

Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

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www.prnc.org

Board of Directors

Mel Mitchell, President
Paula Cracium, Vice President
Ali Dabirian, Secretary
Christopher Cooper, Treasurer

Bright Aregs
Mandhata Chauhan
Irwin Cohen
Susan Hammarlund
Becky Leveque
Ron Nagai
Vas Singh

PRNC Business & General Meeting

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

***6pm – Business Meeting
7pm – General Meeting/ Open Discussion
Shepherd of the Hills Church
19700 Rinaldi Street
Porter Ranch, CA 91326***

PROPOSED AGENDA

President Mel Mitchell announced that a quorum was present, and he called the meeting to order at 6:09pm.

Mr. Mitchell pointed out the agendas on the side table and announced the upcoming breakfast. Some upcoming events were discussed.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that a representative from DONE be asked to attend future meetings.

He said that this was an informal meeting with no specific agenda.

The board then took a preliminary break.

6:00pm – Proposed Business Meeting Agenda

1. President Mel Mitchell – Welcome and Introductions

President Mitchell introduced the board and the minute-taker, and announced that the full board was in attendance.

2. Secretary Ali Dabirian – Roll Call

President Mitchell had effectively done that already, so the board moved on.

3. President Mel Mitchell – Motion to approve proposed agenda

Mandhata Chauhan made the motion. Vas Singh seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Secretary Ali Dabirian – Motion to approve July 8, 2008 minutes

New secretary Ali Dabirian presented the minutes and noted that he had sent them to the board by email. He then made the motion. Vas Singh seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Treasurer Christopher Cooper – Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented at August 12, 2008 meeting

New treasurer Chris Cooper commended the former treasurer for his invaluable assistance in the transition. He did a basic rundown of the treasury activity:

There is \$208.94 in the petty cash fund.

\$37,000 of DONE funding is available.

The VISA account has \$ 196.25.

The Education Account items were approved – the purchases were made at Best Buy.

The Expenditure for the Shepherd of the Hills July 4th Spectacular was \$2000.

There is a total of \$79,805 available funds for the year.

President Mitchell asked whether there are any pending items. Mr. Cooper responded that any motions on agenda would be considered pending, as would the note-taker budget.

Some specific discussion followed about vendors that can be paid with the credit card

account. The DONE payment cycle was also covered. Former Treasurer Paul Drotichian clarified some of the board's questions.

Mr. Cooper made the stated motion to accept the presented Treasurer's Report. Ron Nagai seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Motion, Mel Mitchell – to approve spending an amount not to exceed \$1,000 for the PRNC Retreat/ Planning meeting on August 16, 2008

President Mitchell discussed the Retreat planned for this upcoming Saturday, which would require a spending amount of around \$1000, and made the motion. Becky Leveque seconded the motion.

The dress code was discussed. All board members present (and some members of the audience) indicated that they would be interested in attending. Mr. Mitchell said that a minimum of 20 people is required to make this event happen. Ms. Leveque explained that this specific restaurant was chosen because it is the only non-fast-food venue in the area that offers breakfast.

Irwin Cohen asked if this was an official meeting. The board members clarified that this will be a strategic planning session where board member desires, budget, and community input will be discussed.

Paula Cracium asked if calendars should be brought. President Mitchell replied yes – those would be useful.

Paul Drotichian then pointed out that DONE does not have an enforceable dress code, but recommended that people dress appropriately.

Ms. Cracium called for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Motion, Ali Dabirian – to approve an invoice payment of \$1,500 for PRNC sponsorship of the “Hire LA’s Youth” program

Ali Dabirian made the motion so that the program would employ youth with a 6-week paid internship with the community. Hire LA’s Youth puts students to work. This program has an already-established structure.

Board Member Discussion:

Irwin Cohen stated that he was not in favor of youth grants and does not want to spend money on this type of initiative.

Vas Singh stated that this program is to encourage helping youth find a positive direction.

Paula Caracium clarified that they could work with the neighborhood council and asked about the qualifications.

Ron Nagai said that he supports the program, that it does take a village, and then suggested that the motion be approved pending someone from the program speaking at the meeting to drum up community interest.

Susan Hammarlund thought that approving the money without a specific position description would not be ideal, and noted that the summer season was almost over. Like a few other members, she suggested that the board wait and see how the money is to be spent.

Bright Aregs emphasized that the kids should be from Porter Ranch.

Pres. Mitchell took a quick poll to see how the board felt.

Mandhata Chauhan said it was a good point to find out how the money would be spent, and what kind of return the community would get.

Chris Cooper said that waiting for the particulars is a good idea, but once received, more money should be earmarked for this initiative, because youth don’t get many job opportunities the way they used to.

Vas Singh said that a project report should be available. He said that it is a good program and has seen information on it.

Irwin Cohen is against it. He thinks that grants take away from self-reliance.

Ali Dabirian said that he would look into getting someone from this area, after hearing the varied opinions.

Mel Mitchell likes the program and thinks it’s the board’s responsibility to help the kids. But he thinks the motion should be tabled for a future meeting.

Mr. Nagai agreed with the President.

Ms. Hammarlund suggested looking to the Y for a recommendation of a worthy student.

Ms. Cracium said that it is important to learn what the basis is, if this is a needs-based program. It should benefit Porter Ranch if it uses Porter Ranch funds.

Mr. Aregs thinks it is a good program, but also wants to know more. He spoke about his experience managing a similar program in Africa, where the child has to be in school to benefit from it. He offered to work with Mr. Dabirian on it.

Ms. Leveque agrees with Ms. Cracium but has a feeling that this position is already spelled out specifically somewhere, but we need to know the particulars. It is important to give kids something to do in the summer, because sometimes it's hard for them to find jobs, and crime often happens when kids have nothing to do.

Mr. Nagai made the motion to table the stated motion, and Ms. Cracium seconded. The motion passed unanimously. VOTE: 11-0.

8. Discussion/ Motion to prepare a letter to City of Los Angeles officials about the PRNC position on the YMCA's plan to expand their parking lot and to construct trail access to Limekiln Canyon

President Mitchell recounted the presentation last meeting from the YMCA, who has asked the board to take a position on their parking expansion plan. The board has to decide if they are in support or not, or if they even want to be in support.

Irwin Cohen made a motion to support the YMCA, and Paula seconded.

Ron Nagai recused himself from voting because he is on the board of the Y. He explained in further detail what this plan entails. It is highly planned and will have a minimal visual effect. It will benefit the community.

Bright Aregs suggested that the board take a walk to observe the affected area.

An audience member [Wes Rogers] brought up the issue of maintenance for the proposed trail, the chances of decent upkeep for which are not optimistic. But he agreed that it is a safety improvement.

Another audience member [Wendy] was in favor of this well thought-out plan which will benefit the community.

Becky Leveque discussed the pocket park at Reseda and Rinaldi and the maintenance there. Ken Novak, the official in charge, replanted everything and it looks great.

Mr. Mitchell asked for a vote on the motion. The motion passed. VOTE: 10-0. [Mr. Nagai recused himself]

7:00pm – Proposed General Meeting/ Open Discussion

Some various discussion items, questions, and proposals followed the Business Meeting Agenda:

- Mel Mitchell made the announcement for the PRNC breakfast and Porter Ranch Valley Club for the audience members who may have entered since the initial announcement. The printed invitations are on the side table.
- Irwin Cohen proposed that the bylaws be amended to have a position created for a new chair that represents a senior seat, minimum age 70, as the way that the youth chair and at-large seat exists. Becky Leveque said that would be a good thing to discuss on Saturday. Paula Cracium said that this may not require a bylaws change. An audience member called that cumbersome. Ron Nagai discussed the

way the current board was established, and how the current system works well as it is.

- Susan Hammarlund asked if the priorities being set for Saturday could be posted on the web so that those not present can be aware. Ms. Cracium suggested that those be placed as on the website in the form of polls.
- Vas Singh announced that the India Association of LA, the SFV Chapter is holding a 61st Independence Day celebration on Saturday August 16th from 5-11pm at Pierce College. There will be cultural presentations by the students, and speeches from the dignitaries that will be present. The website with additional information is www.indiaassociationla.org
- Maurece Richardson, an audience member, spoke about how he found the meeting and is here to hear about streets.
- Ms. Leveque thanked Mr. Nagai for organizing the clean-up event and asked how the board can publicize that they did something to benefit the community. She also announced that the new school will be breaking ground around January 2010 and will be open to have classes in 2012.
- Mr. Mitchell discussed the group that wants a high school built in the Porter Ranch area, and how the PRNC has not formed an opinion yet because there has been no demonstration of need. Mr. Nagai mentioned the brief K-12 academy that was discussed a while ago but had been decided against because it was not viable. Mr. Mitchell said it should be considered though, when the information is available.

Update on street services, transportation issues and beautification projects By Ron Nagai, PRNC Board Member

Mr. Nagai had three items to discuss:

1. He said that the committee is working with the DWP to clean up the lots on Tampa. They are developing a façade for that lot. But the DWP only does chain link fences, so that's what they put up. But it is cleaner now.
2. Homeowners from the Stewarton Drive area are asking about Paisley Court and Stonehaven being paved – Street Services was contacted and said that they ran out of money. But they did do some renovation recently. The committee will be sure that the rest gets done.
3. The committee has contracted with the LA Conservation Core, which trains youth in landscape management. They have been overwhelmed with the scope of the job – Reseda, Tampa, Corbin, Rinaldi, and more – but they are looking at cleaning it up and planting new trees. Mr. Nagai has not received that estimate just yet. They are now cleaning up the tree wells and 'sucker' branches.

Ms. Hammarlund pointed out the trees on Rinaldi dying of lyme disease which are becoming a fire hazard. Mr. Nagai stated that this task is the city's responsibility.

The Porter Valley Country Club sidewalks on Rinaldi were also discussed. If homeowners agree to the 50-50 program, Mr. Nagai stated, it can be better attended. That program has to do with the extent of the city's involvement. The homeowners have some responsibility towards cleaning up sidewalks.

Ms. Leveque proposed that some of these cleanup efforts happen more frequently.

Mr. Nagai was done with his report, after much discussion amongst the board.

Announcements:

Becky Leveque announced that the LAPD, Devonshire Division, has a community police academy, for an eight week training. If interested, call Erica at 363-1726.

Mel Mitchell announced the certificates the PRNC received from President Bush and from the Shepherd of the Hills Church.

He then spoke briefly about the 2008 Environmental Youth Conference, sponsored by the City of LA. Ali Dabirian will be attending the conference in December.

The next meeting date, which Councilman Smith will attend, was also discussed.

Ron Nagai spoke about a potential Residential Improvement District.

Mel Mitchell presented the letter from the councilman's office proposing an application for a community beautification grant from Public Works. Mr. Nagai said they usually come to the Congress in October.

Ron Nagai talked about the potential full disclosure of neighborhood council finances for public awareness when approaching the city council.

Adjournment:

President Mel Mitchell made the motion to adjourn. Several board members seconded at once. The meeting adjourned at **8:10pm**.

Minutes prepared by Jon Abrams, Apple One, August 12, 2008.