

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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Secretary: David Levin

Minutes of the
SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL (SNC)
GENERAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, August 28, 2008

at Sylmar Elementary School, 13291 Phillippi Ave., Sylmar, CA 91342

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

President Quyen Vo-Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. LAPD Mission Division Captain Jorge Villegas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano, Hiral Bhakta, Cheri Blose (late), Rick Donnelly, Fabian Garcia, Randall Kelly, Martin Laufer, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes, Jeanne Rowe, Jan Sandstrom, Jim Schopper, Esteban Tavares, Quyen Vo-Ramirez, and Lynn Zekanis.

Board Members absent: Bonnie Bernard (excused), Hector Cabrera (excused), Tammy Flores (excused), Gene Gatmaitan (unexcused), Saul Gonzales (excused), and Nick Krall (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. Also attending were nine Stakeholders and Guests.

3. Adoption of July 24, 2008 BOD Minutes

The following correction to the July 24, 2008 General Board Meeting Minutes was requested:

Page two, Item five: "Officer John Larrigan" should be "Officer John Lonergran".

MOTION (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to approve the Minutes of the July 24, 2008 General Board Meeting, as corrected.

MOTION PASSED without objection.

4. Housekeeping, Stakeholder comments and Speaker Cards. Timekeeper.

Mr. Donnelly explained the above.

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

LAPD (L.A. Police Dept.) Captain Villegas reported that gang crime decreased 5.6%, violent crime decreased 9%, while property crime increased 10%, especially car burglaries and thefts in the daytime, this year, with the Foothill Boulevard corridor “being hit hardest.” Freeways and off ramps are the responsibility of the Highway Patrol. There’s a “party car specifically addressing parties,” considered “a nuisance” by the community because of their loud noise, trash, etc.; the police are seeking to restore funding for a second “party car.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that Mr. Krall is starting a revitalization committee, and she will refer him to the Captain. The Captain continued that a “boot camp”-style 16-week academy for approximately 100 at-risk youth is being established to “provide discipline . . . and, hopefully, jobs for them,” as well as parenting skills for parents. He’s requesting that the NC budget for future youth programs.

Angel Barnuevo, Field Deputy for State 20th District Senator Alex Padilla (818-901-5588; angel.barnuevo@sen.ca.gov), announced that the Homeowners and Renters Assistance Program is still available and can be applied for at the Sylmar Library on September 3rd from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and at Senator Padilla’s Office.

Mr. Donnelly reported that a Stakeholder said they couldn’t find the Agendas and Minutes on the website; he’s following up. Ms. Arellano has photos submitted by a Stakeholder of a knocked-over power pole at Gladstone Ave. and Bledsoe St. Mr. Schopper responded that he also saw it and contacted the DWP (Dept. of Water and Power), who said that the pole is safe and will be replaced. Mr. Bhakta announced a fundraiser on September 25th at 6:30 p.m. at the Moose Lodge. There’ll be a Fundraiser and Walk on September 6th for the Youth Cancer Survivors Scholarship Fund. Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked Board Members and Stakeholders for their attendance at the Youth4Unity and National Night Out events, and said that the EIR (Environmental Impact Report) for the K-8 Span School is available at the Office.

6. Public Comments

Stakeholder Ivan Forbes, who lives next to the freeway, said that the California Highway Patrol agreed that there’s too much freeway noise. He’s asking the NC to endorse a petition, the text of which he distributed, for a sound wall to be constructed and said that the City said they’d endorse the petition. Ms. Vo-Ramirez responded that NC Members can sign the petition as individuals. Mr. Barnuevo, of Senator Padilla’s Office, agreed to help.

Stakeholder John Sherman has led Big Bands playing swing music and wants to start another band. He distributed “a brief review of” himself and would like the NC’s help. Mr. Schopper encouraged Mr. Sherman to contact him. Ms. Vo-Ramirez suggested that Virginia Corbin-Marinovich, Director, Sylmar Recreation Center (818-367-5656; Virginia.Corbin-Marinovich@lacity.org), may help.

7. Reports

Secretary

The Secretary reported that approximately one Stakeholder visits the Office every two weeks, and there are few callers. The Office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 – 3:15, except the fourth week of each month.

Treasurer's Report/Budget Committee

Mr. Kelly reported that the Office landlord agreed to not raise the rent. He reminded Board Members to bring payment documents to him to facilitate payments.

Land Use

Mr. Ortega reported that there are proposed projects that have little landscaping or other open space, and he's open to input about it.

Commercial/Business Interests

Ms. Sandstrom reported that nothing's been done about the facility on Hubbard St. that's been empty for more than one year. Ms. Vo-Ramirez suggested contacting Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; dan.rosales@lacity.org), and that Charles Chacon, LAPD Mission Division Senior Lead Officer (Cell 818-634-0619, Office 818-838-9847), can cite it for Building and Safety purposes.

Outreach

Mr. Bhakta reported the "wonderful, large participation at the National Night Out" event. He thanked Officer Chacon and the NC, especially Ms. Vo-Ramirez and Mr. Tavares, for their assistance.

Election Committee – Chair to be appointed

Events

Mr. Tavares said that there was no report.

Public Services

Mr. Schopper reported that Councilman Alarcon wants to convene some Neighborhood Watch-type groups to increase public awareness and preparedness. He apologized for the Committee's recent Meeting website posting problem. The Committee will meet September 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the NC Office.

Beautification/Grants

Ms. Arellano reported that she'll attend a September Grants Workshop regarding the "\$10,000 grant we're working on" to complete by October.

Education

Mr. Gonzales is absent and there is no report.

Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness

Mr. Garcia reported that he's working on establishing and described a VST (Volunteer Surveillance Team) program in which civilians would have radios and call the police if they see suspicious activity.

Bylaws Ad Hoc

Ms. Zekanis reported that the Committee had two Meetings this month and will be meeting again soon; contact her for more information.

Tabled

8. Adoption of the June 19, 2008 Special Board Meeting Minutes

The following correction to the June 19, 2008 Special Board Meeting Minutes was requested:

Page two, second paragraph: "Foothill Division" should be "Mission Division".

Page two, last paragraph: "We want to support" should be "I want to support".

Page five, next-to-last paragraph: Mr. Kelly was not opposed to the Motion to adjourn.

MOTION (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Mr. Reyes): to approve the Minutes of the June 19, 2008 Special Board Meeting, as corrected.

MOTION PASSED with Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Sandstrom and Mr. Tavares abstaining.

Old Business

9. Discussion and possible action regarding Sylmar Relay for Life funding.

Mr. Kelly explained why this Item is being addressed again.

MOTION (by Ms. Sandstrom, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to withdraw approved funding of \$500.00 toward LAUSD facility fee during Sylmar Relay for Life and fund the cost Sylmar Relay for Life T-Shirts at \$605.00.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Mr. Kelly). There were no objections to the **CALL FOR THE QUESTION**.

MOTION PASSED without any objections, with Ms. Arellano abstaining.

New Business

10. Presentation by Mr. Al Grazioli from Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and progress with the Valley Region K-8 Span School on Bledsoe Ave, Sylmar CA 91342.

Mr. Grazioli presented, noting that the new school at Dronfield and Bledsoe Sts. Will relieve overcrowding at five other schools. He explained the facility and access, using a large diagram. Due diligence has been done; no toxic materials were found on the site, so no environmental cleanup is needed. There'll be equestrian trails on the street frontages and an EIR Hearing on September 9th. Regarding three items that cannot be mitigated: construction noise; pedestrian safety; and connecting the site's surrounding sidewalks (which is very expensive; the LAUSD will pay half of the cost if the City funds the other half), he's asking the NC to adopt a "Statement of Overriding Considerations." Trees will be spread around the campus and the design will support solar panels, though funding for that is yet to be allocated for the panels. He'll confirm whether the design includes decomposed granite. The Principal, Vice Principal, and others will monitor student access in regard to horses being nearby. The LAUSD is required by law to make Eminent Domain offers based upon the market rate; homeowners can get their own appraisal and the LAUSD will pay for up to \$2,500 of that cost. However, the "vast majority of cases" never get to Eminent Domain and have "been very successful."

11. Presentation by Mr. Hugh McDonald from the Optimist Club. Mission: “providing hope and positive vision . . . brings out the best in Kids.”

Stakeholder Hugh McDonald described the Optimist Club as being “dedicated to the betterment of youth.” A new Club is beginning which “can design its own projects in keeping with community needs.” Ms. Arellano offered to help and Mr. Bhakta noted that the Club is “very good at partnering with community groups.”

12. Discussion and possible action to support SB (Senate Bill) 1420, Menu Labeling, proposed by Senator Alex Padilla. Presentation by Field Deputy Angel Barnuevo.

Mr. Barnuevo explained the legislation, which is intended to help lower obesity and diabetes rates, especially in children. He noted that they’re working with the Restaurant Association, which is “not in opposition,” and have amended the legislation to only apply to restaurants that have 20 or more facilities, and that the legislation has wide support throughout the state. It’ll soon be sent to the Governor and be implemented by 2011.

MOTION (by Ms. Zekanis, seconded by Mr. Garcia): to support SB 1420, Menu Labeling, proposed by Senator Alex Padilla.

DISCUSSION: Several Board Members asked questions, which Mr. Barnuevo responded to as noted above.

MOTION PASSED with Mr. Kelly, Mr. Laufer and Ms. Sandstrom opposed, and Ms. Arellano, Mr. Bhakta and Ms. Blose abstaining.

Recess

There was a brief recess.

13. Discussion and possible action to approve the following recommendations by the Land Use Committee:

a. 13560 Fenton Avenue, Amendment to waive landscaping requirement for a previously approved Zone Amendment to allow T-Mobile wireless facilities on LADWP property: substituting a decorative wall instead. DWP has stated they will not allow landscaping on DWP property.

Mr. Ortega distributed and described project documents. He discussed this at length with T-Mobile. The project will have “little or no impact” on the larger community and will “significantly impact the immediate community” by improving cell phone reception. “No neighbors appeared at the Meeting” and he “hasn’t received any phone calls.” He “strongly recommends approval” of the project and will specify that T-Mobile install a “decorative wall” that is not cinder block.

MOTION (by Mr. Ortega, seconded by Ms. Blose): that the 13560 Fenton Avenue T-Mobile wireless facility project have a split-face block wall.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

14. Discussion and possible action to approve a Bylaws Template Article.

Ms. Zekanis distributed and reviewed the “Sylmar [NC] Bylaws, 10/19/07,” “D.O.N.E. Proposed Bylaws Template,” and “Template bylaw language.” The Template will standardize all of the NC’s Bylaws.

MOTION (by Ms. Zekanis, seconded by Mr. Bhakta): to approve Article I of the Sylmar Neighborhood Council Bylaws as it has been inserted into the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Bylaws Template.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

15. Discussion and possible action to approve the following recommendations by the Outreach Committee:

a. to have Black Polo Shirts and T-shirts made with Sylmar logo on the front & either “Volunteer” or “Director” on the back.

Ms. Rowe suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** this Item for further consideration.

b. to recognize our community volunteers.

MOTION (by Ms. Rowe, seconded by Mr. Tavares): to recognize our community volunteers, “good neighbors”, and concerned citizens with certificates of appreciation and to present the certificates, in addition to turning those names in to Council District Seven for additional recognition.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Tavares “wants to use this as an outreach tool.” Ms. Arellano added that it would be good to use at the Community Appreciation Day.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Mr. Kelly). There were no objections to the **CALL FOR THE QUESTION**.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

16. Discussion and possible action to explore additional locations for Sylmar Neighborhood Council office lease.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that DONE that the NC budget be divided into thirds: Operations, Outreach, and Community Improvement. The Office lease is up in October. We’re currently spending more than one-third of our budget, or \$36,812, for Operations, including \$19,372 for the Office. The Executive Board is looking at two other possible Office locations and invites other Board Members to offer other locations. Mr. Kelly added that there’s “no play in the budget,” except for Facilities. We still want an Office, but just need to look at the cost. Ms. Vo-Ramirez stated that they’ll bring possible Office locations to the next Meeting.

17. Board Member Comments

Mr. Bhakta thanks Virginia Corbin-Marinovich, Director, Sylmar Recreation Center, for her National Night Out help. Mr. Garcia reminded about the Volunteer Surveillance Team opportunity; it’s an “easier way to be directly involved in fighting crime.” Mr. Laufer asks the Public Safety or Public Services Committee to ask the City to repave Roxford St. between San Fernando Rd. and the 5 freeway; it’s a “dangerous” “public safety hazard” with an “immediate need.” Mr. Kelly noted that “we’re doing good things” and encouraged to “keep up the good fight.”

Mr. Ortega announced that the next Land Use Committee Meeting will be September 8th. Mr. Tavares announced that the Sylmar Park Halloween Fest needs volunteers; “sign up with him.” Mr. Reyes stated that Mr. Laufer’s letter to LADOT (the L.A. Dept. of Transportation) should be approved at the September 10th Committee Meeting at the Office; there wasn’t a quorum last time. Ms. Vo-Ramirez reminded of the opportunity to participate in Committee Meetings, and for Committee Chairs to bring Committee Meeting Minutes and Agendas, and also Committee Members lists to Mr. Donnelly for website posting.

18. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced the next General Board Meeting date as September 25th at 6:30 p.m. at Palacio Torres off San Fernando Road.

19. Closing Remarks, Announcements; Acknowledgements & Adjournment

Ms. Vo-Ramirez **ADJOURNED** the Meeting without any objections at 9:05 p.m.

Minutes written by DL.