

# Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

May 2, 2005

Minutes

Roll: Tatiana Oueni  
Sue Hammarlund  
Paul Drogichen  
Joseph A. Martin  
Pat Pope  
Ron Nagai  
Matt Gluck  
Mel Mitchell  
Paula Cracium  
Becky Leveque

All present except for Pam Birnkrant, whose absence was excused.

In place of Manny Durazo, DONE representative, Mel Mitchell presented the Grievance Committee report—no decision has been made. Vas Dave Singh reported that the grievance that was filed two weeks ago is still being reviewed. A report will be made at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 2—Election of Board Officers. The Board of Directors at the last meeting passed a motion to postpone the election of Executive Officers until the new Board has had an opportunity to attend a “Board Retreat.” Manny Durazo had informed the board that this was not allowable, according to the by-laws. Mel Mitchell then opened the subject to discussion. Mr. Mitchell indicated he felt the board was sufficiently prepared to vote. Paula Cracium voiced her concern that the new board members had not had sufficient opportunity to learn their new roles and responsibilities. She asked if an extension was possible. Matt Gluck asked if it was possible to ask Mr. Durazo for guidance. Ron Nagai made the point that further delay would jeopardize status as a neighborhood council. Ron Nagai suggested following the original motion, noted that the by-laws do not provide for interim board members, move forward with the retreat, and find out results of the grievance. Paula Cracium suggested a procedural change to amend the by-laws, and was told this is not possible due to the time constraints involved. Joseph Martin, noting Mr. Mitchell’s actions as moderator, outlined the evening’s agenda and discussed the council’s role at this point (working as a committee of the whole). Mr. Martin indicated his support of holding elections this event. Becky Leveque reiterated the Board’s possible violation of by-laws, and indicated her support of holding elections today as well. Sue Hammarlund asked that potential board members introduce themselves and think “on our feet” about the issues at hand for each. Ms. Hammarlund also expressed interest in knowing who the stakeholders present. Joseph Martin noted that the retreat may not take place in time to be of value with respect to the elections. Mr. Martin voiced his support of holding the election after the candidates had an opportunity to introduce themselves. Pat Pope stated that enough time had elapsed and that

it was time to “fish or cut bait.” Paula Cracium asked if the outcome of the resolution of the grievance would affect the board members’ status, in light of the fact that two potential officers are mentioned in the grievance. Tatiana Oueni agreed that the retreat would have helped to become acquainted with the Executive Board candidates, but was also willing to vote at that time. Becky Leveque noted that the elections are being held “under duress.” Matt Gluck observed that the three new board members should have some idea of the issues at hand. Joseph Martin motioned to hold elections today; Becky Leveque seconded. Vote was unanimous to hold the elections today.

Mel Mitchell laid out rules for voting—Candidates should introduce themselves, talk about their vision for the Porter Ranch neighborhood, indicate what they have done with reference to the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council and entertain questions from stakeholders. Paula Cracium asked if candidates must be nominated and then the nomination must be seconded.

Pat Pope nominated Paula Cracium for president, expressing his confidence in her ability to perform the job. Matt Gluck nominated Becky Leveque; Ron Nagai stated his interest in the position and nominated himself. Joseph Martin moved to close the nominations for president, which was seconded by Matt Gluck.

Candidate Paula Cracium discussed the input council members have in city and county government. She stated that her interest in the position resulted from the “fractured” nature of the council board at present and that her intent is to act as a bridge. Her wish is to organize the council’s efforts and to empower the community to get things done and to develop a healthy infrastructure for the Council. She noted that the way to get things done is complicated and no simple answers exist.

Candidate Becky Leveque noted her experience, both at work and within the community, and agreed with Paula that the board’s efforts to date have been fractured. She noted her commitment to the Porter Ranch community, listing activities both she and her family have participated in within the Porter Ranch community. She noted her strength as a “people person,” as an organizer, and expressed confidence in the abilities of her co-council members. Becky discussed the council’s financial resources and indicated that she intended to put those funds to good use. Her intent is to make this the best board possible.

Candidate Ron Nagai noted his past performance as President of the Porter Ranch Council. He distributed a prepared statement that listed accomplishments the council has achieved under his direction, and the qualifications that he has for the position. His vision for the community is for Porter Ranch to be the “jewel of the valley.” He stated that his commitment to the community is proven by his activities outside of the council--fundraising, community improvement, and retaining 24 hour EMT service for the community, to name a few. Mr. Nagai

listed many activities and organizations for which he works in the community, to make Porter Ranch a much better place to live.

Stakeholders were given an opportunity to discuss the issue at hand. Mike Dobry discussed tree planting efforts and replacement of sidewalks on Sesnon that Ron Nagai spearheaded, and asked why the community was not asked for input with regard to choice of plants. Mr. Dobry is General Manager of an area landscape maintenance firm. Ron Nagai noted that the community was not given a choice by the City, especially because the trees on the other side of the street were London Plane. Mr. Nagai emphasized that the trees were made available at no cost to the community. Mr. Nagai also noted that the residents were asked to maintain and care for the trees, and that trees were not planted if the resident did not agree to care for the trees.

Mel Mitchell asked of all the candidates what their major accomplishments with regard to the council. Paula Cracium stated that she did not contribute much to the council or the community because she felt individual council members were not empowered to accomplish things on their own. Ms. Cracium noted that all board members participated in decisions presented to the board, and that she participated fully in those activities.

Becky Leveque stated that getting to know everyone was her most significant contribution, aside from putting together the Firemen's Thank You, which she considered one of her greatest accomplishments. She noted that hospitality efforts were her purview for six months or so. Ms. Leveque voiced her commitment to do more in the next year.

Ron Nagai noted that outreach efforts in Porter Ranch especially were accomplishments for which he took credit. Making sure the community did not lose 24 hour EMT services, involving greater Porter Ranch and Northridge area businesses involved in the North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, and opposition to DWP increases, were cited. He noted that his efforts extended much further than simply voting on issues in the council. He voiced his dismay that other candidates felt there were empowerment issues. He discussed plans for future activities

Pat Pope asked the candidates "If you don't finish first..., what will you do as a member of this board?" Paula Cracium stated that losing the election won't affect what she does with reference to the council. Ms. Cracium said that she will support whoever takes over the office. She stated her hope that next year the board's organization will be more lateral than its present pyramidal form. Becky Leveque—will work for anyone who treats her with respect. She feels that the board is not presently working as a team. Ron Nagai cited his record, and stated he would continue to work hard for Porter Ranch regardless of whether he is president or not.

Joseph Martin noted that he feels that all candidates are qualified and thinks the presidency should be rotated through the board, to allow each person an opportunity, and asked for council members' opinions. Matt Gluck agreed with Mr. Martin's opinion. Ron Nagai asked what Mr. Martin meant by rotation of the presidency. Mr. Martin mentioned filling the presidential vacancy only until the retreat, as well as shorter terms of office.. Paula Cracium agreed that the change in leadership is a beneficial one. She feels the president's role is as a moderator. Becky Leveque agreed and compared the presidency to running a corporation.

Wendy Moore cited Covey's bias for action, and noted that she felt that there had not been much accomplished in the last six months. She urged voting for the person council members felt could get things done. She asked for the top two or three things each felt could be accomplished. Paula Cracium mentioned schools, community outreach, and creation of "real" committees. Becky Leveque mentioned fire dept needs assessment, schools, YMCA child care, Little League, finalizing elections, laptop to VST, spending available funds, Fire Station 8 needs an emergency generator, Fire Station 28 needs a sanitizing washing machine. Ron Nagai agreed that a bias for action is beneficial, and listed short, medium and long-range goals. Short—show progress, like Braemore /Reseda sidewalk repair; Medium—better outreach, better relationship with business community, volunteer surveillance team support (laptop purchase).

Vas Das Singh asked that the board consider having a president and vice president that takes over the presidency at the end of the term. Tatiana Oueni asked how long the president holds office. Pat Pope noted the example of the LA County Board of Supervisors. Elaine Sherman noted that LA Board of Supervisors' term is four years and that she felt this example is not germane because the PRNC Board's term of office is two years. Mel Mitchell discussed the possibility of changing the by-laws. Sue Hammarlund noted that the discussion was drifting away from the issue at hand.

Ron Nagai supported Vas Das Singh's suggestion. Paul Drogichen noted that the two-year term eliminated the ability to have an understudy role. It was agreed that further work would have to be done to provide for a transitory scheme as discussed.

In summation, the candidates were asked to make a short statement. Ron Nagai said he has a lot to contribute and looks for support for future efforts. Becky Leveque stated her interest in the job, commended Ron's efforts, and expressed her confidence in her ability to perform the job's requirements well. Paula Cracium reiterated her wish to create a lateral board.

Pat Pope called for a vote; seconded by Joseph Martin.

Paula Cracium—2 votes. Becky Leveque—7 votes. Ron Nagai—1 vote.

Becky Leveque, as the new president of the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council, thanked Ron Nagai for his past efforts, and called for action from all council members and stakeholders to make the council's efforts effective.

Becky Leveque called for nominations for Vice President--Joseph Martin nominated Mel Mitchell; who demurred. Candido Mares, a stakeholder, noted that Mr. Mitchell's hesitancy was not a good thing, because of the number of issues facing the Porter Ranch community. Mel declined the nomination. Matt Gluck nominated Paula Cracium, who accepted the nomination. Paula also nominated Paul Drogichen. Paul indicated he thought he would be nominated for another position, but accepted the nomination. He discussed his commitment to the community, past community service, present commitments and career activities. He stated his qualifications for the position. Pat Pope nominated Ron Nagai, who accepted the nomination.

A vote called for by Becky Leveque

Paula Cracium—5 votes. Paul Drogichen—2 votes. Ron Nagai —3 votes.

Becky Leveque called for nominations for Treasurer. Ron Nagai nominated Paul Drogichen; no other nominations were made.

The vote called for by Becky Leveque was unanimous.

Becky Leveque called for nominations for Secretary. Mel Mitchell nominated Pat Pope. Mr. Pope accepted the nomination and expressed his confidence in performing the job's requirements. The vote called for by Becky Leveque was unanimous.

Ms. Leveque congratulated all successful candidates and called the meeting to order.

Ms. Leveque asked for formation of a committee to review meeting minutes for the past year. Mel Mitchell motioned to postpone reading of the minutes. Joseph Martin seconded.

Vote was unanimous in favor of the postponement.

Tom Sammartano, EMS Supervisor, was introduced by Captain Mike Franklin, from Fire Station 28, who discussed Mr. Sammartano's responsibilities and role in LAFD Battalion 15. Some discussion occurred about equipment requests and procedures in place for obtaining medical equipment.

The Treasurer's report was tabled until the new officer can familiarize himself with the files at hand. Pat Pope agreed to send a note to Larry Berlin, Eric Blankenburg, and Pam Birnkrant to obtain any existing records.

## Old Business

Becky Leveque called for a vote to approve the purchase of a laptop for VST. Ron Nagai mentioned that the approval had been made, that the only thing that remained to be done was cutting the check. The procedure to spend funds was outlined. Matt Gluck asked for the specifications needed for the laptop, and indicated that he would make some calls to ensure obtaining a good price.

Becky Leveque asked about the status of the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council Post Office box. It was noted that Paula Cracium had spent \$3200 on Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council stationery, but the Post Office box listed on the stationery was lost because the bill was not paid. Candido Mares questioned the \$3200 expenditure. Paula Cracium explained the rationale behind spending funds for this purpose.

Paul Drogichen motioned that the council write to the current holder of the Post Office box to ask that the box be released. Joseph Martin suggested using a change of address form, and renewing the change of address until such time as the stationery runs out. Becky Leveque stated she would talk to the Postmaster about what can be done. Sue Hammarlund suggested writing over the current address on the stationery. Becky Leveque indicated she would follow through with this issue.

Sue Hammarlund has drafted a letter of apology to the City Clerk's office and the MTA regarding election delay and asked for input from council members as well as their approval. She stated that she did not have the name of the City Clerk's office employees or the MTA employee that also attended the referenced meeting. Joseph Martin will find out the name of the City Clerk's official. Mr. Martin and Sue Hammarlund will work together to properly address the letter or e-mail.

Candido Mares, stakeholder, mentioned his interest in participating in the Committee on Cleanup.

Joe Martin discussed the Memorandum of Understanding sent by DON and the DWP, which has to be signed off by each of the Neighborhood Councils. Mr. Martin indicated that e-mails had been sent to each council member, and that all council members should have received and read the Memorandum of Understanding. Mr. Martin noted that the majority of Neighborhood Councils have already signed off on the Memorandum of Understanding, and discussed the process by which the Memorandum of Understanding had been developed. Becky Leveque asked if the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council had a deadline

for signing the Memorandum of Understanding. Ron Nagai stated that the Memorandum of Understanding had been sent to the council members in January 2005. Becky Leveque stated her preference to table this issue until the next meeting. Ron Nagai moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding, which was seconded by Joseph Martin. Vote—3 in favor; 7 against. Paula Cracium moved to postpone voting on the Memorandum of Understanding issue and re-visit the issue at the next meeting; seconded by Matt Gluck. Vote—8 in favor; 2 opposed.

Joseph Martin asked that the Memorandum of Understanding be placed on the PRNC website for review by council members and stakeholders.

### New Business

Joseph Martin mentioned that the Neighborhoods USA Council encouraged participation by at least one neighborhood council member in a grant writing, transportation, etc. conference scheduled to take place in Sacramento May 25-28, 2005. Financial support will be provided by the City at a cost of \$1451 per person, including travel, per diem and expenses. Mr. Martin and Sue Hammarlund indicated interest in attending. Pat Pope made a motion to send a single council member to the Neighborhoods USA Conference, who would report back to the council; this was amended and seconded by Mr. Nagai to allow two council members. Mr. Martin noted that a five page report to the City was required of all attendees. Vote—unanimous in favor.

### Committee Reports

Ron Nagai mentioned the upcoming June 25, 2005 Congress of Neighborhood Councils, which will take place at the LA Convention Center. Joseph Martin called for all stakeholders possible to attend the meetings, noting the value to be received. Becky Leveque requested that the Congress of Neighborhood Councils information be posted as soon as possible on the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council's web site.

Paula Cracium asked if there will be an opportunity for community outreach in the form of an incentive to Porter Ranch constituents who attend the Congress. Ron Nagai discussed how the Congress is set up and conducted. Joseph Martin provided some insight about the Congress as well.

Elaine Woo, a stakeholder, asked if the Education Committee still existed. It was decided that the Education Committee will consist of Sue Hammarlund, Becky Leveque, Wendy Moore and Elaine Woo. The schedule for the next Education Committee meeting will be posted on the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council web site. Ms. Wu also mentioned meetings she attends on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month at Devonshire Division, and promised to e-mail info to the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council members. Becky Leveque asked Ms. Woo to ask

Vivian Imuri for a Needs Assessment list; Ms. Leveque specifically mentioned a crossing guard to be stationed on Braemore near Castlebay School that had been discussed with Ms. Imuri.

Mel Mitchell reported on the Land Use Committee met last month; minutes from that meeting are available on the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council web site. The next meeting is due to take place May 18, 2005 from 6pm to 8pm at the Porter Ranch Library; the Hidden Creeks developer will make a presentation to the Land Use Committee. Ron Nagai provided some background information on Hidden Creeks.

Joe Martin discussed the Transportation Committee, and called for stakeholder and council member participation. He encouraged any interested parties to participate; Becky Leveque called for interested parties to contact Joe Martin. Mr. Martin promised to publish the next committee meeting dates on the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council web site.

Ron Nagai agreed to head the Beautification Committee, whose emphasis is on public arts, enhancements to the public parks' children's area, street medians, etc. Becky Leveque called for committee members for the Beautification Committee. Sue Hammarlund suggested sending a letter to S&S to discuss what has happened to the area between along Rinaldi between Porter Ranch Drive and Mason, as a sort of positive reinforcement. Ms. Hammarlund wants a letter written to notify the developer that this area is unacceptable.

Matt Gluck wants to spearhead the Clean-up Committee, with Candido Mares, Mike Dobry and Councilman Greig Smith.

Outreach Committee — Becky Leveque suggested asking Pam Birnkrant to chair with Mel and herself. Ron Nagai mentioned he thought all board members should take part in this committee. Becky Leveque agreed and volunteered to write a newsletter for distribution on a monthly basis by all committee members.

Safety Committee —Matt Gluck, Paula Cracium, Pam Birnkrant, Mike Dobry, and Becky Leveque. Mike Dobry and Becky Leveque are both Police Community Representatives and active in SOLID

Ron Nagai mentioned that a Budget and Finance Committee should be established, since Neighborhood Councils will soon be able to raise funds on their own. Becky suggested postponing that committee until such time as the \$70,000 is spent. Matt Gluck suggested a pancake breakfast or other fundraising opportunity to raise money for the Fire station washing machine. Becky Leveque agreed and suggested sponsoring this activity through the Adopt-a-Fire Station program.



Becky Leveque suggested a Needs Assessment list should be made, in conjunction with establishing a Needs Assessment committee, as suggested by Matt Gluck, who volunteered to assist with the committee. Pat Pope wants to present the results of our earlier survey next PRNC meeting. Ms. Leveque mentioned another effort is being made by Greig Smith's office that will be mailed out to every homeowner in Porter Ranch.

Paula suggested contributions to the list should be made by the individual committees. She also suggested making chairmanships clear for the individual committees. Mr. Martin indicated that the web site made that information available. Becky Leveque and Paul Drogichen agreed to handle the Hospitality committee.

Becky emphasized that no board meetings will take place in the future without minutes and a finance report. She asked for stakeholder comments, and also asked that stakeholders present at the meeting identify themselves.

The stakeholders in the audience and their comments include: Ron Watkins, who lives at the corner of Braemore and Castlebay and voiced his concern about traffic and safety at that corner; Paula Sonkin; Vas Das Singh; Stephanie Simpson, a 30 year resident; Elaine Sherman represented her son, Congressman Brad Sherman and gave contact information regarding Federal issues; Beverly Mitchell; Elaine Wu; Nadia and Diana (students at Cal State LA), Dick Franton a 35-year resident; Tamara Oueni, Hannah Oueni, Sammy Oueni.

Becky Leveques' closing remarks thanked council and stakeholders; she indicated her intent not to hold office for more than one year.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2005 at Sheppard of the Hills at 6:00 PM. Becky asked for suggestions about speakers for future meetings.

Motion by Joe Martin to adjourn, seconded by Pat Pope.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.