

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)
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, November 20, 2008

Hubbard Street Elementary School, Auditorium, 13325 Hubbard St., Sylmar, CA 91342

NOTE: This Meeting changed from a General Board Meeting to a Special Board Meeting due to the Sylmar fires.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Quyen Vo-Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:44 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano, Hector Cabrera, Rick Donnelly, Tammy Flores (late), Fabian Garcia (late), Randall Kelly, Nick Krall, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes, Jan Sandstrom, Jim Schopper, Esteban Tavares (late), Quyen Vo-Ramirez, and Lynn Zekanis. Board Members Flores, Garcia, and Tavares were late due to their work at the Evacuation Center.

Board Members absent: Bonnie Bernard (unexcused), Hiral Bhakta (excused), Cheri Blose (unexcused), Saul Gonzales (excused), Martin Laufer (excused), and Jeanne Rowe (excused).

Eleven 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 13 Stakeholders and Guests.

3. Adoption of Minutes -- October 23, 2008 General Board Meeting

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #5.]

MOTION (by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to approve the Minutes of the October 23, 2008 General Board Meeting.

The following corrections to the October 23, 2008 General Board Meeting Minutes were requested:

Ms. Sandstrom had phone called for herself and Ms. Blose to be excused.

Page five, Item #7, "Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness": "including by many youth" should be "including help by many youth."

MOTION to APPROVE THE MINUTES as corrected **PASSED** without any objections, with Ms. Zekanis abstaining.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez reminded Board Members to contact her regarding [Board Meeting] absences.

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

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained this.

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

Manny Figueras, Constituent Svcs. Rep. for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; manny.figueras@lacity.org), thanked the LAPD (L.A. Police Dept.), LAFD (L.A. Fire Dept.), and business and community members for their work assisting evacuees of the Sayre Fire, which is under investigation. Many homes and some businesses were destroyed. The Evacuation Center is still at Sylmar High School. FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Administration), the DWP (L.A. Dept. of Water and Power), the Gas Company and others have been open every day at Sylmar Park. He distributed a Press Release and announced that the LAUSD (L.A. Unified School District) awarded Sylmar High School Teacher Jose Navarro as a "California Teacher of the Year."

Mr. Kelly distributed flyers and announced that Poly High School "will be serving Thanksgiving Dinner" November 27th from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. to the Oakridge fire victims. Crime is dramatically down and arrests up as a result of the recently enacted Gang Injunction. He also distributed flyers and announced that there'll be an Environmental Youth Conference December 13th, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the L.A. Convention Center [www.milliontreesla.org]; "admission is free for youth ages 12 to 21."

Mr. Donnelly reports that the website is up-to-date and that Stakeholders are getting information. Mr. Krall announced that the next Relay for Life will be April 18-19; volunteers are being signed up. The Chamber of Commerce moved into a new Office next to Caruso's Restaurant. Ms. Arellano announced the November 22nd Mayor's Day of Service / Sylmar Appreciation Day at Sylmar Park, starting at 8:00 a.m. Mr. Cabrera announced and invited Board Members to attend the Buckeye Neighborhood Watch Meeting at Osceola Elementary School Auditorium November 25th at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Schopper announced and invited fire victims to the Church on the Way Thanksgiving Dinner, November 25th at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked Board Members, and community and student volunteers who assisted fire evacuees. The Red Cross was six to seven hours late and arrived without supplies or a Registered Nurse; Board Members arranged to get supplies, a Nurse and School Police to assist. Evacuees were "sustained by this community . . . our home." Ms. Flores, Mr. Garcia

and Mr. Tavares are, at this moment, at the Sylmar Recreation Center securing food for evacuees. "We're here for you."

6. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

7. Reports

Secretary's Report

Dozens of e-mails were sent to the Secretary in the three weeks since the last General Board Meeting. Many Stakeholders called the Office, most to offer assistance of clothing, food or their time to fire victims and evacuees. Land use project documents, bills, event flyers, and such were quickly forwarded and/or posted as needed. When not in the Office, communications were maintained by e-mail and phone regarding the Office, the website, fire assistance, and more.

Treasurer's Report/Budget Committee

Mr. Kelly said that there was no report.

Land Use

Mr. Ortega reported that the Committee met on Monday and will meet next on December 12th.

Commercial/Business Interests

Ms. Sandstrom said that there was no report.

Outreach

Mr. Bhakta and Ms. Rowe were unable to attend this Meeting; there was no report.

Election Committee – Chair to be appointed

There was no report.

Events

Mr. Tavares invited Board Members to help with fire victim and evacuee assistance at the Evacuation Center at Sylmar Recreation Center.

Public Services

Mr. Schopper reminded that the Mayor's Day of Service / Sylmar Appreciation Day will be on November 22nd at Sylmar Park, starting at 8:00 a.m., and if there're enough volunteers and time, they might also clean the Bike Pathway. There was a November 3rd Ceremony at Hansen Dam; the Mayor and other officials thanked people for their assistance with the Marek and Sesnon Fires.

Beautification/Grants

Ms. Arellano also reminded about the Mayor's Day of Service / Sylmar Appreciation Day on the 22nd.

Education

Mr. Gonzales was unable to attend this Meeting and there was no report.

Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness

Mr. Garcia said that he'll report during Item #11.

Bylaws Ad Hoc

Ms. Zekanis reported that the Committee will work on Bylaws Article IV, Sections 1, 2, and 3 for the next General Board Meeting and that volunteers are welcome.

Old Business

8. Discussion and possible action regarding arranging a group visit to the available office at the Sylmar Recreation Center before the Board makes any decision regarding moving the Neighborhood Council Office from our current location.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that the Board already had and voted to approve a Motion to move the Office [at the September 25th General Board Meeting]. DONE has approved the move and the contract has been signed, but the Board can visit the new Office space. Unneeded office equipment and supplies will be returned to DONE and/or donated. Keys to the new Office will be given to each Board Member and the Recreation Center Director [Virginia Corbin-Marinovich] will also have a key.

Recess

There was no recess during the Meeting.

New Business

9. Discussion and possible action to participate in the Mayor's Day of Service.

Mr. Schopper offered that he'll pick up t-shirts, water and snacks for fire evacuees and lunch will be served at the event. He added that "Guillermo Reyes secured a bus" to bring people there and the Team Leader will be Hiral Bhakta.

MOTION (by Mr. Schopper, seconded by Ms. Flores): to participate in the Mayor's Day of Service Saturday, November 22nd, with a \$1,000 allocation for food and supplies.

DISCUSSION: Anyone can use the bus and other attendees can carpool.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Ms. Zekanis). There were no objections.

MOTION PASSED without any objections, with Ms. Arellano abstaining due to being under the age of 18.

10. Discussion and possible action to collaborate with Oakridge Mobile Home Park in their annual Thanksgiving Dinner celebration.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez removed this Item from the Agenda because a donor was already found. The Dinner will be held at the Knollwood Country Club.

11. Report on the Sylmar Sayre Fire by Board Members who participated at the Evacuation Center.

Ms. Arellano noted that the “Sayre Fire brought the community together . . . [there are] more than 300 names on the volunteer list.” Many youth volunteers” felt “mistreated,” ordered and moved around, confused, disrespected and “accused of misbehaviors.” “Overall, our youth volunteer support was outstanding.” Mr. Garcia observed that “several Board Members [who volunteered] didn’t sleep . . . Issues with the Red Cross will be ironed out.” Volunteers are still needed at the Recreation Center, which will be open 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Krall said that, as soon as he knew there was a major fire, he called radio stations to advise them that an evacuation center would be opened. He has phone numbers of Red Cross and other officials if needed in future situations. Board and community Members set up for and served evacuees while the Red Cross’s “militaristic” approach told volunteers that they and their supplies weren’t needed, and led to many other problems. Mr. Donnelly thanked volunteers.

Ms. Flores thanked Ms. Arellano and Mr. Tavares for organizing the youth volunteers. She was disappointed with the bureaucracy that Board and community Members had to deal with. Mr. Kelly stated that the “biggest issue that we had was communication,” especially with the Red Cross. The Red Cross wanted to pull all the donations and give them to the Salvation Army to distribute, instead of keeping them at the Recreation Center for distribution to evacuees.

Mr. Reyes pointed out that “the community really pulled together” and he thanked them, including local businesses. Ms. Sandstrom volunteered to help. Mr. Schopper noted that the Oakridge Mobile Home Park and other residents now know who the SNC is, adding, “The Red Cross is a good organization, “but they . . . run it like a corporation . . . We are first responders.” Ms. Zekanis is “really impressed by the number of people who came out to help . . . including the youth at one, two and 3:00 in the morning” . . . Ms. Arellano and Mr. Tavares “did a phenomenal job.”

Mr. Tavares thanked “everybody that was there.” Mr. Figueras is “very proud of all the Members of this Neighborhood Council.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez related that there’re “other unsung heroes” in the community, including Sylmar Women’s Club Members who were burned out of the Oakridge Mobile Home Park, who volunteered to help. She thanked Von’s, Sam’s Club, Home Depot, Pizza Hut, Ralph’s, Lowe’s, Guido’s, Domino’s, 7-11, WalMart, the Sylmar Recreation Center, Sylmar High School, and St. Didicus Church and others. She added, “The Recreation Center held onto donations so that the Salvation Army wouldn’t pick them up and sell them back to the community.” “Many of the volunteers . . . were homeless.” The LAPD and LAFD, RAP Maintenance, Rite-Aid, and Union Ice also helped. She also thanked Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; dan.rosales@lacity.org), and Board Members who physically helped put out and prevent fires.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that Councilman Alarcon is convening and invited the SNC to Co-Host a Joint City Education and Neighborhoods Committee Meeting

November 25th, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at Mission College, at which many City Departments will present.

12. Discussion and possible action regarding having a Town Hall Meeting regarding the Sylmar fires.

Ms. Flores announced a Town Hall Meeting November 25th, 6:30 p.m. at Sylmar High School regarding evacuation procedures. Ms. Zekanis wants to ensure “collaboration” between City Departments and the SNC. Ms. Vo-Ramirez clarified that Councilman Alarcon is holding a formal Meeting to debrief the community, while the Town Hall Meeting will be “to disseminate information.” Councilman Alarcon specifically invited the SNC to participate in the City Education and Neighborhoods Committee Meeting and “this is unheard of.”

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): for the SNC to have a Town Hall Meeting following the Mayor’s Meeting, on Tuesday, November 25th at 6:00 p.m. at Sylmar High School Spartan Auditorium.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

13. Discussion and possible action to increase the Secretary’s hours

MOTION (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to increase the Secretary’s hours to 15 hours per week, anticipating increased workload.

It was agreed to **AMEND THE MOTION**, to read as follows: to increase the Secretary’s hours to 15 hours per week, anticipating increased workload, for 90 days, following a review after 60 days.

AMENDED MOTION PASSED without objection, with Mr. Tavares abstaining.

14. Board Member Comments

Ms. Flores commented that it was “good to take pictures of the Evacuation Center work and volunteers for the [SNC] website,” and that the Pacoima Christmas Parade offered the SNC the opportunity to have a float. Ms. Arellano wants to thank everyone for their Evacuation Center help. Mr. Kelly announced the San Fernando Coalition on Gangs Children’s Faire at Woodley Park on Saturday from 8:00 – 4:00.

15. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced the next General Board Meeting on December 18th, 6:30 p.m. at Sylmar Recreation Center, Small Gym. She reminded Board Members to submit to her Agenda Items at least one week in advance of the Meeting.

16. Closing Remarks, Announcements; Acknowledgements & Adjournment

Ms. Vo-Ramirez wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and **ADJOURNED** the Meeting without any objections at 8:06 p.m.

Minutes written by DL.