

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



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Minutes of the  
**SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL (SNC)**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING**  
**Thursday, May 28, 2009**

Sylmar Recreation Center, 13109 Borden Ave., Large Gym, Sylmar, CA 91342

**1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

President Quyen Vo-Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:42 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, Hector Cabrera, Rick Donnelly, Tammy Flores, Fabian Garcia (late), Randall Kelly, Nick Krall, Martin Laufer, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes, Jeanne Rowe, Jan Sandstrom, Jim Schopper, Esteban Tavares and Quyen Vo-Ramirez.

Board Members absent: Bonnie Bernard (unexcused), Cheri Blose (excused), Saul Gonzales (unexcused), and Rudy Lopez (excused).

Fifteen of the 20 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 approximately 23 Stakeholders and Guests.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

Ms. Vo-Ramirez suggested and it was agreed to TABLE approval of the March 26, 2009 Minutes to the next General Board Meeting.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to approve the Minutes of the April 23, 2009 General Board Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** with Ms. Arellano abstaining.

**MOTION** (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Donnelly): to approve the Minutes of the April 21, 2009 Special Board Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** with Mr. Bhakta, Ms. Arellano, Mr. Kelly, Ms. Rowe, Mr. Schopper, and Mr. Tavares abstaining.

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

Ms. Flores explained the above.

**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), announced that Fire Chief Barry is leaving the Fire Dept. as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Figueras distributed "Mandatory Water Conservation" flyers and announced that, June 1st, reduced water consumption rules and a new City Ordinance take effect. He distributed flyers about and announced that June 12-14 at El Cariso Park, the "Heroes of Life" community festival will be held.

John Lonergan, LAPD Mission Division (west of Glenoaks Blvd.) Senior Lead Officer (818-634-0610), reported that crime is 20% lower than last year in his half of Sylmar, though property crimes have increased around El Cariso Park. The LAPD has made 180 Gang Injunction services so far. The Special Problems Unit will work on Senior Lead Officer Chacon's side of Sylmar. A "party car" will have eight Officers rotating to help with loud noise, fireworks and other complaints.

Yolanda Anguiano, District Representative for State 39th District Assemblyman Felipe Fuentes (818-504-3911; yolanda.anguiano@asm.ca.gov), announced that Assemblyman Fuentes is working on renewable energy and will attend the Valley Regional Congress [May 30<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.]. She encouraged Stakeholders to direct State budget concerns to the Assemblyman's Office.

Ms. Arellano announced a Chinese Auction at JCPenney on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Ms. Flores encouraged registering to attend the Valley Regional Congress.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez congratulated the SNC for being selected by Valley Regional Congress voters as the Neighborhood Council of the Year. She met with Councilman Alarcon regarding a traffic study to be done of the Herrick Ave. – Roxford St. intersection, a speed limit study of San Fernando Road, and a mobile surveillance camera study. A "Blight District" is proposed to reduce the number of billboards. The Councilman was concerned that Assemblyman Fuentes didn't have jurisdiction over the Oakridge Mobile Home Park, but the Assemblyman offered a lot of help regarding Fires assistance and recovery, and was properly and appropriately recognized at Community Appreciation Day [March 28<sup>th</sup>]. Mandatory water conservation rules include watering lawns only on Tuesdays or Thursdays before 9:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m., no hosing driveways or other hard surfaces, and no excessive runoff. She urged each Board Member to bring a Stakeholder to these General Board Meetings, to increase attendance and community participation. Also, she's been receiving a lot of communications regarding absent Board Members and is looking into removal of absentee Members.

## **6. Public Comments**

Trini Rodriguez, Operations Director of Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural (13197-A Gladstone Ave., Sylmar; 818-896-1479; info@tiachucha.com; www.tiachucha.com), distributed brochures about Tia Chucha, a community resource, and announced that they're back in Sylmar.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### Secretary

The Secretary reported that information is being collected and work done to fix Board Member e-mail account systemic and individual problems. E-mails, phone calls and mail from Stakeholders regarding various issues and projects were forwarded. The Webmaster and DONE [the L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment] were worked with to update and correct SNC website listings.

### Treasurer/Budget

Mr. Kelly indicated that the Budget will be discussed later in this Meeting.

### Land Use

Mr. Ortega reported that variance requests will be discussed later in this Meeting.

### Commercial/Business Interests

Ms. Sandstrom reported that some businesses haven't returned, yet some new businesses are locating in Sylmar, and she encouraged shopping first in Sylmar.

### Outreach

Mr. Bhakta announced that next Committee Meeting Tuesday, June 9, 6:30 p.m. here at the Susan B. Anthony Building.

Election Committee – Chair to be appointed.

### Events

Ms. Arellano reported that there'll be a Community Relations Forum co-sponsored by ABC7 TV in September or October.

### Public Services

Mr. Schopper thanked Stakeholders Barbara Winslow and Ann Stockman for their input about the Polk St. re-marking, the mistakes of which were corrected, and thanked Mr. Figueras for his diligence with that. Stakeholder Lisa McDonald was contacted regarding Veterans Park trees that were cut down due to fire damage; they'll be re-planted. The intersection of Tyler St. and Glenoaks Blvd. will get a traffic signal. Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; dan.rosales@lacity.org), reported that the intersection of Herrick Ave. and Roxford St. was also approved "for a traffic signal . . . within a three-year period." Mr. Reyes reported that the Committee didn't meet this month; it was postponed to next month.

Beautification/Grants – Chair to be appointed.

Education

Mr. Gonzales was not present and there was no report.

Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness

Mr. Garcia was at the Community Police Advisory Board Meeting, Ms. Flores reported that the Committee is preparing a Sylmar Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Bylaws ad hoc

Mr. Laufer reported that [former Board Member] Lynn Zekanis prepared the Bylaws update and elections paperwork, which is due to DONE by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Tabled Business**

8. **Report** from Tammy Flores, Sylmar Neighborhood Council liaison to the Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG). Updates on Oakridge residents [Fire evacuees], City services, debris removal, rebuilding, etc.

Ms. Flores reported that LTRG meetings, every third Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. at St. Didacus Church, are open to the public. A “fiscal sponsor . . . signed off” to keep grant money in the community. A local church may assist in the [Oakridge Mobile Home Park] cleanup and the LTRG is seeking assistance from the L.A. Emergency Management Dept. “The Red Cross pulled out of case management without any kind of notice.” The LTRG developed a 12-week Mental Health Workshop which starts Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> here at the Sylmar Recreation Center. She read a note from Councilman Alarcon’s Office regarding the status of the Oakridge recovery. MEND [Meet Each Need With Dignity] (818-897-2443; [www.mendpoverty.org](http://www.mendpoverty.org)) is also helping. The LTRG is helping evacuees to secure trucks to move back to Oakridge and with insurance assistance.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez added that the debris removal contract was awarded to a contractor from outside our area, while there are at least three such contractors within our area; Councilman Alarcon is looking into this. Mr. Krall noted that the earliest move-in date is June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**New Business**

9. **Discussion and possible action** to seat a new member to the Sylmar Neighborhood Council Board of Directors, in the vacated seat of At Large.

Stakeholder Liz Meher, a local business owner, introduced herself and described some of her volunteer experience. Mr. Schopper and Ms. Sandstrom noted that they worked with Ms. Meher on Community Appreciation Day and appreciated her work.

Ms. Flores nominated Ms. Meher as an at large SNC Board Member. Fourteen Board Members approved the nomination. Ms. Vo-Ramirez welcomed Ms. Meher to the Board and will do the Oath of Office next month.

**10. Discussion and possible action** to support Tia Chucha's "[Celebrating] Words Festival," with financial partnership in the amount of \$200.00.

Ms. Rodriguez introduced Christine Vega, long-time volunteer and Event Coordinator, who distributed a funding proposal and flyer for their June 27<sup>th</sup> Festival. She explained that they're partnering with Mission College and other local organizations, and need help.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Bhakta, seconded by Ms. Arellano): to support Tia Chucha's Celebrating Words Festival with financial partnership in the amount of \$200.00.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Rodriguez described that part of the event, from 3:00 – 9:00 p.m., will be inside and part outside due to a funding requirement; an art exhibit will be inside. Ms. Arellano is happy that Tia Chucha is "very involved" in the community. Mr. Kelly is concerned that the event flyer does not show the SNC and that this request was brought to the SNC only 29 days before the event. Ms. Rodriguez described that SNC support would be included on electronic communications and an event banner. Ms. Vo-Ramirez is concerned that, though the SNC has sponsored many community events, Tia Chucha, though it does excellent work, hasn't participated. Mr. Laufer said that the LAPD is "very unhappy" that Tia Chucha is back because of "public drunkenness . . . with teenagers drinking in the parking lot," and the "owner spoke out against the Gang Injunction." Ms. Rodriguez noted that they moved in February and re-opened March 1<sup>st</sup>; there's been little time for other work. They're "trying to be a resource for the entire community" and have worked with the LAPD Watch Commander.

**MOTION PASSED** with ten in favor, three opposed and two abstaining.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez directed Ms. Rodriguez to see the Treasurer regarding a check to be issued to support sound system expenses.

**11. Discussion and possible action** to approve the Sylmar Neighborhood Council budget for 2009-2010, as presented by the SNC Budget Committee.

Mr. Kelly reviewed the handout of the "[SNC] Budget 2008-2009," "Remaining Account Balance Reconciliation," and "Proposed Budget 2009-2010." The rollover amount is \$24,682.62. The starting balance for 2009-2010 will be \$69,683, based partly upon \$45,000 being allocated by the City Council for that year.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bhakta): to accept the SNC budget as proposed for 2009-2010.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Bhakta is very happy that the City Council only cut the NCs allocation 10% to \$45,000.

**MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION PASSED** without any objections.

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously, including by Ms. Arellano, as she is now eligible to vote on financial matters, having attained the age of 18.

**12. Discussion and possible action** to support the following recommendations from the Land Use Committee:

- a. 12415 San Fernando Rd., Sylmar, zone variance with density bonus, for a five-story mixed-use development containing 149 units of senior citizen (55 years and older) housing, 25,000 sq. ft. plus medical offices on a 58,000 sq. ft. lot.

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #12) b).]

Mr. Ortega distributed materials regarding and described the project on the southwest corner of San Fernando Rd. and Astoria St. The lot currently has a single-family-sized lot and a long-vacant old motel, "an attractive nuisance."

Parking would be three-level: above-, at-, and below-ground. The owner has said that access to two of the parking levels "will be sorted out."

Owner representative Kurken Alyanakian, President, DDCM, Inc., described that the project would be 400 feet from the Metrolink Station. He'd like the NC to approve the variance application and support the project, saying, "This is a very high-quality building, with nothing comparable" nearby. He displayed and described project diagrams and an artist's rendering. After listening to community input, they increased the number of parking spaces to 322, including more than 150 for building residents, and increased the open space to more than 23% more than required. The building's medical facilities may include urgent care and minor surgical. They're "committed . . . to do not less than 60% affordable housing." Development staff knocked on every door within a 500-foot radius of the project, averaging 10-15 minutes with each resident, who understood that it's a medical building and were happy about it, saying things like it's "better than the empty lot and the abandoned building"; 49 residents signed a petition of project support.

The project architect added that only 125 business parking spaces are needed; approximately 200 are available for residential parking. They estimate that the building will have businesses supporting 190-210 jobs and, for approximately 18 months, 300 construction jobs.

Ms. Sandstrom is concerned that the building would be the tallest in Sylmar, at five stories; the next-tallest, the Nethercutt Museum, is 3 ½ stories above-ground. Mr. Alyanakian replied that they're not asking for any concessions and the project is in accordance with the existing Community Plan, which Mr. Rosales said (at this Meeting) he would research. Ms. Vo-Ramirez is concerned that the project would be a corner structure with residential behind it; this is the first she's heard of the project, yet it's been developing for one year; also, the current Community Plan revision has been worked on for three years and, she believes, the developer should've coordinated their project research with that.

Mr. Laufer expressed that the City is concerned about dental offices operating in residential neighborhoods, due to the toxic chemicals used. Mr. Alyanakian replied that the zoning code allows for dental offices and a similar project nearby is operational and state-licensed, and “everybody’s happy.” Ms. Flores is concerned regarding traffic and whether the building has enough parking and earthquake safety. Mr. Alyanakian noted that it’s a “fully sprinklered building” and that the new codes with which it complies are “designed for buildings to withstand an 8.1 earthquake.” They also commissioned a traffic study and “proper mitigation measures” will be imposed; the vehicular and residential entrance would be on Astoria and the medical offices entrance at the intersection. Mr. Krall is concerned about the project’s height in regard to the area’s mountain view height limit and that the project would be a “blocked-solid height of five stories.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez “never heard of balconies being counted as open space” and, with Mr. Krall, is concerned about the building having only one exit for 300 parking spaces. Mr. Alyanakian replied that the entrance would be 210-230 feet from the intersection, and they’re hoping that the project will help “clean up the neighborhood”; also, tall trees would be [placed] in back of the building.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez recommended Tabling this Item for further study. Ms. Sandstrom is concerned about seniors driving and walking there, and the possibility of accidents; also, she believes that it’s dangerous to expect seniors to walk to the Metrolink Station without security. Mr. Alyanakian responded that pedestrian traffic discourages minor criminal activity, and the project may reduce the drug-dealing and prostitution being done in that area. Ms. Vo-Ramirez is concerned that “this building doesn’t meet the needs of the community.” Mr. Laufer is concerned that there’s only one local Fire Station to serve the community; adding a new building like this would increase their burden. Mr. Alyanakian responded that the Fire Department will decide needed fire safety mitigation measures.

Mr. Ortega said that the project seeks support, not a permit, and that the NC “can speak again to the issues” later when the project is presented again. Mr. Alyanakian added that “we would have no project” if it was cut to three stories, and the variance would bring the project into Community Plan compliance.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Ortega, seconded by Mr. Reyes): to approve and commit to advocating for the project at 12415 San Fernando Rd., Sylmar, a five-story mixed-use development containing 149 units of senior citizen (55 years and older) housing, 25,000 sq. ft. plus medical offices on a 58,000 sq. ft. lot.

**MOTION FAILED**, with four in favor, five opposed and four abstaining.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez offered that the plan needs to be modified to be re-presented to the NC and recommended presenting the project to Neighborhood Watch groups.

- b. 12506 and 12514 Bromont Ave., Sylmar, lot line adjustment to re-establish original tract map property line between two parcels. Area of lots 12,750 sq. ft. Mr. Ortega explained that the owner wants to re-establish the original tract line.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Ortega, seconded by Mr. Kelly): to approve the lot line adjustment at 12506 and 12514 Bromont Ave., Sylmar.

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously, without any objection.

**13. Board Member Comments**

Mr. Tavares submitted a resignation letter to the Board, effective immediately. A number of Board Members commended him for his service. Mr. Reyes suggested contacting Board Members who don't attend, to submit or sign a resignation letter. Mr. Krall would like to see a process for removing them, excused or not. He announced a June 19-21 International Business and Job Fair at Mission College, and that a local "purchasing group" was formed. Mr. Donnelly encouraged attending the Valley Regional Congress. Mr. Laufer appreciates the "spirited and well-behaved discussions." Ms. Arellano is concerned that some Board Members' comments are not well-chosen. Mr. Cabrera noted that the Buckeye Neighborhood Watch is "going very well." Ms. Wells thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve and "will be extremely involved."

**14. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Vo-Ramirez encouraged Board Members to submit Agenda items for the next General Board Meeting.

**15. Closing Remarks, Announcements, Acknowledgements and Adjournment**

Ms. Flores declared the Meeting **ADJOURNED** without objection at 9:18 p.m.

Minutes written by DL.