

PORTER RANCH
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

General Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 1, 2009
Shepherd of the Hills Church
19700 Rinaldi St., Porter Ranch, CA 91326

1. Welcome and Introductions

President Mel Mitchell called the Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Board Members present: Mel Mitchell (President), Paula Cracium (Vice-President), Bright Aregs, Mandhata Chauhan, Irv Cohen, Sue Hammarlund, Becky Leveque (late), Ron Nagai, and Vas Singh.

Eight of the 11 Board Members were present at the beginning of the Meeting, which is a quorum, so the Board could make Motions and take votes. Absent: Christopher Cooper (Treasurer) and Ali Dabirian (Secretary). Also attending were approximately 40 Stakeholders and Guests.

3. President, Mel Mitchell - Motion to approve proposed agenda.

MOTION (by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Aregs): to approve the Agenda for this September 1, 2009 General Board Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED without any objections

4. Secretary, Ali Dabirian - Motion to approve unapproved Minutes.

MOTION (by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Nagai): to approve the Minutes of the August 11, 2009 General Board Meeting as written.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote, with Ms. Cracium abstaining.

5. Treasurer, Christopher Cooper - Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented at the September 1, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Mitchell noted that Mr. Cooper was not able to attend and there was no report.

6. Motion, Paula Cracium - To approve that the Outreach Chair has the authority to spend funds to promote and facilitate the events and meetings for the PRNC. Ms. Cracium explained that the NC "needs the ability to promote [speakers] between [General Board] Meetings."

MOTION (by Ms. Cracium, seconded by Mr. Nagai): for the PRNC to approve that the Outreach Chair has the authority to spend funds up to \$2,000 that are needed to

promote and facilitate the events and meetings for the PRNC. The Outreach Chair requires the approval of one Member of the Executive Board and, if an Executive Board Member is not available, any Board Member will suffice for this approval.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cracium elaborated that this “would be ongoing, per event . . . within the budget.” Mr. Cohen was concerned that “it’s too nebulous . . . [and] ambiguous.” He suggested that “the Outreach Committee lay out a plan each year.” Melvin Canas, Neighborhood Empowerment Analyst, L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) (818-374-9953; cell 323-972-7782; melvin.canas@lacity.org), clarified that, “as long as [the allocation is] part of a line item budget, it’s okay.” Ms. Cracium added that “that’s the way [the PRNC] operated last year; we just didn’t have a budget.” Ms. Hammarlund noted that “this could be Tabled until the Budget Committee Meeting.” Mr. Canas added that “most NCs have [budget] categories, [not] line items . . . It’s more of a budget amendment than a Motion.”

MOTION to TABLE (by Ms. Cracium) this discussion to the Budget Committee.

MOTION to TABLE agreed to without any objections.

There was discussion regarding the next Budget Committee Meeting date; there’s a conflict with the Chatsworth Train Accident Memorial Service being on the same day, Saturday, September 12th.

7. **Motion**, Paula Cracium - To approve that the Public Safety Chair has the authority to spend funds up to \$3,500 that are needed to respond in an emergency on behalf of the PRNC. The Public Safety Chair requires the approval of one Member of the Executive Board and, if an Executive Board Member is not available, any Board Member will suffice for this approval.

There was discussion which led to the following Motion.

MOTION to TABLE (by Ms. Cracium) this discussion to the Budget Committee.

MOTION to TABLE agreed to without any objections.

8. **Motion**, Becky Leveque - To approve up to \$2,000 for the memorial service in honor of the victims of the Chatsworth Train Accident.

MOTION (by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Singh): for the PRNC to approve up to \$2,000 for the memorial service in honor of the victims of the Chatsworth Train Accident which occurred September 12, 2008. The memorial service will be Saturday, September 12, 2009 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Hammarlund was concerned that “[the PRNC] already kicked in money for” other events. Mitch Englander, Chief of Staff for L.A. City District 12 Councilman Greig Smith (818-756-8501; mitch.englander@lacity.org;

www.lacity.org/council/cd12), announced that “[City Council District 12] raised \$5,000” for the memorial. “The community has really stepped up . . . a lot is planned . . . The Chatsworth NC is pitching in for the other half of the lunch . . . We’re anticipating 300-500 people . . . There’ll be a dedication for a permanent plaque.” Mr. Cohen was concerned that “having a memorial service is great . . . however, the PRNC was given taxpayer money to spend within the Porter Ranch area . . . [The memorial] should be a private enterprise.” Mr. Nagai believed that “we’re talking about standing along with our neighbors.” Stakeholder Jeannie Plum indicated that “first responders who live there want no recognition . . . How could such an extravaganza be planned without a budget?” A Stakeholder said that the service “doesn’t need [food] . . . It’s not a celebration.” Mr. Chauhan “would support a plaque.” Mr. Aregs believes that “\$2,000 is extravagant.” Mr. Mitchell expressed that “this is a tribute for the people who helped . . . and a memorial.” Mr. Englander explained that the service is modeled after the LAPD (L.A. Police Dept.) fallen officers service, is not extravagant and is open to the public.

MOTION PASSED with nine in favor, one opposed and two abstentions.

9. **Motion**, Becky Leveque - To send a letter by September 8, 2009 to the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and the Firefighters Union regarding a flyer that was sent to 100,000 residents.

Ms. Cracium noted that Ms. Leveque [who had not yet arrived at this Meeting] had wanted to and it was agreed to Table this Item.

10. **Appointment** - two PRNC representatives to attend the September 12th NCs Regional Roundtable & Training.

Mr. Mitchell explained this. Mr. Cohen was concerned that PRNC representatives may make commitments unknown to the rest of the Board Members. Mr. Canas explained that the event will have workshops regarding gang reduction, and Board Member liability and safety issues. Mr. Singh and Mr. Chauhan volunteered to represent the PRNC at the event.

11. **Appointment** - one PRNC representative to attend the September 10th Outreach Forum regarding the 2010 NC elections.

Mr. Canas explained that Outreach Committee Chairpersons from different NCs are attending and that the Forum is open to anyone. Ms. Cracium said that she’ll consider representing the PRNC at the event.

12. **Approval** - the PRNC draft letter to the L.A. Dept. of Recreation and Parks requesting the construction of a children’s swing set area near the present children’s play area in Holleigh Bernson Park. The swing set area shall be approximately 20 feet by 20 feet and contain four to six swings.

Mr. Cohen will draft the letter for the PRNC.

13. **Discussion** – re: NCs having a say in selecting the next LAPD and LAFD Chiefs.

Mr. Canas explained that the Mayor’s Office is seeking community input about this.

14. Discussion - PRNC attendance at an upcoming Community Beautification Grant Workshop.

Ms. Cracium will send Mr. Nagai information regarding a mural grant.

15. Discussion, Paula Cracium - Verizon installing low-hung cabinets in the Public Right-of-Way.

Ms. Cracium explained that “Verizon installed” the cabinets “in public walkways.” There’ll be a Public Hearing September 11th at 9:30 a.m. downtown. Mr. Mitchell said that information will be available on the website [www.PRNC.org].

16. [The second #15 on the Agenda.] **Presentation Request**, Peggy Burgess, Stakeholder and Member, North Hills West NC Land Use Committee - proposed Sepulveda VA Project

Mr. Mitchell explained that Ms. Burgess was not present and that he’d advise her to discuss this with the PRNC Land Use Committee.

Millie Jones, Senior Deputy for L.A. County District Five Supervisor Michael Antonovich (818-993-5170; mjjones@lacbos.org), introduced herself and offered assistance.

Kim Thompson, of the Granada Hills North NC [GHNNC], introduced herself and explained her new “Submeter Maid” business, which has “dropped tremendously” her DWP (L.A. Dept. of Water and Power) bill. The meter separates the water bill by use. You’ll need to get a permit, and it costs between \$1,000 and \$1,200, including a plumber.

17. [#16 on the Agenda.] Congratulations to Mike and Sam Dobry -- snake at ET Park. Mike Dobry explained that he and his son Sam were in ET Park when Sam saw a rattlesnake. Sam alerted Park users to stay away while Mike alerted authorities. Mr. Nagai noted that Mike Dobry has also assisted with community cleanups. (Applause.)

Ms. Leveque arrived at approximately 7:00.

Guest Speaker at 7:00 p.m.: Mitch Englander, Chief of Staff, City Council District 12. Mitch Englander was introduced by Mr. Mitchell. He’s been Chief of Staff since 2003, was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, and is a Reserve LAPD Police Officer.

Mr. Englander said, “Every Fire Station has a paramedic unit,” though non-emergency overtime is being cut; with “the redeployment plan . . . response time [is still] seven minutes . . . no different today than one year ago.” He described that it’s important to disseminate information during disasters. Visiting Fire Companies to last year’s Sesnon Fire waited for some gates to be unlocked so that they could fight the fires; as a result, the Councilman introduced a Motion to have a statewide gate key. The L.A. County Fire Dept. website (<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov>) has a “Ready, Set, Go” disaster preparedness plan available.

Mr. Englander shared a story regarding how one of the recent Movie Nights helped bring a family together. Fee waivers enable events to be held that generate a lot of revenue for the City.

He explained the process by which a community can get a school built. He helped Porter Ranch to qualify with the School District to build the new Porter Ranch K-8 Span School. The School will have enough community space designated for “joint use” to fulfill the Porter Ranch Specific Plan, as ensured by a Joint Use Agreement. The school will be built within two years and the fields will be open to the public on weekends.

Mr. Englander noted that DWP rebates are available. The DWP’s 2005 Water Use Master Plan needs to be revised. Regarding water use restrictions, the Councilman “authored a Motion for three days a week watering . . . [with] all exemptions for [areas that need it, including] hillsides . . . and equestrian properties . . . [They expect the Motion to pass].”

Regarding the Verizon utility boxes that are being installed, the City met with Verizon, which agreed to inventory and move the boxes up on telephone poles, but didn’t move them. Also, the Councilman introduced a Motion regarding an ATM PIN number being able to be entered backwards to alert (the emergency number) 911 that a robbery is in progress.

The Council District Office told the developers of the mall that will be built on the northwest corner of Porter Ranch Dr. and Rinaldi St. to keep open space for now if they cannot build what the community wants. The developers agreed to go with the original idea of having at least mid-sized stores. Traffic patterns have been checked on Rinaldi St. and Tampa Ave., and another lane will be added. ATSAAC (the Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control system) is fully funded and being installed Citywide.

In response to a Stakeholder’s concern, Mr. Englander encouraged the NC to decide how they want to fix the “Welcome to Porter Ranch” sign at the northwest corner of Tampa Ave. and Sesnon Blvd., which was apparently broken by the Sesnon Fire.

The CD12 staff “has been working extremely hard on” “unhitched trailer signs.” The challenge is, violators “must be cited five times under the 72-hour rule” to be towed “because of a judge’s decision.” CD 12 has more “no unhitched trailer signs” than any other Council District. The owner of many of the trailers keeps moving them around and playing games. Some NCs are listing trailer advertisers, asking Stakeholders not to do business with the advertisers and to call them to ask them to have the trailers removed.

Mr. Englander continued, “pension and retiree benefits . . . are what’s causing most of the financial issues the City is currently facing . . . Every city, county and state in the country is in the same boat.” Regarding the Firefighters Union, “86% of” “patch-through” calls to the CD Office for Stakeholders were through the Union. When the CD

Office called back some of the Stakeholders and informed them that the Union had called, the Stakeholders said that they support the Councilman's position.

Various Stakeholders voiced concerns, regarding which Mr. Englander indicated that he'll follow up, or encouraged and/or made recommendations for how the NC and/or individuals can take action.

Jim Dellinger, Field Deputy for L.A. City District 12 Councilman Greig Smith (818-756-8784; Jim.Dellinger@lacity.org), presented a plaque to the PRNC for its support of SOLID (Supporters Of Law enforcement In Devonshire) to help purchase gym equipment for the LAPD Devonshire Station.

Mr. Mitchell declared and it was agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:02 p.m.