

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, June 25, 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 6:44 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Stakeholder Sherry Lincoln.

**2. Roll Call**

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano, Hiral Bhakta, Cheri Blose (late), Hector Cabrera, Tammy Flores, Fabian Garcia (late), Saul Gonzales, Randall Kelly, Nick Krall, Martin Laufer, Liz Meher, George Ortega, Jeanne Rowe, Jan Sandstrom, Jim Schopper, and Quyen Vo-Ramirez.

Board Members absent: Bonnie Bernard (excused), Rick Donnelly (excused), Rudy Lopez (excused), and Guillermo Reyes (excused).

Fourteen 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 14 Stakeholders and Guests, including Ms. Lincoln, who again volunteered to staff the literature table.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

**MOTION** (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Ms. Flores): to approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2009 General Board Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** without any objections.

**MOTION** (by Ms. Sandstrom, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to approve the Minutes of the May 28, 2009 General Board Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** without any objections, with Mr. Bhakta abstaining.

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

Ms. Flores explained the above, read the Public Comments rules and reminded Stakeholders to sign in at the literature table.

**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), distributed flyers regarding the following: a first-time homebuyers Community Redevelopment Agency / Homeownership Opportunity Program (877-570-5276; www.EastValleyHOP.org; Info@GoHomeLA.com) seminar will be held at the LAPD [L.A. Police Dept.] Mission Division (818-838-9800) June 27<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. [This was also announced a few minutes later by Mr. Villegas of the L.A. Community Redevelopment Agency.] District Seven's latest Newsletter is available. Caltrans notified that 210 Freeway ramp meters are activated for mornings and afternoons.

Charles Chacon, LAPD Mission Division (east of Glenoaks Blvd.) Senior Lead Officer (Cell 818-634-0619, Office 818-838-9847), reported that Officer Lonergan [who was earlier at this Meeting] had to leave for a Neighborhood Watch Meeting. Crime in Ofcr. Chacon's area is down; in Ofcr. Lonergan's area west of Glenoaks Blvd., there've been more daytime burglaries, including when no one's home. Detectives are working on catching suspects in the act. He reminded people to secure their property, including garages. There'll be "heavy deployment" for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday regarding fireworks, loud parties and other issues. Violators will be cited and fireworks confiscated. Report anything suspicious by calling the LAPD non-emergency number 1-877-ASK-LAPD.

Amelia Herrera-Robles, Neighborhood Empowerment Analyst, L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) (818-374-9895; amelia.herrera-robles@lacity.org), congratulated the SNC on being named Valley Neighborhood Council of the Year. DONE is revamping their website; NC self-updating is available. She left a CD for Board Members to view regarding sexual harassment avoidance guidelines. Saturday is the Mayor's Volunteer Appreciation Day.

**6. Public Comments**

Stakeholder Emelio Vasquez (Emilio.L.Vasquez@BasicStudies.org), an Electrical Engineer, announced that he's opening a non-profit tutoring center in the Sylmar / San Fernando area. His Building Academic Success In our Community (BASIC) tutors students and is seeking guidance in connecting with the community. BASIC was approved by the State and they're working on a Federal tax exemption.

Stakeholder Rosemary Jenkins, Executive Director of the Golden State Jobs Coalition, which serves the north San Fernando Valley to Santa Clarita, said that the Coalition is reaching out to various organizations for union jobs and linking people with training for "Green Jobs for Green Projects." They'd like to partner with the NC. [Ms. Jenkins wrote on her Speaker Card that she'd "like to get on the next Agenda."]

Sean Rivas, Outreach Chair of the Granada Hills South NC and an Organizer for the recent Valley Regional Congress of Neighborhood Councils (SRivas@GHSNC.org), presented a Certificate of Appreciation for Ms. Flores for her hard work for the Congress. He invited Board Members to the September Outreach Forum.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### Secretary

The Secretary reported that nearly every Board Member's e-mail account has been fixed. Information is still needed from a few to complete the project. E-mails, phone calls and mail were received from Stakeholders Community Organizations, Board Members, other Neighborhood Councils, DONE, LADOT, Caltrans, elected officials' Offices and more. Project work included helping a new Board Member get started and a candidate to apply; updating our website and our listing on the DONE website.

### Treasurer/Budget

Mr. Kelly said that there was no report.

### Land Use

Mr. Ortega reported that the Committee met and he'll advise regarding the next Meeting.

### Commercial/Business Interests

Ms. Sandstrom reported that she and Mr. Bhakta met June 18<sup>th</sup> with the Business Improvement District group, which has an "exciting project" ongoing. Just past Hubbard at San Fernando Road, they're putting up a "beautiful placard" with Sylmar's name.

### Outreach

Mr. Bhakta reported that the Committee met. He staffed a booth at the well-attended June 13<sup>th</sup> Health Fair at the Sylmar Recreation Center, which wants to make it an annual event. He'll submit Stakeholder contact information for the database and encouraged Board Member participation in such events. The Committee will next meet July 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. here at the Susan B. Anthony Building.

### Election Committee

Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked Mr. Laufer for attending the City's Neighborhood Councils Elections Meeting. Mr. Laufer reported that he was downtown on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m., at which the SNC's next election date was chosen as March 27, 2010, probably from 1:00 – 7:00 p.m. An Election Committee is needed to complete forms and, by July 31<sup>st</sup>, identify five potential voting places, of which one will be selected. He volunteered to Chair the Committee. Ms. Vo-Ramirez appointed and Mr. Laufer accepted to be Election Committee Chair.

### Events

Ms. Arellano reported that she attended the Sylmar Optimists Club Meeting, which was very good, and will e-mail the Board about their future Meetings.

### Public Services

Mr. Schopper reported that the next Committee Meeting will be July 7<sup>th</sup> here at the Susan B. Anthony Building. He's working to get a Caltrans speaker regarding Sylmar-area Freeway work, and also the DWP's Greg Bartz to speak regarding water conservation and bill payment help.

Beautification/Grants – Chair to be appointed.

### Education

Mr. Gonzales said there was no report.

### Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Flores reported for Mr. Garcia that the Committee is working on a proposal for a Fireman's Fund. [Fire Station 91] Chief Kennington said that it "looks good for a grant to go through" for single-user survival kits, to be given upon completion of training. The L.A. Emergency Management Dept. and other Public Safety Chairs are working to create an "emergency preparation template" in cooperation with DONE.

### Bylaws ad hoc

Mr. Laufer reported that he "completed work on re-doing the Bylaws" and is "waiting for DONE approval"; the Committee can then be disbanded. Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked Mr. Laufer for his service.

## **New Business**

**8. Discussion and possible action** to request letters of resignation from Board Members who have not fulfilled their duties as an elected Board Member per SNC Bylaws.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that this Item was requested by a number of Board Members. She has a resignation letter from a Board Member. Ms. Flores read the letter and announced that "Bonnie Bernard is stepping down from this Board" and "would like to remain active." Ms. Vo-Ramirez elaborated that "Board Members who haven't shown up for these Meetings or haven't participated in any events" will receive a letter regarding possible removal from the Board.

**9. Discussion and possible action** to seat a stakeholder in the vacated seat of Community-Based Organizations to the Sylmar Neighborhood Council Board of Directors.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that candidate Ricardo Benitez has belonged to the Four-Square Church for ten years. Mr. Benitez introduced himself and said he wants to "create good ideas for the community." He's a plumbing and electrical contractor living in Sylmar with four children for 12 years. He attended two Outreach Committee Meetings and knows we need more outreach. He'd like to also work on street lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks, and "many community issues" for kids." He can "schedule his time" to attend Committee Meetings and community events. Ms. Vo-Ramirez wanted Mr. Benitez to know that this is a hard-working Board. Mr. Benitez "sees [the NC] as a family." Ms. Sandstrom proposed to "nominate Ricardo

Benitez for the Community-Based Organizations position on the [Sylmar Neighborhood Council] Board.”

Mr. Benitez was **APPROVED** as a new SNC Board Director, with 12 votes in favor.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez asked and Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon, agreed to administer the Oath of Office to Mr. Benitez and to Liz Meher, who was approved as a Board Director at the May 28<sup>th</sup> General Board Meeting. The new Directors were congratulated and Mr. Benitez was seated with the other Directors.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez nominated and Mr. Benitez agreed to serve on the Election Committee.

**10. Discussion and possible action** to support the Department of Transportation recommendation on radar-enforced speed limit areas and possible speed bumps. Brian Gallagher, Senior Transportation Engineer, LADOT (L.A. Dept. of Transportation) (818-374-4688; brian.gallagher@lacity.org), distributed a handout and spoke about local speed limit changes. He stated that “recently, changes were made to State law” regarding speed limits and speed traps. Speed limits must be reviewed every seven years. Some municipalities were setting speed limits “artificially low” and “writing hundreds of tickets.” The DOT measured the “85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed,” then rounded it out to the nearest five-mile-per-hour (mph) speed; for example, 34 mph was rounded to a 35 mph limit. Other considerations include lighting, road steepness and curves, and the presence of animals. School Zone speed limits are always 25 mph. If there’s no enforcement of the limits, it’s because the limits expired. Speed limit changes were recommended to five Sylmar streets: Gladstone Ave., Glenoaks Blvd., San Fernando Rd., Bradley Ave., and Polk St. He encouraged letting the DOT know of any problems or concerns. He’ll check on Mr. Gonzales’ concern regarding \_\_\_\_\_. Ms. Sandstrom was concerned about some speed limit increases’ effect on safety in business and residential areas. Mr. Gallagher responded that reviewing the speed limits assists in enforcement and can increase safety. Mr. Ortega, who also does this for a living, affirmed that State and Federal standards must be applied to increase enforcement.

[Mr. Garcia arrived at this time.]

**MOTION** (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to support L.A. Department of Transportation recommendations on radar-enforced speed limit areas and possible speed bumps, as presented by Brian Gallagher of LADOT, at this June 25, 2009 Sylmar Neighborhood Council General Board Meeting.

**MOTION PASSED** without objection, with Mr. Bhakta and Mr. Garcia abstaining.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that the NC will send a letter to Councilman Alarcon stating the NC’s support of the speed limit changes.

Board Members gathered for a picture taken of them for the DONE website.

**Recess:** there was a brief recess at this time, during which Ms. Sandstorm had to leave.

- 11. Discussion and possible action** to have a Sex Offenders Population Reduction ad hoc Committee to address issues pertaining to registered sex offenders, effective immediately and ending when the committee is not needed or one year from now.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez recommended and it was agreed to Table this Item since Ms. Flores, who had wanted it to be agendaized, had stepped out of the room.

[This Agenda Item was returned to after Item #13.] Ms. Flores explained the need to have a Committee to address this issue.

**MOTION** (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Mr. Garcia): for the Sylmar Neighborhood Council to have a Sex Offenders Population Reduction ad hoc Committee to address issues pertaining to registered sex offenders, effective immediately, to be evaluated one year from now.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Garcia relayed that the City Council District Seven Office wants to be involved in this effort.

**MOTION PASSED**, with Mr. Bhakta and Mr. Ortega abstaining.

- 12. Discussion and report** from Long Term Recovery Group Liaison Tammy Flores: updates regarding possible donation of mobile offices, funds for our community, etc

Ms. Vo-Ramirez recommended and it was agreed to Table this Item since Ms. Flores, who had wanted it to be agendaized, had stepped out of the room.

[This Agenda Item was returned to after Item #11 was addressed.] Ms. Flores explained this Item. The Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) will be the template for other such groups in the city. FEMA [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] will soon release 300 affected families from FEMA's administration for the LTRG to provide support. Salvation Army and Red Cross money is being used for families' immediate needs. Ms. Flores described other assistance efforts, including support groups and replacement of computers and other work tools, and children's sports equipment. Insurance information will be available at a State Dept. of Insurance Meeting August 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at 300 S. Spring St., Los Angeles.

- 13. Discussion and possible action** to host a Community Social to reconnect the community of Sylmar with food, music and games not to exceed \$1,500; location to be determined.

Mr. Krall noted that the Agenda should say "community of Oakridge residents," not "community of Sylmar." He reported that Oakridge Mobile Home Park [November 14-15, 2008] Fire survivor residents are still scattered around the western United

States. Hosting social events has proven successful in re-settling other disaster-hit communities.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Krall, seconded by Mr. Kelly): for the Sylmar Neighborhood Council to host a Community Social to reconnect the community of Oakridge residents with food, music and games, at a cost not to exceed \$1,500; location to be determined.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Schopper was concerned regarding whether many residents would attend and how to outreach to them. Mr. Krall responded that there is a 250-person list and volunteers to contact them; City Council District Seven can also help. Residents will be called and may also be mailed, and he knows where many locally live. The Social would probably be held here at the Sylmar Recreation Center and the expected cost is less than \$1,500. Mr. Laufer believed that this Item should first be handled by the appropriate Committees and the Treasurer before being brought to the full Board, and that the event is being sponsored by another organization. Mr. Krall reported that residents' move-in dates have been pushed back to the "beginning of September" and it'll probably be one to three years before the Community Room can be replaced.

**MOTION PASSED**, with eight in favor; Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Laufer, \_\_\_ and Mr. Schopper opposed, and Ms. Arellano, Mr. Bhakta, Ms. Blose and Mr. Ortega abstaining.

- 14. Discussion and possible action** to review Board of Directors meetings locations, possibly partnering with other community-based organizations such as Neighborhood Watches, Sylmar Woman's Club, Friends of the Library, Faith-Based Organizations, Schools, etc.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained the above and encouraged discussion. Mr. Bhakta encouraged renewing and expanding regional outreach, and Board Members mingling with [General Board Meeting-] attending Stakeholders. Ms. Blose suggested moving NC business to the ends of the Meetings. Mr. Cabrera encouraged Stakeholders to carpool to Meetings. Mr. Garcia reminded of the need to keep discussion brief and believes that these Meetings are doing well. Mr. Laufer agreed and noted that even City Council Meetings usually only get five to 10 attendees. Ms. Flores expressed that the NC needs to "create" more events, not just participate in other organizations' events, and that more Board Members need to participate in NC events.

Mr. Kelly noted that most City work is done in Committees and commented that some NC Committees are doing their work at these General Board Meetings; also, Agenda topics need to be submitted sooner to the President, and these General Board Meetings could be held every two months. Mr. Krall mentioned that the NC could invite other groups to attend these Meetings, and have speakers and youth performances. Ms. Meher said she'll post General Board Meeting information and mention the Meetings at the World Gym. Mr. Ortega voiced that it's okay not to

entertain Stakeholders; these are business meetings. Mr. Benitez remarked that the NC needs to educate Stakeholders about what the NC is doing and needs Spanish-language interpreters. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that when interpretive services have been provided, there was almost no request for them. The Secretary said that the database needs updating and could be used to reach more Stakeholders. Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that the Executive Board will discuss this issue and present it to the entire Board.

#### **15. Board Member Comments**

Mr. Bhakta was pleased with the Item 14 discussion. Ms. Blose noted that the water rate increases are especially of concern to owners of horses and other animals, while the City Council will not allow exceptions until at least October or November. Also, there'll be a four-day Horse Show at the L.A. Equestrian center in Burbank. Mr. Garcia noted that he's obligated to attend the beginnings of Panorama City NC General Board Meetings, which are held at the same time as these Meetings. Also, he'll be submitting an Emergency Preparedness Plan soon, after working with DONE and other City agencies; and, the Sepulveda Recreation Center "Summer Night Lights" Program for at-risk youth will be Wednesdays-Saturdays July 8 – September 5, 7:00 p.m. – midnight.

Mr. Laufer reported that the Mayor has proposed "point-of-sale sidewalk repairs"; homeowners would have to repair sidewalks before they could sell their homes. Ms. Flores welcomed Mr. Benitez and Ms. Meher to the Board. Mr. Kelly noted that there's also a "Summer Night Lights" Program at Hubert Humphrey Park, and asked about the status of the NC's participation in the July 4<sup>th</sup> Hansen Dam event. [It was said that it's been hard to get information.] Ms. Meher noted that she got involved in the NC because she wanted to volunteer; she wasn't contacted, despite a number of attempts to get information. Mr. Schopper said that he e-mailed former Board Member Bonnie Bernard to thank her for her hard work in helping to start this NC. [Applause.]

#### **16. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that the next General Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 23rd at 6:30 p.m. at Palacio Torres [Banquet Hall, 12341 San Fernando Rd., Sylmar (818.833.8394)].

#### **17. Closing Remarks, Announcements, Acknowledgements and Adjournment**

Ms. Vo-Ramirez **ADJOURNED** the Meeting without objection at 9:29 p.m.

Minutes written by DL.