



Northridge East Neighborhood Council

**Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, August 15, 2007 7:00pm to 8:30pm
Andasol Elementary School Auditorium, 10126 Encino Ave.**

Call to Order: 7:10pm

Kelly Lord called the roll and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance: Kelly Lord, Thomas Baker, Don Dwiggins, Steve Patel, Ray Calnan, Barry Greenberg, Peter McCarty, Lucille Meehan, Judith Nutter, Alice McCain, Sara Adelman, Harold Ellison, Travis Daniels, Caroline Moore (elected during meeting)

Absent: Yeprem Davoodian (missed roll call, entered meeting late)

Minutes: Kelly Lord motioned to approve the minutes. Don Dwiggins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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Public Comments

Kelly Lord announced that the schedule is full, and asked the public speakers to keep their words to 3 minutes.

Adam Haverstock, student body president at Cal State Northridge:

There is a concern about manpower for the Adopt a Street Program. We talked to our athletic director who is looking into student athlete participation. There are no specifics yet but we are sure to have some soon.

Also, the student government is focusing on voter education and motivation. We are looking for 1000 students to vote in the 2008 elections, both local and national. If anyone here wants to collaborate on voter registration efforts, please let me know.

AGENDA:

2. Neighborhood Prosecutor Mike Pizzuti report on Fraternity Houses at Halsted and Etiwanda Ave.

Steve Patel:

Update on the two fraternity houses -- they were shut down. *The audience applauds.* Neighbors have been there for 20-25 years; this has been a challenge, and now it has been successfully done, thanks to Mike. We have a letter of appreciation from the stakeholders. Steve then read from the letter, which voiced the approval of the closing of the illegally-run frat houses in the

local residential area. The neighbors felt like this was the last hope before moving out, and they feel vindicated. This neighborhood is a better place to work and play,

Mike Pizzuti:

Mike said that the Neighborhood Awareness Program has been around for 5 years, advocating for the neighborhood. These are lawyers working for the community for free. This is the largest community participation program in the nation. These fraternities tried to get a conditional use permit all the way back in the fifties, and, not winning that, they operated anyway. The Department of Building Safety investigated the difference between the fraternity claims and the neighborhood reports. Then our staff made changes in quality of life problems by uniting different agencies, such as Cal State University Northridge, the police, prosecutors, students, and so on. We sent in a pretty woman to get an “undercover” report from inside. I worked with Steve Patel throughout this in order to build a case. As a result, a 70-year-old homeowner was unhappily booked -- I don’t care about the charge or punishment, I just want to resolve the problem. In two weeks the kids were evicted and the property was closed, and a “NO TRESPASS” sign was erected. To the shareholders: You have to fund community prosecutors year-to-year, so let us know you want us to continue. I’m personally taking a 3 month year of absence, so I’m glad I was here tonight.

Kelly Lord asked the room for questions:

Audience Member: Will the court order be enforced in the future? Mike Pizzuti: Yes, we will keep this guy under probation. He was humiliated, sat in jail, put the house up for sale (but not to any fraternities), so he got the message. There were two houses; both are shut down. The other one will be empty by September. The case is still pending and we can charge again for future violations, for any one day that they operate as a fraternity. The deposition will be happening in the next couple weeks. We can get you the case number. The number to call neighborhood prosecutors is 818-374-6837

Don Dwiggin noted that if something like this happens again, contact us [the council] as well.

Barry Greenberg: Is anything in writing? Mike Pizzuti: They have letters about what will happen. This probably will be disclosed to future members.

Steve Patel: The “FOR SALE” sign has separate numbers, and calls made to those numbers have gone unreturned. Mike Pizzuti: I will check into that. There’s a lot we can do about that.

Audience Member: There is a health hazard at a residence on White Oak, overgrown with weeds. Mike Pizzuti: Building & Safety and Council Member Smith's office are good with monitoring those kinds of things.

John Bwarie from Council Member Smith's office then gave the stakeholder his business contact.

1. Election of Executive Board

Kelly Lord: We will now have nominations for board officers.

President:

Barry Greenberg nominated Steve Patel as president, Ray Calnan seconded.

Tom Baker nominated Kelly Lord as president, Alice McCain seconded.

Alice McCain suggested that a secret ballot was to be done any time when there are multiple candidates.

John Bwarie: Under the Brown act (the open meeting law), council meetings have to happen in

public.

Kelly Lord allowed the nominees to make comments: Steve Patel noted that he loves working with Kelly, and that his other agendas concern the budget for the next couple years. Kelly Lord had nothing to say, and took hands. There were 5 hands for Steve Patel, 8 hands for Kelly Lord. Kelly Lord retained his position.

Vice president:

Tom Baker nominated Don Dwiggins for 1st vice president. Alice McCain seconded. All board members agreed, and Don Dwiggins accepted the position.

2nd vice president: Don Dwiggins nominated Tom Baker. Alice McCain seconded. None abstained. All approved.

Secretary:

Peter McCarty nominated Barry Greenberg. Alice McCain nominated Judy Nutter. 7 hands went up for Judy Nutter, 2 for Barry Greenberg. Judy Nutter is now the secretary.

Treasurer:

Lucille Meehan nominated Steve Patel. Ray Calnan seconded. Kelly Lord nominated Ray Calnan. Steve Patel seconded. Steve Patel was then nearly unanimously elected.

3. D.O.N.E - explanation of relationship between NENC and D.O.N.E.

Melvin Canas, from the city department of neighborhood empowerment, taking over from Thomas Soong:

Passed out a document. This sheet talks about the role of the department, based on the plan of the citywide system for neighborhood councils. I would like to field questions.

Don Dwiggins: How are these mass mailings done? They didn't seem to work before. Melvin: There was an issue with time constraints. The department needs to coordinate with the main post office in south LA -- there is folding to be done, and dividing into all mailing routes. A lot of labor is required. It used to be that neighborhood councils would support these efforts. Now we use print shops to deliver documents, but they don't have access to apartment buildings. This method works better in reaching single-family homes and apartments that have post boxes. We are now in the 5th year of neighborhood councils existing. It's expensive to coordinate, and the department can't do all the sorting that is required. In the last year, we have had to do a Walking Man distribution; a company that handles that. The City Clerk's Office will be working on facilitating this sometime in the future. The neighborhood councils work on citywide election procedures with city [independent election] administrators. We provide 2 mass distributions, using Walking Man methods. There have been a lot of city budget cuts. If you need a document translator, we help. If you need an interpreter at elections, we provide that up to 10 hours.

Tom Baker: Neighborhood councils face a burdensome problem trying to hold elections every year, and it's expensive. Can we amend our by-laws to change the elections from every year to every two years? Melvin Canas: Yes, I encourage that and I can work with you on it. We make ourselves available to you, the board members, as well as stakeholders. Please make use of us as a resource. We have a government center on Van Nuys, below Victory, with copy machines you can use. The city attorney's office and their liaisons go through us. We want to meet with them

on issues such as the recent brownout. Concerning the matter of training: we can work with you at your upcoming retreat; we have staff specifically to work with neighborhood councils. I did one such retreat recently, from 6:30 to 9:30pm. It was very helpful for everyone towards building a sense of camaraderie. In general, we will observe and occasionally step in; we are the department who monitors neighborhood councils.

Don Dwiggins raised a question on the issue of outreach: We want to make sure you are concerned with reaching out to us. Also, can you help us with badly-damaged streets? Melvin Canas: Yes, I can connect you with the necessary city departments.

Tom Baker: Do you have our board member addresses? Melvin Canas: Please write them down for me. I need them so I can update the website.

After this Item was complete, Kelly Lord asked the chief to introduce himself:

Chief Gregory Reynar, Battalion Chief with the local fire department:
(818) 756-8615 gregory.reynar@lacity.org

I have 25 years of experience in the area, and I grew up in the area. Kelly Lord has my phone number and contact information over at Department 70. I look forward to working with you all.

9. Vacancy on NENC Board – Appointment possible

Peter McCarty nominated Caroline Moore who was unanimously appointed for this vacant position.

4. Proposal to establish standing chair for seniors – Peter McCarty

Kelly Lord: We want to program activities for our seniors and do outreach.

Peter McCarty: There is a great need within our population among seniors. People are living longer, and their families and advisers need more awareness about the resources available to them. We currently have a small local education center. I propose to make it a priority to work with volunteers and non-profits and those who are in the health care provider business. I am a financial representative and I already work with businesses on this issue. Many present here tonight are seniors, and there is much opportunity out there for you.

Kelly Lord clarified that this is a standing chair position, of the sort that Ray Calnan maintains for the matter of land use. This is not yet a motion to nominate Peter McCarty; just to establish the position.

Peter McCarty added: My interest is in getting neighbors to know each other, particularly seniors. It would be horrific to hear that someone fell and didn't have help, or got abused. I want to better our community and this is a way to do that. I recommend that we make this a priority; there are statistics available to back it up.

Ray Calnan made the motion. Don Dwiggins seconded. (Peter McCarty abstained.) The motion passed unanimously.

5. Northridge Senior Health Fair, request for partnership (Possible board action

up to \$1000)

Steve Patel: Tom Soong used to handle this function.

Melvin Canas: I have Tom Soong's position now. I spoke with him today, but because of the perceived conflict of interest, he did not want to represent the issue.

Kelly Lord: We have no real intimacy of this fair for seniors.

John Bwarie: I don't either.

Kelly Lord: When does it start? Where does it take place? Melvin Canas did not have the answer.

Kelly Lord: We are like the city in this case. If we are spending money on a fair that could promote someone's business, that could be a conflict of interest. We want to make sure we do this the right way.

John Bwarie: It is not a conflict of interest. A non-profit organization is providing information. The city is doing the same thing. If you are not allowed do this, you will be told.

Ray Calnan asked a representative from Community Integration Services to speak:

Bob Erio, Adult Day Program (818) 772-1155: I attended planning meetings for the fair. It will take place on a Saturday, either October 13th or 20th. Its theme will be "balance." There will be a one-day seminar on that topic. Both governmental and for-profit exhibitors will be there -- it's an information fair.

Audience Member: How do you notify seniors? Bob Erio: There will be flyers and local newspaper ads.

Barry Greenberg: This hosting organization is non-profit? Bob Erio: We provide the site, and we are non-profit. We are hosting, not necessarily sponsoring. This is operated by the City Department of Aging.

Audience Member: Are vendors charged to participate? Bob Erio: The budget is \$9-10,000. It was just approved today, so I cant make an official statement.

6. NENC Retreat - Proposed to hold NENC Retreat for Board and public (possible board action cost unknown)

Kelly Lord: This is a proposal to hold our meetings in a public venue.

Barry Greenberg: Because of the Brown act, we hold our deliberations in public. We meet once a month, which isn't enough time to get to know each other. So the purpose of this is to facilitate communication, to discuss issues for more time than usual. The council has been elected to serve and we want to serve the community better. Costs will be minimal.

Audience Member: Define retreat. Barry Greenberg: It means setting aside time to work together, not at some remote location. An example could be a site like the Edelman Center in Van Nuys, where anyone can attend. This would not be a normal business meeting. Maybe it could be held on a Saturday, from 10am to 4pm, with lunch in between. It could also be here; somewhere local. We could spend time deciding about committees; which ones need to be staffed.

John Bwarie: If it's an official meeting, it has to be held within neighborhood boundaries.

Barry Greenberg: Last month I was at a department of neighborhood empowerment meeting at city hall. It seemed like a good idea.

Audience suggestion: Northridge Park? Another: How about CSUN?

Kelly Lord asked for a board motion.

Tom Baker made the motion. Alice McCain seconded. The motion passed.

8. Northridge Recreation Center Summer Theater Program Partnership (Possible action up to \$2500)

Jasmine Dowlatshahi, facility director at Northridge Park:

Jasmine introduced herself, and Steve Klein, the senior director. We have 33 kids in our program, opening night of our show “The Pajama Game” will be this Friday. Here behind me are some kids who have been in the program for years. We need funding for lighting, specifically \$2500 for those costs.

Jonathan Engstrom, I play “Hank” in the show. I’ve been doing this 6 years. I’m 11.

Max Desmond, I’ve been in the company for 11 years, as the stage crew manager and light technician. It means a lot to me.

Jesse Gutterman, playing “Sid” in the show, I also work on stage lights. This is a major part of our lives. I will be attending UC Santa Cruz next year.

Shannon Luft, in my 7th year, going to UC Santa Barbara, I play “Babe”. This program is my number one priority.

Steve Klein, senior director:

We enjoy our partnership with the neighborhood council. Thank you for the fireworks event.

This is a good creative outlet for our kids, other than sports. We offer a low-cost program, especially comparatively. We do a lot of fundraising, such as selling hot dogs & chips at Albertsons many times a summer. We just want to break even and give our kids the opportunity to do well. We decorated the court, and invite you to come see it.

Jasmine Dowlatshahi: I’ve seen this all; it’s tear-inducing. We have a booklet -- in it, we thank the council.

Barry Greenberg: This is short notice for support. We look like bad guys if we don’t help out.

In the future, please approach us in advance. Steve Klein responded: We thought we were on the agenda last month; we weren’t. We will get it right next time.

Peter McCarty: Last year we talked about you approaching the community. Jasmine

Dowlatshahi: We contacted CSUN and they said they have their own theater program. Peter

McCarty: There is no possible relationship between CSUN and this community? Jasmine

Dowlatshahi: Correct.

Lucille Meehan: Do you only come for money? Also, I would like a list of participating children and families. Steve Klein: It’s hard to make every meeting we have. We just got a third full-time person to help. Also, we don’t select from districts. We serve all nearby. No, we have not approached them. Lucille Meehan: Do parents donate? Steve Klein: Yes, time, props, sets, etc. Lucille Meehan: We don’t have the money to cover this. [Goes into specific detail.]

Kelly Lord said this discussion is going far afield. Audience Member: I support this park, it’s

the best in the area. Audience Member 2: Can you tell us more about the schedule? Jesse

Gutterman: There are shows this weekend and next; also a senior show on Wednesday.

Audience Member 3: My son is in this program. There may not be money for a pool, but the arts are worthy of funding, not just sports. It’s great for children.

Tom Baker: I would like to make a motion to fund this program. Northridge Park gives us a forum for free when we use their facilities. It’s within our boundaries, and it serves our

communities and others, so let's not be exclusionary. For thirty years, this program has continued. Let's do it.

Steve Patel: We need proper invoices. We love the program; we just want to make sure you get the most benefit out of this. Come to us more often; let's help you coordinate with other councils. I also ask that Tom Baker be given your schedule and show prices. Jasmine

Dowlatshahi: The council can have free tickets, we have your banner up. I speak with Mr. Lord and Mr. Baker frequently.

Audience Member: Why are there no ads for this? Jasmine Dowlatshahi: There is a banner on Reseda & Mayall, and on Lemarsh by the police station. We have a newsletter, but we can't do newspaper ads. And we do have flyers.

Tom Baker made the motion to approve funding. Alice McCain seconded. Lucille Meehan opposed, and Barry Greenberg abstained. The motion passed.

After this item was concluded (at 8:33pm), Kelly Lord asked: Is Tom Soong here? Melvin Canas replied: He's on his way.

7. Update on 9800 White Oak proposed project

Don Dwiggins: We are waiting for the planning office to schedule a hearing on the matter. The area in question is between Superior and Lassen. There has been no change during this period, although the news has had a lot of stories about developers.

Audience (Pat): How will we be notified? Don Dwiggins: People in the immediate area will be notified directly; otherwise there will be mailings and NENC website updates.

Audience: How will the board act? Don Dwiggins: When we have the information, I will present it to the board and ask them to take a position. John Bwarie: There's no requirement that they come here, but we do encourage developers seeking a zone change to approach neighborhood councils.

Don Dwiggins: I am one of the people in the affected area. I want to take the lead so that all appropriate connections are made.

After that Item:

John Bwarie from Councilman Greig Smith's office:

Good news -- an opportunity has been presented -- a Community Beautification Grant, which offers \$10,000 for a community project in the public right of way, i.e. library, school, park, streets, etc. The city matches the amount of hours that volunteers donate. There have been 100 recipients a year, for the last 10 years. Go to www.Cd12.org for details. Also there will be a workshop at Encino Tarzana Library tonight, and there will be more in the future. Let's set forth a process so that the board works with us to make this run smoothly; so that we have clarity.

Tom Baker: There will be a workshop at Midvalley Library on September 9th. I will be attending. Question for John about work hours vs. donations. John Bwarie: Some combination of the two can be applied. Tom Baker: Can we create an area near the new pool at Northridge Park?

John Bwarie: Just confirm it properly with Parks and Recreation.

John Bwarie then asked: How is Reseda between Roscoe and Superior? The business improvement district installed the trash cans, but that district no longer exists. The median will be maintained by discretionary funds, but we would like to work on projects that will keep the plants alive and the garbage cans installed. The city does *not* make or maintain these improvements. This isn't a punishment, but we're looking to find institutions to continue that maintenance.

Kelly Lord then introduced Tom Soong about upcoming programs. (8:45pm)

Tom Soong:

Concerning the Senior Fair and allocation of monies --I made that approach a few months ago and talked to some board members. Right now we are working on two senior events; one in Woodland Hills/West Hills, the other on October 13 with Northridges West and East. We need councils to come up with funds for these projects. We invite over 200 participants to these events; the main cost is for food (around \$5,000). The venue costs \$5,000; transportation costs \$1500; publicity costs \$1100. The board needs to allocate up to \$5,000 for this event. We are working together in partnership -- Northridge West is on board too. The Department of Aging will supply contact lists. Please note: you *can* change allocation of the funds. That is important to establish now, because we need to start doing outreach before September.

Audience Member: Is there a charge for exhibitors? Tom Soong: 8 to 10 will not be charged. Hopefully at the next meeting, a representative from the Department of Aging can be here to speak to exhibitor questions.

Kelly Lord: Where is this taking place? Tom Soong: We are looking for somewhere central in the Northridge area. There are multipurpose centers.

Judy Nutter: There are many unanswered questions about this. Where? When? How many?

Tom Soong: 200 people. October 13th is more likely than the 20th. There will be screenings for seniors. Judy Nutter: All day? Tom Soong: Yes. Kelly Lord: Can we amend a motion that we've approved? Tom Soong: Yes, we need to see that the money's in place. Kelly Lord: We need more information, though we trust you. \$5,000 is 10% of our budget. Is there more research we can do? Alice McCain: If we commit the money we discussed, and revisit it next month to see if we want to up the ante...

Audience Member: Is the one in West Hills already underway? That would give you time to evaluate. Tom Soong: Yours is going first. That one [West Hills] may be at the Marriott.

Alice McCain motioned to contribute \$1,000, with the possibility of a motion coming up to revisit it. Lucille Meehan seconded. Ray Calnan dissented with the motion -- if we need more information, why commit any money at all? We need to speak to the Department of Aging first. Businesses such as Rite Aid, Walgreens, and so on, should be contacted as they are probably willing to sponsor. Voting yes on \$1,000 is the same as \$5,000. Tom Soong: Could a quick ad hoc committee be formed who I can work with on that?

Kelly Lord put the motion to a vote. Only 2 were in favor, and the motion did not pass.

Ray Calnan volunteered to be on the committee to discuss the matter with Tom Soong. A special meeting, attended by the board members to achieve a quorum, could be scheduled if the timeline demands.

Tom Baker wondered why there is a date scheduled with little other information.

Barry Greenberg: Point of order. This is not set in stone, and can be revisited. 8 out of 15 members have to be present for a vote.

Melvin Canas returned to discuss the LAPD recruitment program at 9:00pm: \$1000 will be donated for every recommendation for prospective officers who the council recommends to the department. On Saturday August 25th, from 8:30am-12:30pm, there will be a meeting congress at the city hall in Van Nuys. There will be training in the funding program. Roles and responsibilities of board members will be discussed. A continental breakfast will be provided. Emails will be sent.

Tom Baker: Will there be old tree preservation information? Melvin Canas: There are 2-3 people who do that; I don't have an answer but we will get in touch.

Kelly Lord requested that all board members meet with Barry Greenberg to present email addresses.

Board Member Reports

There were none made.

Future Agenda Items and other Calendar Events

Were not discussed.

Ray Calnan motioned to adjourn the meeting. Kelly Lord and Don Dwiggins simultaneously seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned: 9:04p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jon Abrams, AppleOne, August 15, 2007