

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, October 22, 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 6:38 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**2. Roll Call**

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Board Members present: Erlin Arellano (late), Ricardo Benitez, Hiral Bhakta (late), Cheri Blose, Hector Cabrera, Rick Donnelly, Tammy Flores, Fabian Garcia (late), Randall Kelly, Martin Laufer, Rudy Lopez, Liz Meher, George Ortega, Guillermo Reyes, Jeanne Rowe, Jan Sandstrom, Jim Schopper, and Quyen Vo-Ramirez.

Board Members absent: Saul Gonzales (excused), and Nick Krall (excused).

Fifteen 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 31 Stakeholders and Guests.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

Ms. Vo-Ramirez suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** approval of the September 24, 2009 General Board Meeting Minutes to the next General Board Meeting.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to approve the Minutes of the September 24, 2009 Special Board Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** without any objections.

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

Ms. Flores explained the above.

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

Charles Chacon, LAPD [L.A. Police Dept.] Mission Division (east of Glenoaks Blvd.) Senior Lead Officer (Cell 818-634-0619, Office 818-838-9847), reported that west of Glenoaks Blvd., crime is down 12% from last year; east of Glenoaks, crime is down 2%. Motor vehicle burglaries are still a problem; “don’t leave anything of value in your car . . . including U.S. mail . . . [which is being stolen for] identity theft . . . The biggest concern . . . [is] Foothill [Blvd. from] Polk St. to Hubbard St.” “Please report truants . . . [if they’re] not in school between 8:00 and 3:00.” The next Neighborhood Watch Meeting will be the usual third Thursday of the month, November 19<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. at Sylmar High School. They’ll also be “a canned food drive . . . Food pantry supplies are dangerously low . . . [They need] water bottles . . . grocery gift cards . . .” There’ll be volunteers from St. Didacus Church and other organizations.

Dan Rosales, Jr., Planning Deputy for L.A. City District Seven Councilman Richard Alarcon (818-756-8409; Dan.Rosales@lacity.org; www.CityPlanning.lacity.org), reported that a 70-acre park needs “to relocate . . . [It’s an] opportunity for a regional park . . . [with] pedestrian [and] bike paths.” Within the next two months project meetings will start.

Louie Sanchez, a consultant for State 39th District Assemblyman Felipe Fuentes (818-504-3911; Louie.Sanchez@asm.ca.gov), distributed a “2010 Census San Fernando Valley Complete Count Committee” information packet and reported on the “State Assembly Select Committee on the Census.” He described the importance of participating in the Census; a lot of funds are allocated based upon it. He cautioned that the area is on track to lose a Congressional seat by 18 people.

Greg Bartz, Neighborhood Council Liaison, L.A. Dept. of Water and Power (213-367-2800, Greg.Bartz@ladwp.com), distributed a “LADWP News: Information regarding mainline breaks and repairs” and other information packet; and an “[L.A.] Department of Water and Power: 2009/10 Fiscal Year Financial Plan, May 19, 2009”. He reported about “water main breaks and power outages.” Information is available about how to listen to DWP Meetings. Their annual Budget Workshop for NCs will be Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Call 800-DIAL-DWP (1-800-342-5397) or contact him.

LAPD Sergeant John Artez and Ken Crawford, LAPD Chief Chaplain (818-838-9471; 23536@lapd.lacity.org) were recognized. Officer Artez distributed a flyer and announced about Children’s Day, November 21st, 9:00 – 4:00 at Woodley Park. [See below Item #13.]

Ms. Flores distributed flyers regarding and announced the “Race for Youth” December 3rd, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at MB2 Raceway; it’s an opportunity to “adopt-a-cop . . . or a fireman.”

Mr. Laufer described the responsibilities of the NC’s Sergeant-at-Arms and read the Neighborhood Council Pledge. He explained that there’ve been “several disruptions

at [these] Meetings in the last several months, and [he read the Pledge] in an effort to maintain proper decorum.”

Ms. Vo-Ramirez explained that the popcorn boxes displayed in front of her were her family’s donation to the October 31<sup>st</sup> Sylmar Recreation Center Halloween Festival and that there were complaints that the NC allocated funds for candy for the event. Virginia Corbin-Marinovich, Director, Sylmar Recreation Center (818-367-5656; Virginia.Corbin-Marinovich@lacity.org), thankfully accepted the donation.

Ms. Arellano arrived at this time.

## **6. Public Comments**

Stakeholder Sam Cordova was concerned regarding a “major [land] development” on Gladstone Ave. close to Hubbard St. He said there was an Order to Comply for major violations as of June 25<sup>th</sup>; he said the L.A. Building and Safety Dept. hasn’t done anything and he wants to know “what is going on there.”

Stakeholder Risa Benning introduced herself and distributed an information sheet opposing “banners displayed off the 210 freeway from the Adult Factory Outlet.” She believes that the banners are illegally displayed and read a letter that she and her husband sent to the owner. She encouraged contacting (213) 894-1660 or e-mail Vincent\_Moreno@dot.ca.gov.

Ms. Corbin-Marinovich distributed flyers regarding and described the L.A. Animal Services’ Mobile Pet Adoption October 24th, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Sylmar Recreation Center, sponsored along with the Sylmar NC and Pet Adoption Services. She also distributed flyers regarding and described the Recreation Center’s Halloween Carnival, October 31st, 1:30 – 5:00 p.m., “an absolute awesome program . . . serving over 2,000 children.” She presented a plaque honoring the SNC “for support for the 2009 Halloween Carnival,” and thanked Ms. Vo-Ramirez and Ms. Rowe for their event donations.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### Secretary

E-mails, phone calls and snail mail received from many sources was quickly forwarded and/or acted upon. Board Members’ e-mail accounts are working. Two Board Members were assisted in accessing the DONE Ethics Training on the Internet and the Board is well on the way to being one of the most ethics-trained and certificated Neighborhood Council Boards in the City.

### Treasurer/Budget

Mr. Kelly distributed an “[SNC] Remaining Account Balance Reconciliation” and “Budget 2009-2010,” and reported that the “Unaudited Remaining Balance Carryover for 2009/10” is \$28,453.89. He described quarterly allocations and expenses.

### Land Use

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

Commercial/Business Interests – Chair to be appointed.

### Outreach

Mr. Bhakta distributed the Committee's "(Unapproved) Minutes, October 13, 2009." The Committee meets on second Tuesdays; October 13<sup>th</sup>, they discussed the October 24<sup>th</sup> Pet Adoption and a potential Town Hall Meeting.

### Election Committee

Mr. Laufer reported that, for Item #9 below, "there'll be a new presentation."

### Events

Ms. Arellano said that she'll report during Item #14 below.

### Public Services

Mr. Schopper offered that, if anyone has questions about the DWP, "please bring them to the . . . Committee . . . We'd be glad to work with you."

Beautification/Grants – Chair to be appointed.

### Education

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

### Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Vo-Ramirez reported that Mr. Garcia is meeting with the Mayor.

### Sex Offenders Population Reduction ad hoc Committee

Ms. Flores said that there was no report.

### Additional Reports, requested by the President

There were no additional reports.

## **8. Discussion and possible action to support the San Fernando Valley Veteran's Day Parade.**

Mr. Rosales, a member of the San Fernando Valley Veteran's Day Parade Committee, described the Parade's history; it's "a Valley-wide event." He displayed a Parade t-shirt and announced that "the Grand Marshall will be Admiral Mike Mullen, a top military advisor to [the President]." The Parade will be on Laurel Canyon Blvd. between Rinaldi and Paxton Sts. Stakeholder Ivan Forbes wanted to "echo what [Mr. Rosales] said . . . [and] recommend that the Board support this Parade."

**MOTION** (by Mr. Bhakta, seconded by Mr. Schopper and Mr. Donnelly): to support the San Fernando Valley Veteran's Day Parade with financial support up \$2,500 toward t-shirts that will be given to the Veterans in Goodie Bags on the day of the

Parade, November 11, 2009. The SNC may submit a float for the Parade.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Schopper said that, at last year's Parade, he "was really moved . . . [He'd] never been thanked" [for his military service].

**AMENDMENT to the MOTION** (by Ms. Rowe, accepted by Mr. Bhakta and Mr. Schopper): ". . . The SNC may submit a float or car for the Parade."

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Rosales clarified that the t-shirts cost \$9,300. Ms. Arellano offered to "get as many volunteers as" needed. Mr. Benitez "supports the Parade."

**MOTION to CALL FOR THE QUESTION;** there were no objections.

**MOTION PASSED** by a unanimous hand vote.

### **New Business**

9. **Discussion and possible action** to approve the procedures recommended by the City Clerk's Election Division.

Sofia Torres, Project Coordinator, Office of the City Clerk, Election Division, Neighborhood Council Election Unit (213-978-0444; Sofia.Torres@lacity.org; <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/election/index.htm>), distributed a "2010 [NC] Elections: [NC] Election Procedures Endorsement Form" and "2010 [NC] Election Procedures." The SNC election will be Saturday, March 27, 2010 from 1:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Sylmar Recreation Center. The Candidate Filing Period is December 28<sup>th</sup> – January 26<sup>th</sup>; more information will be available "in the coming month." Mr. Laufer also has contact information.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): to endorse the Election Procedures recommended by the City Clerk's Election Division.

**DISCUSSION:** The Candidate Filing Form will be available in the next three weeks; Ms. Vo-Ramirez said that it'll be posted on the [NC] website [[www.SylmarNC.org](http://www.SylmarNC.org)]. Mr. Laufer added that he "didn't find anything wrong with [the Procedures draft]."

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

**MOTION PASSED** without any objections.

10. **Presentation and Discussion** regarding the San Fernando Visioning Plan.

Al Santianis, of the Community Redevelopment Agency (818-593-5490; [www.crala.net](http://www.crala.net)), distributed a "Northeast San Fernando Valley Strategic Plan/Vision 2015" slide presentation handout, a "CRA/LA Fall Visioning Workshop" flyer, and a "[SNC]" area map. He described the Plan history and some current programs. The Plan includes a 4,000-acre re-development project which can lead "to a [Community] Plan amendment . . . [which'll] keep economic development here in the

Northeast Valley.” The CRA’s Ms. Roberts encouraged Stakeholders to think about what they want for Sylmar and described the Workshops.

**Recess** [after Agenda Item #13.]

**11. Discussion and possible action** to support the other Neighborhood Councils already joined together to oppose the new housing project on the VA Sepulveda Medical Center Property. Presentations by Ben Rosen and Peggy Burgess.

Lee Millman, Director of Housing and Development, A Community of Friends (ACOF), said that ACOF “didn’t come to [the SNC] originally because the project is not in [the SNC’s] neighborhood . . . ACOF develops housing for homeless people.” New Directions’ “sole mission is to provide housing for veterans . . . [They’re] proposing to rehabilitate two vacant buildings on the Sepulveda VA [Veterans Administration] grounds . . . [It] doesn’t prevent a hospital from being built.” Ben Rosen, Project Manager, ACOF, stated that “Admiral Mullen [Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff] [and others] supports New Directions . . . The VA wants to do this and get homeless veterans off the street.”

Peggy Burgess, Member, North Hills West NC Land Use Committee, said that that NC “and a coalition of over 662,000 opponents of this project, [including] the Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion [oppose it] . . . [ACOF and New Directions] are private sector developers . . . These enhanced-use leases can still be amended at any time during the 75 years [of the lease] . . . This is another attempt to deceive the public and . . . the veterans . . . It’s a land-grab and a \$48 million rip-off . . . [The VA] can transfer title to the developers at any time . . . [It’s] for 149 apartments the size of [her] garage . . . [There’s been] no competitive bidding.” She believed that the City has housed veterans for far less money and “the buildings are in good condition [and] can easily be refurbished as medical buildings,” and that veterans would have to “come up with first and last month’s rent and security deposit.”

Veterans Michael Mahoney, Juan Esparza, Karen Rafer, Glen Barry, James Wolford, and Larry Neal spoke of how New Directions had helped them and changed their lives for the better. Veteran Mr. Cordova urged New Directions, “don’t do it in my home” and expressed that the hospital that veterans were promised after the 1994 Northridge earthquake has never been built. Veteran Ivan Forbes pointed out that veterans have to go to West L.A. or Long Beach [for services]. Angela Campos, who has veterans in her family, said the land on which the buildings are located “was donated to be a military hospital.”

**MOTION** (by Mr. Laufer, seconded by Ms. Sandstrom): that the SNC not take a position on this issue.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Kelly relayed that Mark Reed, 27th Congressional District Candidate, “wanted to state that he’s opposed to this development.” Mr. Rosen

stated that only half of the NCs that're opposing the development have invited New Directions to attend their Meetings, and that "there's structural damage to the foundations of those buildings . . . [They] need significant retro-fitting [and to be] brought up to code . . . The exterior would remain the same . . . They were psychiatric lock-down facilities . . . [The facility] is 57 years old." Mr. Schopper was concerned that "we need something that's going to serve all our veterans . . . coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan . . . not just 147." Mr. Bhakta's "biggest fear . . . [is that veterans'] land will be taken away." Mr. Rosen stated that "the VA retains full control of the land . . . It's not possible [for ACOF to sell the land] . . . We have no interest in [owning] the land." Ms. Burgess believed that the VA is working and "has the authorization to dispose of the land . . . to the developers at any time during the 75 years . . . [They'd] convert the buildings . . . It's happening all over the country right now." Mr. Ortega added that "the sanctity of the site has already been violated . . . [A] golf course uses up around 50 acres of the site" and he supports the Motion.

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

**MOTION PASSED** with nine in favor and six abstentions.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez thanked the attendees, veterans and presenters, and hoped to see them at the Veteran's Parade, adding that "the Motion may need to change in order for the [NC] to revisit the subject."

- 12. Discussion and possible action** to support the Farmers Market Site Feasibility Study. Presentation by Al Avila (Sylmar Business Improvement District). SNC financial support towards the study not to exceed \$1,500. Al Avila, President, Sylmar Business Improvement District (BID) (818-807-9651), distributed "ZIMAS Internet" maps showing possible locations for a Farmers Market in the Edison Right-of-Way, at L.A. Mission College, and near the Metrolink train station. He introduced Vance Corum, Market Consultant (Office 360-693-5500, cell 360-609-7608, fma@pacifier.com). Mr. Avila said that Mr. Corum "has organized Markets since 1979 . . . including 48 in the City." He described that the Feasibility Study for the Farmers Market would analyze parking, income, ethnic composition . . . [have] price comparisons . . . [consider] competition . . . [and include] steps and timelines to proceed . . ." The Study would cost "\$4,000 and be ready in 30 days." The NC would contribute \$1,500; Mission College, \$1,500; the BID, \$500; and the Chamber of Commerce, \$500. The City Council District Seven Office and the Mayor agree that a Farmers Market would be a good idea.

**MOTION** (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Ms. Blose): for the SNC to support the Farmers Market Site Feasibility Study with financial support not to exceed \$1,500, to determine the best site for the Market.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Avila indicated that the Market could be considered to be within the BID's area and that "the Study will give us a road map." Mr. Corum stated that

he “drove the entire area . . . [The Market is] not a swap meet” and that it would not have imported foods, but could have foods from other areas of the County. Mr. Donnelly was concerned regarding the total cost, including fees. Mr. Laufer was concerned that the Market may be like a swap meet. Ms. Sandstrom was concerned that the Market wouldn’t “be successful . . . The San Fernando Farmers Market closed down.” Mr. Benitez was concerned about spending \$1,500 “just to try something.” Mr. Avila related that it’s been “most successful for all the community groups to get together to support the Market” and that “the CRA said they’ll support it if there’s community support.”

Mr. Bhakta stated that “Our community has a demand for this Market . . . [The NC needs] to push for this Study.” Ms. Flores “considers this an investment and outreach” . . . [However, she] didn’t “feel that a proposed site . . . under the power lines . . . is community-friendly.” Mr. Avila added that “the consultant will . . . have site-specific meetings . . . in about two weeks . . . [and is] proceeding without a contract in place . . . He’s originally from this area.” Ms. Vo-Ramirez declared that she “totally supports this” and that funding “should be evenly split” among community groups so that the NC can still have a say about the Market.

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

Ms. Flores **MOVED** and it was agreed to **WITHDRAW the MOTION**.

**MOTION** (by Ms. Flores, seconded by Ms. Blose): “to support the \$1,500 towards the Feasibility Study for the Farmers Market subject to the approval of the Financial Department of the Dept. of Empowerment.”

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

13. **Discussion and possible action** in supporting the San Fernando Valley Coalition on Gangs' 2nd Annual San Fernando Valley Children’s Day, A Salute to Kids with financial support not to exceed \$1,000.

[This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #10.] Sergeant Artez reported that there’re 80 identified gangs with 15,000 members in the San Fernando Valley; to counter that, the LAPD helped develop Children’s Day. It includes “a Resource Fair designed to keep kids out of gangs . . . Sylmar received \$5,000 last year for the Sylmar Youth Task Force . . . \$1,000 [would] help defray some of the expenses of this event.” Around 50,000 people attended last year.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Bhakta, seconded by Mr. Laufer): to support the San Fernando Valley Coalition on Gang’s 2nd Annual San Fernando Valley Children’s Day, A Salute to Kids with financial support up to \$1,000, to go towards brochures.

**DISCUSSION:** Sergeant Artez described that they need funding “towards brochures . . . [that cost] \$5,260 . . . and five by seven cards . . . in English and Spanish . . . All [NCs] will be listed in [their] website [www.ChildrensDay2009.com] as supporters.”

Mr. Lopez indicated that “We don’t have enough programs out there . . . This is truly needed.” Mr. Bhakta reminded that “the San Fernando Valley Coalition on Gangs . . . provided a Mobile Skate Park . . . This is a long-term asset for this community.” Sergeant Artez added that the NC is “welcome to have a . . . booth at the event.”

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

**MOTION PASSED** without any objections.

14. **Discussion and possible action** in supporting an end of the year Town Hall in December with possible topics to be discussed: Update on San Fer Gang Injunction; Oakridge Mobil Home Park Fire Recovery, Impacts and threats of Mudslides; and SNC Election.

Ms. Arellano reported that they’re “looking at next year” for the Town Hall.

15. **Discussion and possible action** to renew Moore Business Results contract for SNC Web Services.

Ms. Vo-Ramirez suggested and it was agreed to Table this Item until the next General Board Meeting.

16. **Board Member Comments**

There were no additional comments.

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

Ms. Vo-Ramirez announced that the next General Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 19th at 6:30 p.m. at the Sylmar Recreation Center, 13109 Borden Ave., Large Gym.

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

Ms. Vo-Ramirez declared and it was agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:56 p.m.

Minutes written by DL.