

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)
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, June 19, 2008, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
At Sylmar Recreation Center (Small Gymnasium)
13109 Borden Ave., Sylmar, CA 91342

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

President Quyen Vo-Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by Stakeholder Debbie Schopper. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano, Hiral Bhakta, Cheri Blose, Hector Cabrera, Tammy Flores, Fabian Garcia, Randall Kelly, Nick Krall, Martin Laufer, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes, Jeanne Rowe, Jim Schopper, Quyen Vo-Ramirez, and Lynn Zekanis.

Board Members absent: Bonnie Bernard (excused), Rick Donnelly (excused), Gene Gatmaitan (unexcused), Saul Gonzales (excused), Jan Sandstrom (excused), and Esteban Tavares (excused).

Fifteen of the 21 Board Members were present at the beginning of the Meeting, which is a quorum, and the business of the Council could be conducted.

3. Housekeeping, explanation of Stakeholder comments and Speaker Cards, and Timekeeper.

Ms. Flores explained the above.

4. Discussion and action to take a position of support, opposition or neutrality regarding the proposed San Fer Gang Injunction by the City Attorney's Office.

Action will be recommended to the [L.A. City] Council District Seven Office and the [L.A.] City Attorney's Office before the [City] Hearing on June 24, 2008.

Public Comments

David Guzman, Mission Hills NC President, said that that NC will support the SNC decision. Stakeholder Jack Lindblad thinks the injunction [covers] too large [an area], though the NC should stand up against gangs and he supports the NC. Stakeholder Lois Fife supports the injunction and believes it is necessary, and that `we should not

be intimidated [by the gang].’ She supports the large area of the injunction ‘because maps show the activity,’ and she supports the LAPD (L.A. Police Dept.); ‘this allows them to do their job effectively.’ Stakeholder Linda Folly ‘would like see the [injunction] boundary extended.’ Stakeholder Bob Feeney, a realtor, ‘thinks that crime is a problem and will reduce property value, not the injunction.’ He’s ‘in favor of the injunction and making it as big as possible to give the police all the tools for them to eliminate gangs.’

Jorge Villegas, LAPD Mission Division Captain, said that the police ‘do not need the community’s support to move forward with the injunction. Based on the evidence that we have, we can proceed in court, but I cannot in good conscience move without the community’s support. We are public servants and we are here for you. The injunction is one tool and allows us to keep gangs from recruiting and growing. I want to support schools, the NC, the Chamber [of Commerce], the youth taskforce, and other organizations.’

Mr. Garcia, SNC Public Safety Committee Chairperson, read 21 speaker cards that, due to the time constraint, were not read or answered.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez requested a tally of the Town Hall surveys.

Jeanne Rowe, Outreach Committee Co-Chairperson, related that ‘letters of support and surveys were in favor of the injunction.’ She said that ‘the police don’t create crime, they respond to crime and the police are out there to protect all of us, so we need to support them.’

Mr. Garcia reported that the Town Hall surveys tally showed that 18 were in favor of the injunction and one against; an additional 66 surveys were all in favor of the injunction.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that ‘there is so much talk about this being a racially motivated injunction or an injunction to give the police a right to racially profile individuals. What is ironic is individuals at a previous Town Hall Meeting racially profiled an individual of our panel.’ She commented that the NC ‘can only respond to items that the community shares with us . . . to be accused of not informing the community about this injunction is unfair. This injunction has been in the news for about six months and there have been two Town Hall Meetings with various additional meetings in which individual Board Members have taken part. Be proactive. Contact us. Our contact information is public record. When have any community organizations contacted this Board to be a part of the dialogue? Unlike most gangs, the San Fers are generational recruiters. As part of one provision of the injunction, they can not associate with their grandpa, uncle, or son if they are San Fer gang members. This seems like an infringement upon their quality of life. But what about our quality of life? Whose quality life do we need to look at? In the end, it’s . . . to protect the general public . . . Has anyone considered the victims of this gang?’

Ms. Arellano supports the injunction. Ms. Blöse ‘would like it to encompass the other side of the 210’ [freeway] and asked why the other side wasn’t included. Captain

Villegas responded that he `suspects that there is gang activity on the other side of the 210, but right now it's not in the proposed injunction.'

Mr. Krall commented that `we should hold parents accountable . . . the injunction should provide safety for us. When our youth defy authority it's different from questioning authority.' He supports the injunction, as `crime is organized and we need to be organized.' Mr. Laufer is `surprised that anyone would say that the injunction would cause property value to go down. When crime goes down real estate goes up.' He supports the injunction because he has `lived here for over 21 years and [has] seen our community go down . . . Injunctions have been effective. This injunction will keep kids from growing up to be gang members.'

Mr. Garcia `was very concerned with racial profiling, and in speaking with several officers and the Captain,' he feels `that they are aware of the sensitivity [of the issue] and that [the Captain] will take care of that.' Mr. Kelly asked, `how many people have read the documents or have done the research?' He has `an issue with three of the provisions [of the injunction that] are not criminal acts,' and asked, "can we re-work that?" Mr. Ortega has a `fear that police will overstep the boundaries . . . This injunction needs modifying and I cannot support this injunction as is.'

Mr. Reyes said, `I don't see this as racial profiling. It's occurring in a Hispanic community; this is the only race that lives here. I support the injunction, our community supports this injunction and we should support the community.' Mr. Schopper related that he `ran into the San Fer gang' 30 years ago, `and they weren't good then and I don't think they're good now . . . look at the names: "Scrappy," "Bizarre," "Crook," "Panic," "Animal," "Criminal"; the police didn't give these names to the gang members; the gang gave them to themselves. This isn't a perfect document but we need to support the police officers. The gang won't go away by themselves . . . we need programs and we need to protect our community.'

Ms. Zekanis voiced that people have asked about the NC, `why didn't we do this and why didn't we do it this way? We only have so much of our budget to outreach to the community. Where is our community? It is your responsibility to find out what is going on, stay responsible . . . though I may have reservations, I support this injunction. Come to these meetings, find out what is happening and if you chose not to be a part of the process, you don't get a voice on this.' Ms. Flores commented that she `hasn't felt safe handing a flier to a gang member . . . I felt like I had to watch my back. We have had many meetings.' She `wants more clarifications' about the injunction.

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Cabrera): that the Sylmar Neighborhood Council adopt a resolution to support the injunction, but that it not be implemented before taking action on the following conditions:

1. Boundary adjustments: Concerns of boundaries have been expressed research proposed. Some feel that it is too big others while feel that it is not big enough. There are areas that are under the injunction that should be and other areas that should not be. The investigation should redefine those boundaries.

2. City supplementation and coordination: We make sure the City Departments give input regarding city services options and how we can co-ordinate city services with police activity within the injunction areas.
3. Supporting documentation: That the injunction not be implemented until we have been given stats and data that support these boundaries or reasons why those boundaries were not included.
4. Community process implementation: to include a community process to be activated before implementation of injunction.
5. Quarterly report: to provide a report to the community to see if the injunction is working.”

DISCUSSION: Ms. Zekanis said, ‘I think this Motion has questions that should have been brought fourth to the Board before this Meeting. I don’t understand the Motion . . . Most of these have been answered over and over again by the Captain and the City Attorney’s Office. [The injunction] is a legal proposal. I don’t know if we can attach City services to it, and crime [statistics] will be given to us on a monthly basis anyway. Mr. Laufer remarked that he ‘would have to oppose this Motion. This has been worked on by the City Attorney’s office for over eight years, and I would say that they know more then we do and I would have to support them.’ Mr. Krall declared that ‘we need to support [the injunction] as is, not at all or stay neutral. We shouldn’t break it up.’ He ‘would prefer to see a different Motion.’

Mr. Ortega thinks ‘we should have more of a community process to this proposed injunction . . . I’m looking at how it will be implemented or articulated. How can we make the injunction better?’ Mr. Garcia related that ‘originally, I thought that this Motion sounded good, but now I can see that it doesn’t make sense. The only one that I would still ask for is having [the police’s] word that we will get [statistics], particularly [about] reduction in crime and those served.’ Mr. Schopper is concerned that ‘this seems to be a block of the injunction. I don’t understand the five points. There have been public records and eight years of research.’

Ms. Vo-Ramirez asked if other Stakeholders would like to speak. Stakeholder Ms. Fife thinks that ‘we need to support this injunction and this Motion is a block on the injunction.’ Stakeholder Ms. Rose said, ‘I think the Motion is awkward [and] has too many things . . . We need to support [the injunction] or not.’ A Stakeholder said, ‘I think it’s great that this Board supports the injunction. I know this is a tough job and I support you guys, and you should keep doing what you are doing.’

Captain Villegas added that he ‘would like to encourage the board to not support the Motion. It appears that it was not actually thought out too well that it would block this injunction. All the information that we have has been given to us by the gang members. We didn’t wake up one morning and say “we’re going to go after this gang.” This has been a strategy provided by the City Attorney’s office based on eight years of data. If you want more city services or just services that are due to you contact your City Council office.’

Mr. Cabrera explained that ‘one of the reasons that I seconded the Motion is because . . . people who elected me have said that this seems to be rushed . . . we need to

listen to our community.’ Mr. Garcia asked whether Ms. Flores would `retract the Motion.’ Ms. Flores said that her `intention was not to block the injunction. I totally support the injunction . . . I made this Motion so that we can get more information to our community. This proposal started eight years ago and [the NC has] been around for five years; where were the police and the City Attorney then?

Mr. Laufer thinks `that this Motion [would] block [the injunction] and . . . does not refer to the [Agenda Item]. [The] Item states, “what type of position [should the Neighborhood Council] take [on the injunction]: support, neutrality or non-support?” This is the one and only item of this Agenda, and [other discussions] may be a violation of the Brown Act.’

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Mr. Kelly).

There were no objections to the **CALL FOR THE QUESTION**.

MOTION FAILED on a Roll Call vote as follows: Mr. Cabrera – yes; Ms. Flores – yes; Ms. Blose – no; Mr. Kelly – no; Mr. Krall – no; Mr. Laufer – no; Mr. Ortega – no; Mr. Reyes – no; Ms. Rowe – no; Mr. Schopper – no; Ms. Vo-Ramirez – no; Ms. Zekanis – no; Ms. Arellano – abstain; Mr. Bhakta – abstain; and Mr. Garcia – abstain. Totals: two in favor, ten opposed, and three abstaining.

MOTION (by Ms. Zekanis, seconded by Mr. Garcia): that the Sylmar Neighborhood Council support the San Fer Gang injunction.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Kelly asked Ms. Zekanis if she would be [willing to amend her Motion to] `request the review of three items.’ Ms. Zekanis declined. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that `two Board members had asked to be excused from tonight’s board meeting because they felt they would receive retaliation or intimidation.’

MOTION PASSED with 11 in favor, two opposed (Mr. Kelly and Mr. Ortega) and two abstentions (Mr. Cabrera and Ms. Flores).

Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked Stakeholders for their attendance and Board Members for their vote.

A **MOTION** was made to **ADJOURN** the Meeting.

MOTION PASSED with 16 in favor, one opposed (Mr. Ortega), and two abstentions (Mr. Bhakta and Ms. Flores).

The Meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 8:30 p.m.