipment.

MOTION PASSED, with 13 in favor and three abstentions (Ms. Arellano, Mr. Krall, and Mr. Ortega).

18. Discussion and possible Board action regarding a Relay for Life team.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Ms. Blose): to form a relay team to participate in the Sylmar Relay for Life.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Flores explained that the team can be any size.

MOTION PASSED, with 15 in favor and one abstention (Mr. Bhakta).

19. Discussion and possible Board action to invest \$100 for T-shirts for outreach.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to invest \$100 for silk-screened T-shirts with art work for identification for the purpose of community outreach.

DISCUSSION: It was requested that such Motions be brought to appropriate Committees before being brought to the Board. Ms. Flores explained that a local company will do the work and had quoted the most reasonable cost.

MOTION PASSED, with 14 in favor and two abstentions (Ms. Arellano and Mr. Gonzales).

20. Discussion and possible Board action to consolidate Committees.

MOTION (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Krall): to consolidate Committees under five main Committees, with all other Committees as Sub-Committees as follows: 1) Budget; 2) By-Laws: Ethics; 3) Outreach: Election and Events; 4) Public Services: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Education, and Beautification and Grants; and 5) Land Use: Commercial / Business Interest.

DISCUSSION: It was explained that the Sub-Committees would be separate Committees, but part of the main Committees. It was requested and not agreed upon to have the Education Sub-Committee be part of the Outreach, rather than the Public Services, Committee.

MOTION PASSED, with 13 in favor, two opposed (Mr. Bhakta and Mr. Gatmaitan), and one abstention (Ms. Arellano).

21. Discussion and possible Board action to appoint a liaison to the City Attorney's Office.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez would like to appoint Ms. Zekanis and Mr. Laufer to the position. Both accepted their appointment.

22. Discussion and possible Board action to assign five Board Members to write our Community Impact Statement (CIS).

Ms. Flores explained that a CIS is really important for the community, and Ms. Vo-Ramirez added that the CIS is the community's voice with the City Council. Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Ortega, Mr. Krall, Mr. Donnelly, and Mr. Garcia volunteered to do this.

23. Discussion and possible Board action to have Board Member business cards.

Mr. Kelly remarked that Board Members need business cards to identify ourselves and let people know how to contact us. [Sample cards were distributed.]

MOTION (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Zekanis): to have business cards made for Board Members for the purpose of community outreach.

MOTION PASSED, with 14 in favor and two abstentions (Mr. Bhakta and Mr. Gonzales).

24. Report on retail sales and economic conditions of Sylmar businesses and residents.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that Ms. Bernard is absent. It was agreed to Table this Item.

25. Appointment of Committee Chairs by President.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez appointed Mr. Kelly as Budget Committee Chair; Ms. Zekanis and Mr. Laufer as By-Laws Committee Co-Chairs; Ms. Rowe (who has expressed interest) and Mr. Bhakta as Outreach Committee Co-Chairs; Ms. Arellano as Beautification and Grants Committee Chair; Mr. Gonzales as Education Committee Chair; Mr. Reyes and Mr. Schopper as Public Services Committee Co-Chairs; Mr. Ortega as Land Use Committee Chair; and the Public Safety and Commercial / Business Interests Committees need volunteer Chairs.

26. Board Member Comments

Ms. Zekanis welcomed new Board Members. Mr. Ortega noted that Form 700 discussion will continue; there'll be a Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils mixer at Carol's Café in Studio City on March 13th at 6:00 p.m.; and a State Senate Bill (SB)1818 discussion included the DWP General Manager. Mr. Krall announced that the Relay for Life kick-off will be March 9th from 2:00 – 4:00 at Sylmar Park and related that the City Council passed a more severe ordinance and giveaway to builders than SB1818; affordable housing is not being held in perpetuity. Mr. Donnelly commented that it is good to see Stakeholders at the Meeting and that he looks forward to working with the new Board Members.

Ms. Flores made Office keys and needs Board Members to sign them out. The Office is being organized and the Internet connection works on both computers.

She encouraged people to work with the new Executive Board, looks forward to working with the new Board Members, and thanks Stakeholders for being here.

Mr. Laufer thanks Mr. Donnelly for his website update work, and looks forward to working with the Board and Committees, and to Stakeholders using the NC website. Ms. Blose noted that a Horse Trails Show will be held at Stetson Ranch and classes are available; the Chamber of Commerce Office is negotiating to move to Caruso's; and the City will implement a K overlay to protect equestrian properties. Ms. Arellano thanked Board Members for their "Youth 4 Unity Festival" event support and for listening to youth; it shows that youth have a say in the community.

27. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that the next General Board Meeting will be Thursday, March 27th at 6:30 p.m. here at Hubbard Street Elementary School; the Land Use Committee will meet Monday, March 3rd at 6:30 p.m. at the Office at 13515 1/2 Hubbard Street. She encouraged people to submit Agenda Items to be addressed at the next General Board Meeting to Executive Board Members.

28. Closing remarks, announcements, acknowledgements and adjournment.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked Stakeholders for attending and reminded Stakeholders that the NC website is constantly updated. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.