

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

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**Minutes of the
SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL (SNC) GENERAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, March 27, 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 6:35 p.m. Stakeholder Charles Partello led the Pledge of Allegiance. Manny Figueras, Constituent Services Representative for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; manny.figueras@lacity.org), led a moment of silence for the L.A. firefighter who died today. Ms. Vo-Ramirez led a moment of silence for Joyce Partello.

2. Roll Call

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

Board Members absent were: Gene Gatmaitan (unexcused), and Esteban Tavares (excused).

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

Also present were approximately 18 Stakeholders and Guests.

3. Adoption 1/24/2008 Minutes and Adoption 2/28/2008 Minutes

The January 24, 2008 Minutes were ACCEPTED without objection.

The following correction of the February 28, 2008 Minutes was requested:
Page seven, Item #19: “. . . to invest \$100 for silk-screened T-shirts with art work . . .” should read, “. . . to invest \$100 for silk-screened T-shirts **for** art work . . .”

The February 28, 2008 Minutes were ACCEPTED as corrected without objection.

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 thanked the NC for their Sylmar Park Easter Egg Hunt participation. Many children appreciated it. Regarding Agenda Item #10 (submitting a letter to the Los Angeles Fire Department requesting to maintain our Paramedic unit at Fire Station 91), his understanding from Assistant Fire Chief Timothy Manning is that no staff reductions are planned as of now. Regarding Agenda Item #12 (submitting a letter to the L.A. Department of Transportation (LADOT) regarding the intersection of Maclay and Gladstone Avenues), there's a four-way Stop there now; LADOT said to send them a letter and they'll do a study. There're more than 140 sex offenders in Sylmar; he wrote a letter about it to the State Parole Office. Flyers are available for the April 5th Environmental Faire at Sylmar Park. There'll be an all-day Girl Scout Olympics at Sylmar High School. Sylmar Independent Baseball League Opening Day is April 26th at 9:00 a.m. L.A. City Building and Safety Dept. General Manager Andrew Adelman and two inspectors, and Stakeholders helped get an illegal sign removed from 12445 Gladstone Avenue.

Mr. Bhakta, for the Outreach Committee, announced that there'll be a Chamber of Commerce breakfast April 3rd at 7:30 a.m.; call 818-367-1177 to RSVP. The monthly El Dorado Neighborhood Watch Meeting will be April 7th at 7:00 p.m. Contact Mr. Bhakta regarding more community events.

Ms. Arellano announced that there'll be a Beautification and Grants Committee Meeting March 31st at 6:30 at the SNC Office, combined with the Public Services Committee.

Mr. Garcia said that the Relay for Life team is registered for the April 12th fundraiser event; volunteers are sought.

Ms. Flores talked with Mr. Figueras and Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; dan.rosales@lacity.org), about the 157 sex offenders locally housed; none are near schools or parks. They've legal rights to be there; she's investigating, with State 39th District Assemblyman Felipe Fuentes and the State Parole Office, why so many are in our community. Charles Chacon, LAPD Senior Lead Officer (818-838-9847), added that four of them are known to be at a house at 12836 Hubbard Street, but none of them are on parole or probation.

Mr. Krall expressed that the Relay for Life will be a great event; volunteers and donations are welcomed. Sylmar High School had a student event today regarding cancer prevention.

Mr. Laufer announced that there'll be a By-Laws Committee Meeting April 1st at 6:30 at the SNC Office and everyone's invited; the By-Laws will be changed regarding the elections and community input is needed.

Ms. Sandstrom reminded about the Public Services Committee Meeting March 31st. Also, the Mayor's Big Sunday event will be May 3rd and 4th, and the Mayor wants to extend it to one week. Volunteers are welcomed for fun, food and community service; there'll be "Big Sunday" t-shirts and trees to give to volunteers.

Ms. Blöse noted that the website now has pictures.

Officer Chacon reported that crime in our area is decreasing overall, but property crime is still high and has increased, especially in the daytime. He asked that we all help carry the message to secure our homes by doing simple things such as putting sticks in sliding glass door rails, which is a deterrent. Secure your mailboxes, too; there was a recent arrest of identity and mail thieves who were using ATM cards for which people had used their social security numbers as pin codes. The thieves sat in a car checking out the neighborhood for around two days before stealing, so if you see something like that, don't hesitate to call the police. Other thieves were caught today after a burglary on Glenoaks Boulevard.

New Patrol Captain Dwayne Howakowa starts within two weeks. Regarding sex offenders, if they're not on parole or probation, and they're registered, they don't have to be monitored. Sylmar has so many living here, according to the State, because there're so many hotels, especially on San Fernando Road. Officer Chacon encouraged people to write letters to State officials about this.

6. Public Comments

Fritz Bronner of Lake View Terrace, the Foothill Trails District NC Land Use Committee Chair, announced the War Horse and Militaria Heritage Foundation. The Foundation proposes to build a Multi-Use Equestrian Park within Gabrieleno Park in Lake View Terrace which would accommodate many southern California civic events. Mr. Bronner would like to be on next month's Agenda to talk about the Park, which would include and promote environmentally friendly uses and awareness, and have a "great economic impact" for our area. The Foundation is seeking volunteers.

Stakeholder Risa Benning spoke regarding the Adult Factory Outlet signage. The owner had refused to remove the sign; Ms. Benning spoke with many Stakeholders and officials, who all helped to get the sign removed. L.A. City Building and Safety Dept. determined that the banners were "very oversized." Ms. Benning is seeking NC support about this issue; she feels that such signage is especially inappropriate for minors. She'd like to establish a community standard and there's legal precedence for doing it.

Stakeholder Trini Rodriguez is a co-founder of Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural (info@tiachucha.com), a non-profit cultural arts center, which promotes and provides

space for arts growth and expression. She announced their Celebrating Words Festival at El Cariso Park on June 21st. Ms. Rodriguez would like to be on next month's Agenda "to speak on [a] request for collaborative support for [the Festival]."

Stakeholder Adolfo Naranjo is concerned about a large sinkhole at the intersection of Tripoli Avenue and Gridley Street; there's been no response to his repair calls. He contends that the DWP (the L.A. Department of Water and Power) (800-342-5397; ladwp.com) is trying to "rip off" himself and his neighbors because the DWP is estimating their power usage instead of checking the meters, and no information is available at different places. Ms. Vo-Ramirez referred Mr. Naranjo to Mr. Figueras.

7. Committee Reports

Secretary

The Secretary reported that five Stakeholders were provided with NC Board and Committee Meetings and volunteering information from the NC Office. The Principals of Hubbard Street and Sylmar Elementary Schools agreed to host our Meetings through September, with the help of the L.A. School District's locations permit office.

Marianne Love, a Reporter for the San Fernando Valley Sun, would like to have General Board and Committee Meeting information appear in that weekly newspaper.

Various e-mail and fax spammers were contacted to immediately remove and delete our e-mail address and fax number from their databases.

The Secretary reminded everyone to speak one at a time so that the audio recording is clearer. Also, the Office now has recycling bins, but doesn't have a cleaning crew. Various people were thanked for helping with the Minutes and at the Office.

Treasurer / Budget

Mr. Kelly reported that first and second quarter reports were submitted to DONE (the L.A. City Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment) (213-485-1360; www.lacityneighborhoods.com). The Committee Meeting was well-attended. He would like the other Committees to submit a Committee Expenditure Request form to let him know by the first part of May what funding they'll need for the rest of the year. The NC will have \$20,000 at the fiscal year-end, and the NC gets another \$50,000 in July. Mr. Kelly is seeking ideas for best spending the NC's money on the community. A Request for Funding form for community groups is available on the NC's website, www.sylmarnc.org.

By-Laws

Ms. Zekanis reported that the first Meeting will be April 1st. The By-Laws "need tweaking," and your help is appreciated.

Ethics

[There was no report at this time.]

Land Use

Mr. Ortega reported that we're working to make the Committee more inclusive. There'll be a Meeting April 7th. The City Council rejected the [proposed] Las Lomas project.

Commercial / Business Interests

[There was no report at this time.]

Outreach

Mr. Bhakta reported that the April Meeting date will be announced. Let him know about any community events.

Election

[There was no report at this time.]

Events

[There was no report at this time.]

Public Services

Mr. Reyes reported that the first Meeting will be March 31st. The community clean-up day is coming soon and volunteer opportunities are available.

Beautification / Grants

Ms. Arellano reported that there'll be a joint Meeting with the Public Services Committee on March 31st.

Education

Mr. Gonzales reported that there'll be a Meeting on March 31st. The Sylmar Youth Task Force needs help.

Public Safety / Emergency Preparedness

[There was no report at this time.]

Tabled Items

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

Ms. Bernard reported that the economy is down; even Home Depot and Bank of America have fewer customers and fewer employees. Construction company Tutor Saliba is doing well, while animal services clinics are way down. Mr. Laufer added that local hotels house sex offenders because it's guaranteed income from the State; maybe the Chamber of Commerce can address this.

Old Business

9. Discussion and possible action to have board retreat and workshop

MOTION (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Flores): to have a Board Members Retreat and Workshop at the SNC Office on Monday, April 21, 2008 from 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. for the first session and on Saturday, April 25, 2008 from 10:00 - 2:00 for the second session and community walkabout, with both workshops [sessions] to be facilitated by DONE and [Independent Elections Administrator] Stephen Box.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Donnelly explained that the walkabout is an opportunity to see community needs. Amelia Herrera-Robles, DONE Project Coordinator (818-374-9895; amelia.herrera-robles@lacity.org), pointed out that the workshop is an “amazing opportunity” for discussion and learning about things such as the Brown Act, and that Mr. Box has lots of urban information and experience to share. She added that the walkabout can help Board Members see community needs for such things as street signs, lights, parks and schools.

Ms. Zekanis is concerned about the time commitment because the workshop would be during the same week as the General Board Meeting. Ms. Bernard expressed that the Brown Act training is the most important thing.

MOTION AMENDMENT (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to keep the April 21, 2008 first session date and look for an alternate date in May for the second session.

MOTION AMENDMENT ACCEPTED.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Bernard).

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION APPROVED without any objections.

MOTION PASSED with 16 in favor and one opposed (Kelly).

The Meeting was recessed for eight minutes from 7:52 – 8:00 p.m.

New Business

10. Discussion and possible action to submit a letter to the Los Angeles Fire Department.

Ms. Rowe indicated that our local 12-hour EMT [Emergency Medical Technician] shift as been removed; the 24-hour shift still exists. Our Fire Station, which has been here for 50 years, is responsible for one of the largest Fire Department areas in the City, including four freeways; it's equivalent in size to the City of Burbank, which has four Fire Stations.

MOTION (by Ms. Rowe, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to submit a letter to Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Douglas Barry, Fire Station 91 (FS 91) and the five Fire Commissioners, requesting to maintain our Paramedic unit at FS 91 in Sylmar; also, for the letter to note that our Fire Station area is equivalent in size to the City of Burbank, which has four Fire Stations; and to note the particular needs of our community.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Flores noted that the nearby mountains are a fire hazard area. Mr. Ortega said that Burbank has six Fire Stations. Mr. Figueras related that local paramedics come from the Mission Hills area and no FS 91 staff is being cut back. Mr. Kelly would like to see a letter from the Fire Department within seven days affirming that there'll be no FS 91 paramedic cutbacks; Mr. Figueras replied that he will take care of that. Mr. Krall noted City budget cuts and possible upcoming layoffs, while we're already underserved. Ms. Herrera-Robles encourages writing the letter, especially if it can be combined with other NCs; she'll support it.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Flores).

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION APPROVED without any objections.

MOTION PASSED unanimously.

11. **Discussion and possible action to submit a letter to the Department of City Planning**

Mr. Gatmaitan, who wanted this Item agendaized, was not present.

MOTION (by Ms. Bernard, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to request that the L.A. City Planning Department not approve any new developments that require a zone and/or density change until the updated Sylmar Community Plan is completed and adopted.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Zekanis declared that it's "way too late to write a letter like this," anyway, it would restrict property use. Mr. Laufer remarked that this Motion should've first been presented to the Land Use Committee for their approval.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Bernard).

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION APPROVED without any objections.

MOTION FAILED with 11 opposed (Donnelly, Flores, Garcia, Gonzales, Kelly, Krall, Laufer, Ortega, Rowe, Schopper, Zekanis) and six abstaining (Arellano, Bernard, Bhakta, Cabrera, Reyes, Sandstrom).

12. **Discussion and possible action to submit a letter to the [L.A. City] Department of Transportation ([LA]DOT)**, requesting that the Department review

and resolve the traffic funnel and congestion at the intersection of Maclay and Gladstone [Avenues] with a traffic signal.

Mr. Gatmaitan, who wanted this Item agendaized, was not present.

MOTION (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to TABLE this Item and assign it to the Public Services Committee.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Bernard contended that we don't need to study this again; we've got current study results. Mr. Ortega believes that the Motion needs to be reworded to mention the 210 freeway.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Flores).

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION APPROVED without any objections.

MOTION PASSED with all in favor except for two abstentions (Arellano, Bernard).

13. Discussion and possible action to have the Outreach Committee research and adopt a memorial.

Ms. Flores reviewed some of the incident's history and expressed that we need to honor those who gave their lives for this community.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to have the Outreach Committee research and adopt a memorial for the miners who lost their lives in the 1971 Sylmar tunnel explosion; and to look into the park that was promised by Lockheed.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Laufer is concerned that we need prices before proceeding; this could be expensive.

MOTION AMENDMENT (by Ms. Zekanis): to change the word "adopt" in the Motion to "recommend," as in ". . . and recommend a memorial . . ."

MOTION AMENDMENT ACCEPTED.

MOTION PASSED unanimously.

14. Discussion and possible action to add an Alternative/Renewable Energy Sub-Committee to the Outreach Committee.

Mr. Gatmaitan, who wanted this Item agendaized, was not present. Mr. Bhakta agreed to put this Item on the Outreach Committee Agenda.

MOTION (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Ms. Zekanis): to TABLE this Item to add an Alternative/Renewable Energy Sub-Committee to the Outreach Committee.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

15. Discussion and possible action to send a letter [see below].

Ms. Vo-Ramirez passed the gavel to Ms. Flores, in order to speak on this Item. Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that the letter could be an “announcement that we’re here and we’d like to work with you,” as an “outreach tool.” Mr. Bhakta would like a list of who receives the letter.

MOTION (by Mr. Krall, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to send a letter from the SNC President introducing the board with an invitation for community collaboration to be distributed to community base organizations, schools, businesses and faith-based organizations within our jurisdiction.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

16. Discussion and possible action to participate in the Mayor’s Day of Service [see below].

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to participate in the Mayor’s Day of Service with financial support in the amount of \$1,500.00 for food, outreach and materials.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Schopper stated that the Committee doesn’t anticipate spending \$1,500; their contact, David Cooper, has provided all the materials and it’ll probably cost less than \$500. Mr. Donnelly agrees that it’s important to watch expenditures, but we need to have the higher amount allocated in case it costs more than \$500. Ms. Bernard noted that if the allocation is less than \$500, no permission is needed. Mr. Kelly stated that the \$1,500 isn’t a budget problem. Ms. Zekanis reminded that we need to spend the budget or the City will take it away.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Flores).

MOTION PASSED with one opposed (Cabrera) and two abstentions (Arellano and Kelly).

17. Discussion and possible action to approve the recommended and modified Secretary duties.

MOTION (by Ms. Bernard, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to approve the recommended and modified Secretary duties.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Bernard noted that in December 2007 the Secretary’s duties were emailed to Board Members. Mr. Kelly requested one clean copy.

MOTION PASSED with 15 in favor and two abstentions (Arellano and Ortega).

18. Discussion and possible action to review and adopt procedures for submitting a Community Impact Statement (CIS).

MOTION (by Ms. Zekanis, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to restrict and reinstate procedures for submitting a Community Impact Statement (CIS) that's been voted upon by the NC to include wording that the President will receive the CIS before it is submitted to the City.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Zekanis explained that we need to clarify our CIS procedures; it's important for City Council business. Mr. Krall believes that we need to restrict this to Items that are discussed in Committees and with the NC Board. Ms. Herrera-Robles confirmed that a CIS needs to reflect information and policies adopted by the NC. Mr. Laufer counseled that a CIS should, to avoid Brown Act violations, only be based upon agendaized Meetings discussions.

MOTION RESCINDED by Ms. Zekanis.

There was extensive discussion regarding the wording of the following Motion.

MOTION (by Ms. Zekanis, seconded by Ms. Bernard): that a Community Impact Statement (CIS) reflect the NC's position; that the President review the CIS before it is submitted to the City Council; that the Board Members who write the CIS meet before the next General Board Meeting to create a CIS-writing procedure template, which will also be reviewed by the President, for all CIS's, with that template to be approved by the Board; and that the template be applicable to all CIS's.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Bernard).

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION APPROVED without any objections.

MOTION PASSED without any objections, with Ms. Arellano and Mr. Bhakta abstaining.

19. Appointment of Committee Chairs by President

Ms. Vo-Ramirez appointed and the following Board Members accepted: Mr. Bhakta as Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Chair; Mr. Tavares as Events Chair (Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that Mr. Tavares had requested this position); and Ms. Sandstrom as Commercial and Business Interests Chair (Ms. Sandstrom volunteered for this position).

20. Board Member Comments

Ms. Bernard stated that we need to approve a permanent Secretary; she'd also like to hear each Committee's mission; and this was a well-run Meeting. Mr. Bhakta spoke that the hotel he works for has never had a state contract and is one of the best-run hotels in Sylmar. Mr. Garcia encouraged that if you don't have a Relay for Life Team Member application, let him know. Mr. Gonzales said that he's outreached to other NCs and they don't want to work with the SNC, though they're

working with each other; we need to do more outreach. Mr. Kelly expressed that we need to do better Agendizing and planning; most of this Meeting's "New Business Items" were "thrown at us" at the last Minute.

Ms. Flores secured a bus for Board Members to attend the Presidential Awards, and thanks Ms. Vo-Ramirez for her leadership. Mr. Donnelly disclosed that the website will have a new form for Stakeholder input. Mr. Krall related that other NC Land Use Committees are working with us. Mr. Laufer agrees that we need to do better Agendizing and planning, and would like the Public Services Committee to speak with the L.A. Police Department regarding our making an allocation to them. Ms. Rowe agrees with Mr. Laufer and remarked that we need to allocate youth program funds. Mr. Reyes questioned whatever happened to the two-hour parking on the east side of Foothill Boulevard. Ms. Zekanis indicated that she's looking forward to the Holy Cross Hospital expansion.

21. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that the next General Board Meeting will be here at Hubbard Street Elementary School on Thursday, April 24th at 6:30 p.m.

22. Closing Remarks, Announcements; Acknowledgements & Adjournment

Ms. Vo-Ramirez declared and, without any objections, this Meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.