

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, August 27, 2009

Dyer St. Elementary School, Auditorium, 14500 Dyer St., Sylmar, CA 91342

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

President Quyen Vo-Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Vo-Ramirez.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano, Ricardo Benitez, Hiral Bhakta, Cheri Blose, Hector Cabrera, Tammy Flores, Saul Gonzalez, Nick Krall, Martin Laufer, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes, Jeanne Rowe, Jim Schopper, and Quyen Vo-Ramirez.

Board Members absent: Rick Donnelly (excused), Fabian Garcia (excused), Randall Kelly (excused), Rudy Lopez (excused), Liz Meher (excused), and Jan Sandstrom (excused).

Fourteen of the 20 Board Members were present at the beginning of the Meeting, which is a quorum, so the Board could make Motions and take votes. Also attending were 24 Stakeholders and Guests.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The following correction was made to the July 23, 2009 General and Special Board Meetings Minutes: Fabian Garcia's absence from both Meetings was excused.

MOTION (by Ms. Rowe, seconded by Mr. Reyes): to approve the Minutes of the July 23, 2009 General Board Meeting as corrected.

MOTION PASSED with three abstentions (Arellano, Krall and Vo-Ramirez).

MOTION (by Mr. Reyes, seconded by Ms. Flores): to approve the Minutes of the July 23, 2009 Special Board Meeting as corrected.

MOTION PASSED with two abstentions (Krall and Vo-Ramirez).

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 Jeff Carr will replace Robin Kramer as the Mayor's Chief of Staff, as of mid-September. Also, the first Yoshinoya Restaurant in Sylmar opened in the Sam's Club Center [at 12902 Foothill Blvd.]. He encouraged people to stay cool in the hot weather; assistance information is available.

John Lonergan, LAPD Mission Division (west of Glenoaks Blvd.) Senior Lead Officer (818-634-0610), reported that crime is down in his area 9% compared to last year, and 17% overall in Sylmar. Violent crime is down 28%. The main problems are Grand Theft Auto and burglary from vehicles.

Amelia Herrera-Robles, Project Coordinator, L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) (213-473-6451; Amelia.Herrera-Robles@lacity.org), announced that DONE is hosting a Roundtable and Training, regarding having a safe Neighborhood Council environment, on Saturday, September 12th at the Braude Center in Van Nuys. On Thursday, September 10, 2009, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., at a location to be determined, there'll be an NCs Outreach Planning Meeting for the 2010 NC elections. The Mayor's Budget Day and Neighborhood Councils Congress will be October 10th at City Hall.

Mr. Krall announced a Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting tomorrow, the 28th at 5:30 p.m. at Shakey's Pizza. Contact him or Cheri Blose at www.SylmarChamber.com to join or update your membership. Also, the Relay for Life fundraises year-round; there'll be an organizing Meeting August 31st at Shakey's Pizza; 20% of your food order will be donated to Relay for Life.

Ms. Flores announced a Mission Hills Movie Night at 7:30 p.m.; all are invited. Also, a Fireman's Fund grant of \$5,000 was approved, which will enable purchasing survival kits for the community.

Mr. Schopper announced a Public Services Committee Meeting on Thursday, September 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the Sylmar Recreation Center; the Meeting will not be held on the usual first Monday of the month because of the Labor Day holiday.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that volunteers are needed to represent the SNC at the Mayor's Budget Day on October 10th; Stakeholder Sherry Lincoln and Ms. Flores volunteered. At the monthly meeting with Councilman Alarcon, CD7 Strategic and Vision Plans were discussed, including earthquake and disaster, rebuilding, business boosting, and zoning and planning. The Plans will show where commercial and

residential development will be allowed. She'll notify the SNC Webmaster to list Workshops on the SNC website.

6. **Public Comments** [This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #7.]
Stakeholder Rosemary Jenkins, Executive Director of the Golden State Jobs Coalition (818-360-4583; wrfjenkins@aol.com), announced a Meeting on Monday, September 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the California State Building; all are invited.

Kurken Alyanakian, President, DDCM, Inc., claimed that Ms. Vo-Ramirez told him that she was told by several Board Members that he intended to sue the NC. He said that he never intended or would do that.

7. **Committee Reports**

Secretary

The Secretary reported that DONE's Rodger Shimatsu confirmed receipt of our Neighborhood Council Inventory list, so that our funding is safe regarding that, and that all of the thousands of hardcopy documents from the first five years of the Neighborhood Council have been recycled or archived as needed.

Treasurer/Budget

Ms. Vo-Ramirez reported that Mr. Kelly said that the Budget is on target.

Public Services

Mr. Schopper said that there was no report.

Outreach

Mr. Bhakta reported that the Committee met on the usual second Tuesday, August 11th and discussed the SNC participating in the Granada Hills Chamber of Commerce Street Faire, and the October 10th Logan's Run for Autism Awareness. An organizing Meeting for the MB2 Race for Mission Area Police Station Youth charity event on Nov. 12, 2009 will be held Wednesday, September 9th at 6:30 p.m. at the MB2 Raceway in Sylmar.

Land Use

Mr. Ortega reported that, at the last Committee Meeting, there was an "insurrection" in which Committee Members believed that that Board of Directors cannot reject what the Committee decides. He believed that it "was a Brown Act violation" and "a dereliction of duty" for them to do that.

Commercial/Business Interests

Ms. Sandstrom was not present and there was no report.

Election Committee

Mr. Laufer reported that the City will conduct the next NC election on March 21, 2010. The Committee will start Meeting in or soon after December 2009.

Events

Ms. Arellano said that there was no report.

Beautification/Grants – Chair to be appointed.

Education

Mr. Gonzalez said that there was no report.

Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness

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

Sex Offenders Population Reduction ad hoc Committee

Ms. Flores reported that the Committee is “still in the planning stages.”

New Business

8. **Presentation** of Sylmar Neighborhood Council Certificates of Appreciation, Spirit Awards and Certificates of Acknowledgement for work performed on the Sylmar Neighborhood Council.

It was reported that the Certificates are not yet available.

9. **Discussion and review** of Parliamentary Procedures, SNC Bylaws, Conflict of Interest, Code of Conduct and Civility, Brown Act and any guidelines that may apply to the Board of Directors in order to conduct business.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that this was agendaized “because at the last [General Board] Meeting there were several” issues regarding protocols and procedures. Ms. Herrera-Robles reviewed what NCs are, saying that their “role is to be the link between City Hall and the community . . . to advise the [City] Council District Office about” things the community needs. The City allocates \$45,000 to each NC [per year] for outreach, neighborhood improvement projects and administration. Rules, regulations and Bylaws guide NC procedures and Meetings. The Brown Act, Bylaws, Board Rules, and Code of Conduct are applicable for “procedural actions . . . for the NC to be effective, transparent and efficient . . . including . . . Robert’s Rules of Order . . . to make Meetings friendly . . . Rosenberg’s Rules of Order can be used to run Meetings.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez added that Sturgis’ [“The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure”] is “between” Robert’s Rules and Rosenberg’s Rules, and that the presiding President “needs to keep order at Meetings.” The Sergeant-at-Arms needs to be called upon by the presiding President . . . The Bylaws [on page 11, Section IV) 1) D) e)] indicate that a person “cannot speak until recognized, or [they] are out of order.”

Ms. Herrera-Robles observed that “it’s really important for [Board Members] to familiarize themselves in the Bylaws . . . We’re going to need to be able to compromise . . . [and have] the ability to agree to disagree . . . be patient and flexible . . . try to work with one another . . . and improve . . .” Mr. Laufer believed that “if a Committee comes up with a” recommendation, the entire Board then gets a chance to agree with it or not, and that every Committee should come [to the full Board] with the idea that they’re going to make a recommendation [to the full Board]. Ms.

Herrera-Robles continued that “Committees are fact-finding bodies. Their role is to [bring information to the Board] . . . [The Committees] do their research and due diligence . . . Committees do not have the final power or authority; that’s for the Board . . . [Committees are] only a fact-finding body that should make recommendations to the Board . . . [Governmental] legislative bodies work that way . . . [There] can be a majority and a minority report.”

Ms. Blose voiced that Land Use Committee Members “are pretty well versed . . . The Board has looked at projects that’re completely compliant and voted them down.” Ms. Herrera-Robles replied that “we’re talking about what the Committees structure and responsibility is . . . to talk about some of what’s been going on,” and that a Board Retreat would help. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that the Bylaws indicate that Board Members are responsible for representing the City and that Committees are responsible to educate the Board. She believed that it wasn’t clear what a proposed San Fernando Road land use project would bring to the community and noted that, at the May [General Board] Meeting, there was an Agenda Item to approve a zone change for two lots behind the project.

Mr. Krall expressed that Committee discussions need to be properly presented to the full Board. Ms. Herrera-Robles added that Agendas need to be clearly specified and posted according to requirements, and Agendas and Minutes must be available to any Stakeholder who requests them. Ms. Vo-Ramirez relayed that Darren Martinez, Deputy L.A. City Attorney, requested that Board Members review the Brown Act and that he noted that, at the last SNC General Board Meeting, the presiding President called for a closed session, which is prohibited by the Brown Act.

Ms. Herrera-Robles reminded that a Brown Act video is available online [www.lacityneighborhoods.com/brown_act.htm]. Also, only four Board Members have current Conflict-of-Interest [Ethics] Training Certificates; this is a State law that also affects NCs. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that the recently revised [July 2nd] Bylaws include Conflict-of-Interest and Brown Act references, and that Board Members can be censured and not allowed to vote if they haven’t completed the Training. She added that the Bylaws indicate that “Agendas must be prepared by the President” and that Items will be added “as time permits.” She also noted that “the Motion [regarding the San Fernando Road land use project] that stands is a non-support for that development. If any Board Members have any questions, [they] can contact Amelia Herrera-Robles, Darren Martinez, or [herself] . . .”

Ms. Blose stated that Ms. Vo-Ramirez “had invited the developer to the July [General Board] Meeting.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez read the Motion from that Meeting. Ms. Herrera-Robles clarified that the City Attorney needs to review the Motion, especially regarding the “contingency clause.” She proposed “that [the Board] get together” to support each other and “be leaders in the community . . . to mentor and engage each other and the community . . . before the election next March.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez related that she called Mr. Alyanikian [the San Fernando Road land use project developer] as a courtesy . . . [and that he] “terminated” [the call].

10. Discussion and possible action to review SNC Committee structure, roles and responsibilities.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez observed and there was no disagreement that Items #9 and #10 were discussed together.

Recess

11. Discussion and possible action to send a letter requesting the return of our paramedic unit assigned to Fire Station 91 in Sylmar, as stated by Fire Chief Douglas Barry.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that Sylmar has one Fire Station, serving approximately 50% more area than most Fire Stations. LAFD (Los Angeles City Fire Dept.) (911 in progress/emergency; 311 non-emergency; www.lafd.org) Battalion Chief Cory Rose (818.756.8612; Cory.Rose@lacity.org) elaborated that Fire Station 91 has a paramedic engine and rescue unit there full-time, however, the area they serve is around the size of the City of Burbank, which has four Fire Stations. City budget cuts eliminated the [RA891 EMT Basic Life Support Unit] ambulance. Another Battalion ambulance will be “detailed over here during the day . . . from a less busy area . . . not to say that we don’t want to bring it back here permanently.” The ambulance was never permanent. Fire Stations 75 and 98 are the closest other Fire Stations. He encouraged talking with the City Councilman to restore the ambulance. Due to current weather conditions, tomorrow, the LAFD is “going into extreme” conditions, one step below the highest “critical” condition, and they’re “pre-deploying equipment into the mountains.”

Ms. Blose was concerned about the Department’s ability to cover all of Sylmar in an emergency. Thomas Kennington, LAFD Captain, Fire Station 91 (818.756.8691; thomas.kennington@lacity.org), was also present.

MOTION (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Mr. Krall): for the SNC to send a letter to the Mayor, City Councilman Richard Alarcon, and Fire Chief Barry, requesting the LA Fire Dept. to return the RA891 EMT Basic Life Support Unit ambulance to Fire Station 91 in Sylmar.

DISCUSSION: Stakeholder Bonnie Bernard requested that Stakeholders have the ability to add emergency information onto the SNC website. Stakeholder Esteban Tavares volunteered to assist.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Mr. Laufer); there were no objections.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

12. Discussion and possible action to host the MB2 Race for Mission Area Police Station Youth charity event on Nov. 12, 2009 with financial support up to \$4,000.00 towards venue and outreach. All proceeds to support programs such as Jeopardy, Explorers, etc., as they support our community of Sylmar.

Ms. Flores explained that the Board voted unanimously to do this and that MB2 is charging \$800 per hour, much less than usual. Greg Baker, President of the Mission Community Police Council (www.lapdonline.org/mission_community_police_station/content_basic_view/9066;818-534-1191), described that the event would fundraise for the LAPD's Jeopardy, Explorers, Cadets Boot Camp, Police Activity League, and other programs for ages Elementary through High School. He believed that, through these programs, children learn responsibility and community involvement. The Explorers is a more advanced level, a stepping-stone to motivate some of them to go into law enforcement. It's the "first [fundraiser] of its kind" and he'd like to raise \$5,000-7,000. Ms. Flores added that there'll be a silent auction and toy fundraiser; the event will be open to the public and has gotten a lot of interest.

Mr. Benitez would like the children's families to get involved and contribute in return for the assistance. Mr. Baker replied that some families are required to pay \$100 and take parenting skills classes; admission to the event will be \$25, \$20 if a toy is brought, and \$75 to drive. Ms. Vo-Ramirez expressed that the Board would like to see an itemized budget, containing, for example, the cost of printing flyers and tickets, because every penny must be justified and so that the SNC website can show what the expenses are. Mr. Baker replied that caterers, decorations and more will be there. Ms. Rowe stated that "[the Outreach Committee] will prepare a budget . . . This [discussion] is just to get permission and to move forward . . . [The event] will support the community." Mr. Laufer believed that the SNC Treasurer would want "line-item expenditures" and would know if \$4,000 is available to spend . . . [Mr. Laufer] "would like greater detail about what the funds raised would be used for . . . to gain public support [for the event]."

Ms. Flores commented that "the event planning committee has been meeting every week" and "can provide a budget." Ms. Vo-Ramirez reminded that SNC Committees must agendaize and post regarding their meetings; otherwise, if the [MB2 event planning] committee has been meeting every week, the committee is in violation of the Brown Act; she suggested referring this Item back to the Outreach Committee for agendaizing.

MOTION (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Mr. Reyes): for the SNC to support the MB2 Race for Mission Area Police Station Youth charity event on Nov. 12, 2009 with financial support up to \$4,000.00 towards venue and outreach, contingent upon approval of the SNC Treasurer and revocable if no event budget is produced within two weeks.

MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION (by Mr. Laufer); there were no objections.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

Mr. Baker will provide a list of where the funds will go. Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained the Committee Motion procedure and the need to agendaize Meetings.

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

Mr. Ortega noted that only Item a) was approved by the Committee.

- a. 13140 Gladstone Avenue, request for variance for two flag lots in 41-lot tract. Mr. Ortega distributed a handout and explained that the [Zoning] Code was written to prevent subdividing the lot or having a flag lot, to avoid having a land-locked lot needing access through another lot; the City recommends supporting this project.

MOTION (by Ms. Blose, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to accept the 13140 Gladstone Avenue, request for variance for two flag lots in 41-lot tract project, as presented.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Ortega described that the project “has some slopes to it . . . [though each lot is] generally flat”

MOTION PASSED with Mr. Bhakta abstaining.

- b. 13201 - 13240 Gladstone Avenue. In order to reinstate conditional use permit for sign, applicant is required to relocate existing sign at Hubbard St. driveway 10' from property line at existing shopping center.

Mr. Ortega explained that a CUP [Conditional Use Permit] was revoked and that the applicant “needs to re-install the sign to current standards.” He doesn’t “see any benefit in the sign staying where it is . . . [and] suggests supporting this project.

MOTION (by Ms. Blose, seconded by Mr. Bhakta): to accept, as presented, the 13201 - 13240 Gladstone Avenue project in which, in order to reinstate the Conditional Use Permit for the sign, the applicant is required to relocate the existing sign at the Hubbard St. driveway 10' from the property line at the existing shopping center.

DISCUSSION: Stakeholder Vartan Apuyan, of ANA Signs, stated that the CUP was revoked because the lot changed to “a commercial corner.” Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; dan.rosales@lacity.org), clarified that the original CUP may’ve time-expired.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

Ms. Bernard requested and Ms. Vo-Ramirez agreed that whatever materials are distributed [regarding land use projects] to the Board will also be available to inspect at the literature table. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that distributing land use project materials to the Board started when Mr. Ortega became the Committee Chair.

- c. 12706 Glenoaks Boulevard, request variance to construct a carport 1' from property line on a single family lot of 6,250 s.f.

Mr. Ortega explained the project. Stakeholder Alejandro Suarez showed a diagram and photos to Board Members, and said that adjacent neighbors approve and have signed in support of the project. He said that there's no other place on the property to build a carport and that four nearby properties have similar projects. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that the Agenda is incorrect, and agreed with Mr. Suarez that the project is an adjustment, not a variance. Mr. Krall would prefer a permanent carport.

MOTION (by Ms. Blose, seconded by Mr. Bhakta): to accept the 12706 Glenoaks Boulevard adjustment to construct a carport 1' from property line on a single family lot of 6,250 s.f., as recommended.

MOTION PASSED with Mr. Ortega abstaining.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez stated that the NC will send a letter of approval.

- d. 13147 Gladstone Avenue, request 13-lot subdivision tract map on a 94,487 s.f. lot.

Mr. Ortega explained that the project is across the street from the above Item 13) a), and that this property has appeared before to the Committee and the Board; one lot would be for rainwater runoff treatment. Ms. Blose believed that the project is "in full compliance; they've done what the City requested them to do . . . two years ago." Mr. Krall remarked that no letter of approval was written because the Board voted the project down; he then read from that Meeting Minutes. Mr. Rosales elaborated that the City Zone Change Plan Amendment three to four years ago approved of the project, however, the Bureau of Engineering had problems with the project's drainage; "the homes are consistent with what's across the street."

MOTION (by Ms. Blose, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to approve the 13147 Gladstone Avenue, request 13-lot subdivision tract map on a 94,487 s.f. lot project, as proposed.

DISCUSSION: Stakeholder Bob Wollers wanted to know why one house can't be put on the property, instead of thirteen; his "property would be devalued . . . [the project has] no green space." Ms. Blose observed that the "new Plan will have protected areas; this isn't one of them." Ms. Vo-Ramirez pointed out that "the Plan is already approved . . ."

MOTION PASSED with Ms. Arellano, Mr. Reyes and Ms. Rowe abstaining.

- 14. Discussion and possible action** to remove Saul Gonzalez from the SNC Board of Directors for violating the SNC Bylaws by having 3 or more consecutive absences. Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that this discussion is in accordance with the previous and current SNC Bylaws, and that a courtesy call was made and a letter sent [to Mr.

Gonzalez]. She read from Bylaws page nine, Article III, Section 6) A). Mr. Gonzalez believed that there was no violation because “in 2008, [he] was going through a very difficult time” due to [personal] and business issues; he wants to stay on the Board. Ms. Herrera-Robles noted that [SNC documents] indicate that the Board is to be notified of an absence. Ms. Vo-Ramirez noted that “it’s up to the Board Member to contact” another Board Member. Mr. Gonzalez indicated that he’s contacted parents and would continue doing educational work. The Secretary asserted that he [as the Secretary] was asked to do a number of things regarding this issue and that a number of untruths have been told; many of his e-mails and phone calls were not replied to, yet at least two e-mails were sent to a number of Board Members criticizing him for doing his job. He expects no further unfounded claims, distortions or attacks about this. Ms. Flores confirmed that the President and the Board were “just following the rules.”

MOTION (by Mr. Reyes, seconded by Ms. Blose): for the SNC to support Saul Gonzalez staying on the SNC Board.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Cabrera expressed that Mr. Gonzalez “has worked diligently” on social care issues . . . and “is well-respected” in the professional community.

MOTION PASSED without any objections.

15. Board Member Comments

Ms. Vo-Ramirez reminded Board Members to review the Bylaws and other rules documents. Mr. Bhakta encouraged donating blood. Ms. Flores announced a meeting of the MB2 event planning committee on Wednesday, September 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at the Raceway. She also encouraged Committee Chairs to submit their Committee Minutes for the website and the Office.

16. Next Meeting date, Future Agenda Items

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that the next General Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 24th at 6:30 p.m. at the Sylmar Recreation Center, 13109 Borden Ave., Large Gym.

17. Closing Remarks, Announcements, Acknowledgements and Adjournment

Ms. Vo-Ramirez **ADJOURNED** the Meeting without objection at 9:41 p.m.

Minutes written by DL.