

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

SYLMAR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - MINUTES
Wednesday, October 23, 2019 - 6:30 PM
Sylmar Neighborhood Council Office
13521 Hubbard Street, Sylmar, CA. 91342

Committee Chair – Diane Valencia

Sylmar Neighborhood Council Meeting Minutes are a summary, not an exact, verbatim, word-for-word transcript of what was said at a Meeting. The only two exceptions are the Motions shown in italics and quotes shown with quotation marks (“ ”) at the beginning and ending of a word or words. The Minutes are not, nor were they ever meant to be, a comprehensive record of what was said about an issue or project.

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Diane Valencia called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM

2. Housekeeping: Sign-In Sheets, taking of Minutes, etc.

Diane covered general housekeeping items for the meeting, including sign-in sheets and where the restroom is. Diane will take notes for the Minutes.

3. Roll Call of Committee

Committee members were present: Diane Valencia, Bonnie Bernard, Tom Weissbarth,

Committee members absent: David Gonzales, Bob Oppermann

Others present: SNC Directors Cheri Blose and Penny McMillian; Stakeholder Peggy Bennett; Sunland-Tujunga resident Mark Hutton.

4. Public Comment on non-agendized matters, within the Committee’s subject matter jurisdiction.

Mark Hutton introduced himself and shared some of the projects that he and others in the Sunland-Tujunga area are focused on, namely development of the now closed Verdugo Hills Golf Course property. He also spoke of the importance to work with and support one another across CD7 on shared concerns/issues. If CD7 communities work together, a coalition of volunteers could be convened to speak at City Hall on specific issues of concern. Diane will reach out to Mark after the meeting.

5. Public Official Comments / Presentations, including Q&A

None

6. Discussion and possible action regarding the possible naming of a horse arena at Stetson anch after the late Captain Albert Torres of the LA City Park Rangers, including a possible referral to the Equestrian Committee for a joint recommendation.

The Committee discussed how Captain Torres had worked with the Committee on the No Trespassing signs and other issues at Stetson Ranch. Diane recounted how Captain Torres had taken the time twice

to call her during the Saddleridge Fire to check in and express concern for Sylmar. Cheri also has had a long history of working with Captain Torres.

Motion by Tom, second by Diane to approve an amount not to exceed \$2,500 (re-allocating funds for the No Trespassing signs at Stetson Ranch) for a recognition marker / monument at Stetson Ranch to honor Captain Albert Torres, including possibly naming one of the equestrian arenas for him.

Motion passed: 3/0/0

The Public Safety and Equestrian Committees to collaborate with LA City Recreation & Parks, with the target being the unveiling of the marker / monument at a ceremony during the Make Your Horse Count event in May, 2020. Diane to make the initial contact with Rec & Parks, will keep Cheri in the loop and will provide an update at the next Committee meeting. The goal is to have the City pay for the monument but SNC funding will be requested as a back-up.

7. **Discussion and possible action** related to the Saddleridge Fire

General discussion of what did not go well along with the need to schedule a community meeting, specifically for equestrian / ranch community members related to large animal evacuations. Diane, Cheri, Leah Blose, Janet Gibson, Tom Weissbarth and John Pacheco met briefly on Sunday, October 20th to discuss. Diane will reach out to All Nations Church to see if they might have space available on a Sunday or weekday evening. Church of the Foothills is the next choice if All Nations cannot accommodate.

Though CD7 appears to have some sort of a large animal evacuation plan, no equestrians in Sylmar are aware of it. All large animal evacuations in Sylmar during the raging fire were handled by community members while there were apparently drivers, trucks and empty trailers sitting empty at Hansen Dam which did not respond to Sylmar's needs.

John and Cheri spoke of the need for the Map Your Neighborhood program, which John can assist with. Equestrian facilities and ranches need to be identified / mapped in advance. Diane and Janet advised that their conversation with an LAFD Battalion Chief was helpful. When roads are closed, drivers must have proper identification, which ties them to the address they are trying to get to. There were some delays at roadblocks during the fire for safety reasons, because drivers did not have appropriate ID. Diane suggested that the Public Safety Committee could take up the ID card issues with the LAPD and LAFD to confirm exactly what information needs to be on a card. John and Cheri work on their respective areas and we will all stay in communication.

8. **Discussion, update and possible action** related to possible funding items from now through the end of the Fiscal Year, including but not limited to Community Improvement Projects, Neighborhood Purpose Grants, meetings, events and other general Public Safety related needs.

It is still too early to know how much the ID badge project (for emergency evacuations) may cost. Committee will discuss funding items at its next meeting. Per Fire Station 91, they are looking to have Fire Service Day in 2020 be a larger event than in 2019. They may look to close Polk Street to allow a fire helicopter to land across the street, and have other community/family friendly offerings. Diane to stay in touch with them on this and confirmed with them already that their Fire Foundation funds have been used up. There will be a collection box again at Fire Service Day but last year they only broke even with t-shirt and hat sales and did not come out ahead. Some station improvements were last done in 2018 by community volunteers. FS91 is scheduled for their Annual Inspection just before Fire Service Day. In light of the recent fire, Diane will agendaize this again for the next Committee meeting.

Motion: Diane moved to approve an amount not to exceed \$1,000 to support community member attendance at Fire Station 91 with food and refreshments on Fire Service Day – May 9, 2020. Tom seconded.

Motion passed: 3/0/0

9. **Discussion and possible action** related to two recent Op-Ed pieces in the Los Angeles Times by Char Miller – W.M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis & History; Environmental Analysis Program; History Department; Chair, Sociology – Pomona College.

Diane shared that she had reached out to Professor Miller about his articles and recent interview on KFI radio. He has offered to assist the Committee but Diane advised him that we first needed to have a discussion to determine next steps.

The Committee had a general discussion of the development in Sylmar which has occurred over the last few years. Cheri shared that all of the development that we are currently seeing in town had been approved a long time ago, before the Sylmar Community Plan was approved and adopted. The massive increase in population over the years with no significant increase in public safety resources, specifically LAFD staffing and resources, puts our community members lives and property in jeopardy.

Motion by Tom, second by Bonnie: Request that the City puts a moratorium on any new development in Sylmar, and no new certificates of occupancy issued until the entire community of Sylmar is continually serviced within NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standards for all categories of emergency response.

Motion passed 3/0/0

10. **Discussion and possible action** regarding local LAFD resources in Sylmar. (Follow-up from prior meetings). Discussion regarding Public Records Act requests, agreement(s) between the City of Los Angeles and the City of San Fernando, special taxes levied (Mello Roos) relate to City of Los Angeles Community Facilities District No 8 (Legends at Cascades), disposition of land acquired for LAFD Station 31 and \$200,000 allocated by CD7 for a fire station study.

Diane has sent a Public Records Act (PRA) request to Ron Galperin's office to try to determine if CD7 has completed a \$200k "feasibility study" regarding a fire station study for Sylmar. Galperin's office indicated that they are not the custodian of these records As instructed by Galperin's office, Diane will send her request to the additional City departments and will provide an update at the next meeting. Tom will work on analyzing response time data. Diane sent another email request for information on this study on Monday, October 21, 2019.

Further research to be done by the Committee on Mello Roos payments broken down by parcel and amount in each year; City of San Fernando contract(s) to outsource fire protection to the LAFD. Land ownership of Station 31 parcel has already confirmed with LA County Tax Assessor.

11. **Discussion and possible action** on November, 2019 Public Safety Committee meeting. As a result of the Saddleridge Fire, Oscar Vargas, District Fire Management Officer (DFMO) for the U.S. Forest Service, along with Battalion Chiefs will be our featured speakers. LAPD Valley Traffic has been requested for the December meeting.

Diane has confirmed the U.S. Forest service, contingent on no emergency response needed by them. Valley Traffic has confirmed they will attend in December, subject to staff being available.

12. **Discussion and possible action** regarding outreach / communication related to the upcoming anniversary of the Loop Fire tragedy that occurred on November 1, 1966.

Committee supports communications to the public to remind them about this tragedy. Diane to ask the Board to with disseminating communications via Facebook, the SNC website, Constant Contact, etc. Per Oscar Vargas, Division Chief at the US Forest Service, this is a very special day for the fire service. Staff visit the memorial at El Cariso Park each anniversary.

13. **Committee Member Comments on subject matters within the Committee's subject matter jurisdiction.**

14. Future Agenda Items: Please e-mail the Committee **Chair, Diane Valencia, at Diane.Valencia@SylmarNC.org**

Next meeting to be held November 14, 2019, at Oakridge Mobile Home Park.

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

Diane called for adjournment at 8:42 PM, with no objections from the Committee.

Committee Meeting Minutes are available on the SNC website www.SylmarNC.org