

PORTER RANCH NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Shepherd of the Hills Church

Porter Ranch, California

1. MEETING OPENING

a. Welcome and introduction of special guests

President Becky Leveque called the meeting to order at 6:18 PM, noting a quorum was established. Ms. Leveque introduced special guests Michael Toh, Policy Director for Congressman Brad Sherman of the 27th Congressional District and John Bwarie, DONE Field Representative.

b. Roll Call

Board members present: Paula Cracium, Mel Mitchell, Sue Hammarlund, Chris Cooper, Paul Drogichen, Becky Leveque, Vasdev Singh, Pat Pope, Bright Aregs, and Ron Nagai.

c. Approval of Proposed Agenda

Pat Pope moved to adopt the agenda. Sue Hammarlund seconded. The agenda was adopted unanimously.

d. Presentation and Approval of November 2006 Minutes

Pat Pope moved that the minutes from the November, 2006 meeting be approved. There were no negative comments on the minutes. Sue Hammarlund seconded. The minutes were adopted unanimously.

e. Treasurer's Report

Paul Drogichen presented the Treasurer's Report. PRNC has approximately \$84,000 in available funds. Paul noted that PRNC will have a large Outreach expenditure for our election. He noted that most of the budget categories have a large amount available. Mel Mitchell is concerned about fire safety and wants some of the money allocated for that. Paul noted that the generator requested by Fire Station 8, and approved by the Board last fiscal year has not yet been purchased.

At the request of stakeholder Irv Cohen, Paul went into some detail explaining the line items of the budget. Paul also explained that the City adds \$12,500 every quarter to our budget. PRNC has about \$70,000 that we can write checks for without getting further approval from the City. Any monies over three years old

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will be given back to the City. Paul advised the Board not to spend money frivolously, but the Board should make some decisions to avoid giving money back to the city that is supposed to be spent in Porter Ranch. Ron Nagai moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Bright Aregs seconded. The Treasurer's Report was adopted unanimously.

2. OTHER ACTION ITEMS

2.1

Michael Toh from Congressman Brad Sherman's office addressed several issues before the new Congress. First, the Congressional leadership has moved the House of Representatives to a 5-day Washington work week. The last Congress worked 3 days a week in Washington. The new schedule will allow the Congress to get more done. Of course the new schedule will not allow California representatives to spend as much time working in their districts.

Congressman Sherman is working on the Social Security Fairness Act. It will allow government employees that have paid into Social Security to get benefits.

Congressman Sherman is working with other House members that represent the San Fernando Valley and the Census Bureau to allow the Valley to be a recognized census area.

Sherman is also looking for some federal funding for the expansion of the North Valley YMCA.

Michael Toh said that the Congressman is in favor of widening the Tampa off ramp from the 118 Freeway, this lead into the main reason that John Bwarie from Councilman Smith's office attended.

Mr. Bwarie discussed in detail the reasons for the proposed widening of the westbound 118 Freeway Tampa off ramp. John said that the MTA oversees transit funds. He provided a sample of a letter which he requested that the PRNC would send to the MTA regarding the proposed change.

The basic change would widen the exit on the existing right-of-way. This would separate people turning left, from people turning right sooner. It would allow for faster exiting during busy periods. The hope would be to reduce back-up onto the freeway during rush hours. The entire bridge will be re-striped to allow a second left turn lane from southbound Tampa to the eastbound 118 Freeway, reducing the backup of traffic on Tampa during rush hours.

There are many freeway projects competing for funds. An endorsement by PRNC could help obtain the funds. If approved, the project could start in as little as two years.

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Mr. Bwarie answered questions from Board members and stakeholders. Pat Pope asked if consideration had been given to adding an off ramp at White Oak. John said neighborhood opposition to a White Oak ramp is strong in Granada Hills. Further discussion ensued regarding benefit to the Porter Ranch community. Ron Nagai summed up by noting that he had been advocating this change for years and stated that this project will have long-term benefits to the community. A stakeholder stated that this is a 'band-aid' solution and a more broad solution should be sought. The stakeholder voiced concern about development projects that increased density in the area. Mr. Bwarie referred to a proposal being pushed by Councilman Smith that will provide a sunset clause for a particular development's required traffic study. Mr. Nagai summed up the reasons for the current amount of traffic in the Porter Ranch area, and noted that a 'band-aid' solution is still a viable solution. Mr. Bwarie listed the steps yet to be taken to get the appropriate funds to complete the proposed widening.

Ron Nagai moved endorse the subject project and to write a letter of support for the project to Roger Snoble for delivery to LA DOT to be inserted in their package to MTA; seconded by Vasdev Singh.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor. The motion passed.

2.2

Sue Hammarlund brought up the fact that PRNC Board meetings have often been moved because of holidays, or schedule conflicts at Shepherd of the Hills. She suggested that PRNC publish a Master Calendar. Paula Cracium said they would take up the idea in the Outreach Committee and report back to the Board.

2.3

Becky Leveque withdrew her motion to designate the second Tuesday of each month for PRNC meetings, because the of the pending review by the Outreach Committee.

Additional Items

Becky Leveque introduced Vivian Ihori, principal of Castlebay Elementary School, and PATH president, and Elaine Woo. Sue Hammarlund presented a DLP projector to Ms. Ihori for use at Castlebay.

Sue Hammarlund read the text of a letter to Councilman Grieg Smith that requests the study of the addition of a right turn lane at the westbound intersection of Rinaldi and Corbin as discussed at the November 2006 meeting, and provided a copy to the Board for review. By acclamation, Ms. Hammarlund was authorized by the Board to sign and send the letter.

3. OLD BUSINESS

Status of the Porter Ranch K-8 Span School

Becky Leveque reported that a major hurdle to get a new Span School (K-8) built near the corner of Mason and Sesnon has been cleared by LAUSD. It has taken many hours of effort by PRNC, S&S, and Councilman Smith's office to get to this point. The school would be 12.9 acres adjacent to a 52 acre park. The park would be "Joint Use"; during the school day it would be used by the students for physical education and other outdoor uses. After school hours the land would be usable as a park by the community. Community input will be requested for the design. If all goes well, the school will be built by 2010 or 2011. LAUSD has not worked with a Neighborhood Council before.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Outreach to businesses in Porter Ranch

Sue Hammarlund reported on proposed efforts for outreach to Porter Ranch businesses that are driven by input received from stakeholders. There was discussion about holiday decorations at the shopping center. Ron Nagai reported on earlier appearances before the Board by area businesses, which were arranged through the Chamber of Commerce. Paula Cracium complained that efforts to outreach to area businesses would not have positive results. Becky Leveque suggested contacting the shopping center to find out why there were no holiday decorations, and to discuss the topic at the upcoming Thursday, January 11, 2006 meeting.

b. Newsletter

Paula Cracium discussed plans for community outreach, including a newsletter that will be discussed at a meeting on Thursday, January 11, 2006 at Bakers Square at 7 am.

a. Committee Reports

Becky Leveque discussed her request to Committee Chairs for a report of goals for each committee for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

Ron Nagai reported on efforts to facilitate the Neighborhood Cleanup proposed, and noted plans to develop an RFP to obtain bids for the work to be done. Mr. Nagai proposed engaging a contractor to clear the sidewalks and hiring a street sweeping service. Mr. Nagai cautioned about achieving a balance regarding how much of the City services PRNC takes on.

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Becky Leveque noted a recent crime report received from Devonshire Division, and commended citizens' efforts, which have resulted in a lower crime rate in the Porter Ranch area. Christine, a stakeholder, complained about graffiti. Ron Nagai advised the stakeholder to take a picture of the graffiti before it is removed and to provide the picture to the police. Ms. Leveque suggested asking a Police Department representative to speak at an upcoming PRNC meeting. Discussion followed regarding gang activities and police efforts in the area.

Regarding emergency preparedness, Bright Aregs asked about the web site posting for the emergency preparedness committee. Becky Leveque will follow up to make sure Mr. Aregs is listed as the contact for this committee. A stakeholder suggested including a mechanism for stakeholder comment.

Mel Mitchell suggested that PRNC consider active participation in the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils. Mr. Mitchell relayed announcements from Manny Durazo, DONE representative: a January 17 orientation for new Board members, a January 20 academy sponsored by DONE regarding strengthening communities, feedback requested regarding an upcoming Congress of Neighborhoods, participation in neighborhood celebrations, Citywide Alliance of Neighborhood Councils. Discussion followed about the need for choosing appropriate activities for Board members to attend. Mr. Mitchell noted his plan to attend an upcoming meeting sponsored by the Department of Planning. Paula Cracium asked if Bright Aregs would research which activities PRNC Board members should attend. Debate about the reach and scope of the Neighborhood Council resulted. Becky Leveque appointed Bright Aregs to head a Political Action committee to research the issue of the scope of PRNC.

Sue Hammarlund reported the agenda to be discussed at the upcoming Education Committee meeting and noted that CERT training will begin January 22, 2006, at no charge.

Chris Cooper, reporting on fire danger, noted that Red Flag status alerts have been posted several times in the past few days, and discussed the LA Fire Department's plan for proactively responding to fire hazards. Mr. Cooper reported on his recent promotion and reassignment to Fire Station 12, at Avenue 60 and Figueroa, reported on proactive response to fire danger, discussed the recent fires that occurred in the area around the 101 and Barham and in Malibu. Mr. Cooper also discussed a recent newspaper article that reported comments he made regarding fire department personnel management. In answer to Becky Leveque's question Mr. Cooper discussed Chief William Bamattre's contribution and recent retirement from the Fire Department. Ron Nagai suggested recognizing Chief Bamattre at a Firefighter Appreciation Day.

Ron Nagai asked that an open forum be provided on the agenda to allow stakeholders the opportunity to speak at upcoming meetings.

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Ron Nagai asked about including additional PRNC stakeholder phone numbers, to be obtained through reverse lookup. Pat Pope will research obtaining stakeholder information and report.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus, at 8:41 pm.