

PORTER RANCH
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 7, 2008
Shepherd of the Hills Church
19700 Rinaldi St., Porter Ranch, CA 91326

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mel Mitchell introduced himself and called the Meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Each Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council (PRNC) Board Member introduced themselves. Board Members present: Mel Mitchell (President), Paula Cracium (Vice-President), Christopher Cooper (Treasurer), Ali Dabirian (Secretary), Bright Aregs, Mandhata Chauhan, Irv Cohen, Sue Hammarlund, Becky Leveque, Ron Nagai, Vas Singh.

All 11 Board Members were present at the beginning of the Meeting, which is a quorum, and the business of the Council could be conducted. Also attending were 21 Stakeholders and Guests.

3. Approval of the proposed Agenda

MOTION (by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Cohen): to accept the Agenda as written.

MOTION PASSED without objection.

4. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION (by Mr. Dabirian, seconded by Mr. Mitchell): to approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2008 General Board Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED without objection.

5. Approval of the Treasurer's Report

Mr. Cooper reported that \$87,000 is available in the budget and he reviewed some expenditures. The LAPD (L.A. Police Dept.) Devonshire Station gym equipment was installed, for which the PRNC had allocated \$4,300. The equipment supplier was designated by the City and allocations were split between seven NCs. Current checks total \$17,000 and \$68,000 is remaining. Mr. Cooper will represent the NC at Saturday's Mayor's Community Budget Day and Congress of Neighborhoods.

MOTION (by Mr. Cooper, seconded by Ms. Hammarlund): to accept the Treasurer's Report for October 7, 2008.

DISCUSSION: The Holleigh Bernson Park \$17,000 Demand Warrant was paid by DONE to the City Department of Recreation and Parks. The Holiday Party and more allocations will be outstanding.

MOTION PASSED without objection.

6. **Discussion / Motion** re: to organize a PRNC committee regarding office space
Mr. Cohen described the expanding Porter Ranch population and the need for “a physical facility” to assist with outreach.

MOTION (by Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. Nagai): that the Land Use Committee will explore the availability of a permanent office site or space in the Porter Ranch community for the use of the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council as an official physical office and return the findings or recommendations to the full Neighborhood Council at the Council’s February Meeting.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Hammarlund is concerned that office space “can be prohibitively expensive . . . and [the NC doesn’t] need someone sitting in the Office day in and day out . . . [The NC] could use the money to help the community.” Mr. Aregs responded that the NC needs “an identifiable place.” Ms. Cracium noted that “the CD [Council District] 12 Office is available” and believes that an office wouldn’t be used enough “to be effective.” Ms. Leveque said that the West Hills NC offered the use of their office for meetings and she thought that a local land developer could donate the use of a facility. It was observed that the Sylmar NC office only receives around one visitor every two weeks. Mr. Mitchell observed that “there’s a municipal facility” that’ll be available in Porter Ranch. Mr. Cohen clarified that the Motion is only to explore the possibility of finding office space. Mr. Aregs reminded that first the NC needs “to determine if we want an office.” Mr. Nagai said that he doesn’t “see any problem with a volunteer championing this cause” and looking for office space. Stakeholder Paul Drogichen cautioned, “don’t count on surplus funds” to pay for an office . . . Be very careful.” He’d “be very much against sharing an office” with another organization. Mr. Cohen added that the Motion “is just to get it started.”

There were no objections to a **CALL FOR THE QUESTION.**

MOTION PASSED by a hand vote, with Ms. Hammarlund opposing.

7. **Discussion/Motion** [to propose]: to prepare a letter to LAUSD officials about the PRNC position on the Draft EIR for the Valley Region Span K-8 #2 School Project (Porter Ranch School).
Mr. Mitchell read the topic. Ms. Cracium believes that “we’re not qualified to take a position” and Mr. Aregs agreed. Mr. Cohen thinks that “the Education Committee should hold a meeting . . . [and] take a stand [that we] agree with the DEIR [Draft Environmental Impact Report], with comments, then . . . include our comments with the DEIR.”

Mr. Mitchell suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** this discussion, though discussion continued. Ms. Leveque noted that the L.A. Unified School District [LAUSD] “has already done everything we’ve asked.” There was extensive discussion regarding how to proceed in regard to meetings, timing and appropriateness of the NC’s response. Mr. Cooper believes that “it’s incumbent upon us to make a statement.” Mr. Aregs suggested that the NC could say, “we support the effort to produce the EIR . . . and we believe the school is for the benefit of the community.”

MOTION (by Mr. Aregs): to have the issue of whether the NC should prepare a letter to LAUSD officials about the PRNC position on the Draft EIR for the Valley Region Span K-8 #2 School Project (Porter Ranch School) referred to the Education Committee, to be Chaired by the President, so the letter can be drafted before it’s too late.

MOTION FAILED for lack of a second.

MOTION (by Ms. Cracium, seconded by Ms. Hammarlund): that the PRNC write a letter to the requesting agency that we are in favor of the Valley Region Span K-8 #2 School Project (Porter Ranch School), but we are not qualified to comment on the DEIR.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Mitchell believes that “sending a letter is probably the appropriate thing to do.” Mr. Mitchell suggested and it was agreed to **POSTPONE** this Item until there is further discussion. [The discussion continued near the end of the Meeting just before the Pancake Breakfast announcement.] There was additional discussion regarding what the NC can say about the DEIR; traffic and other conditions at the School; and NC response possibilities. It was agreed that the Land Use Committee will prepare the letter.

NO VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION.

[Agenda Items eight through 12 were addressed toward the end of the Meeting after the three presentations.]

8. **Motion** [to propose]: Becky Leveque - to approve an expenditure for the victims, families and responders of the Chatsworth train accident.

Mr. Mitchell explained that BONC (the L.A. Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, which oversees the NCs) wants to give the PRNC an award for the response to the Chatsworth train accident.

MOTION (by Ms. Leveque, seconded by Mr. Cooper): to approve an allocation of up to \$2,000 for food, water, supplies, blankets and items needed for the victims,

families and responders of the Chatsworth train accident of September 12, 2008, to be taken out of the Public Safety budget.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Leveque described the urgency of the situation, which necessitated spending the money before this Motion was made.

There were no objections to a **CALL FOR THE QUESTION.**

MOTION PASSED without objection by a hand vote.

9. **Motion** [to propose]: Becky Leveque - for the PRNC to participate in the earthquake preparedness drill, The Great California Shakeout, on Thursday, November 13th at 10:00 AM. The cost not to exceed \$1,000 and to be taken out of the Public Safety budget.

Ms. Leveque explained this. She suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** this discussion.

10. **Discussion** - Update by Ali Dabirian about the Motion that was tabled at the August 12, 2008 meeting to approve an invoice payment of \$1,500 for PRNC sponsorship of the "Hire LA's Youth" program
Mr. Mitchell suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** this discussion
11. **Discussion** - updates about all PRNC Committees: status, meetings, etc.
Mr. Mitchell noted that Committees are starting to meet regularly.
12. **Motion** [to propose]: Mel Mitchell - to renew the contract with Moore Business Results [MBR] for PRNC Web Site services.

MOTION (by Mr. Nagai, seconded by Mr. Singh): to renew the 12-month contract with Moore Business Results for PRNC website services for the fixed fee amount of \$4,500.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Mitchell monitors the contract, which is publicly available. Status reports are provided three times per year. Mr. Cooper offered that the "contract covers . . . substantial public relations" and that Ms. Moore [MBR owner] "has generated" newspaper articles for the NC "for free." The public relations contract is separate from the website maintenance contract. Ms. Moore added that "we can re-brand [the] website . . . to re-focus the NC."

There were no objections to a **CALL FOR THE QUESTION.**

MOTION PASSED without objection by a voice vote.

Announcement: The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) presentation at the Citywide Congress of Neighborhoods on October 11, 2008 to the Chatsworth NC and the PRNC for their efforts during the Chatsworth train accident of 9-12-08. The announcement was made during the above Item #8.

Presentation: William A. Robertson, Director - Street Services, City of Los Angeles will discuss 2008/2009 plans for street repairs in Porter Ranch and the City. Mr. Singh introduced William Robertson, Director, L.A. Bureau of Street Services (BSS) (213-847-3333; lacity.org/boss). Mr. Robertson said that the BSS works on "streets, trees and sidewalks . . . L.A. has the largest street system in the country . . . [it has an] overall street condition of D+." Residential streets last around 30 years; major streets, around 17 years. L.A. street maintenance levels didn't change from the 1930's to the 1980's. Pavement condition, pavement area, and traffic flow are considered for maintenance allocations, and a "budget allocation form" is "based on scientific data." \$230 million is needed and \$84 million is available this year. The City uses a "Pavement Condition Index" also used by the federal government and the military.

"The backlog [for sidewalk repairs] was 83 years . . . the budget just got cut in half, so the backlog is now 166 years." Tree roots damage 85% of sidewalks needing repair and no such repair was done between 1978 and 2000, when the [50-50] Sidewalk Repair Program (which he said is "great" and "accepts credit cards") started. Partly due to this, "millions of dollars have been paid every year in trip and falls." The tree-trimming cycle is every 8 ½ to nine years, and is critical for sidewalk repair because of tree roots raising sidewalks and causing trip and falls, and making sidewalks non-ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act]-compliant.

Filling a pothole doesn't fix the problem because the problem that caused the pothole will still exist. "Utility work must have a Permit, usually through the Engineering Department." The Personal Services Program can be used to hire a City crew to work, only on a weekend, for around \$500-\$600. Street striping is done by DOT (the L.A. Dept. of Transportation) (311; ladot.lacity.org). He recommends that NCs have a "Neighborhood Services" Committee instead of "Transportation" or "Roadworks" Committees. Mr. Robertson can be e-mailed at william.robertson@lacity.org. All information presented is on the website and a CD disk of it can be requested.

Presentation: Carole Lutness, State Assembly Candidate.

Ms. Lutness, 38th State Assembly District Democratic Candidate (661-755-3772; lutness4assembly@yahoo.com; www.lutness4assembly.com), introduced herself, distributed flyers and described the District boundaries. She believes that our economy and society "are at a tipping point . . . of economic and environmental collapse." She wants to clean up perchlorate in the Santa Susana area, and stated that "we can no longer allow this unbridled development that isn't in the best interest of the community . . . We need a well-trained workforce for the new, green economy." She "will protect the schools, the infrastructure and the environment" and would "accept a public/private hybrid healthcare system." She concluded that

“consumer protection is extremely important” and wants a strong public transportation system.

Presentation: Marcie Adavalos of the “Yes on [Proposition] Seven” (916-444-2425; info@yeson7.net; www.Yeson7.net) campaign.

Ms. Adavalos introduced herself, distributed literature and stated that one of their goals is for 50% of California’s energy to be renewable by 2025, which “would create 370,000 new prevailing-wage jobs.” They would have a 3% price increase cap, and she noted that most of California’s energy is from out-of-state.

The following announcements were made after Item #12, near the end of the Meeting.

Announcements

Ms. Leveque announced an Outreach Committee Meeting this Friday at 8:00 p.m. at Bakers Square Restaurant and a Public Safety Committee Meeting Tuesday, October 28th at the Library at which they’ll discuss coyotes.

Ms. Cracium had to leave the Meeting at this time.

Ms. Leveque announced a Pancake Breakfast for the LAPD on Friday, October 17th; tickets are available.

Mr. Mitchell declared and it was agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:41 p.m.