Meeting Minutes – November 13 2019 - DRAFT

Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council (PRNC)
Board Meeting

Wednesday, 13 November 2019
Porter Ranch Community School (PRCS)
12450 Mason Avenue, Porter Ranch 91326

DRAFT MINUTES (PENDING BOARD APPROVAL)

1. Meeting call to order
   ▪ President Issam Najm called the meeting to order at 6.20PM.

2. Welcome
   ▪ Issam welcomed over twenty-two stakeholders along with [eventually] eleven board members.
   ▪ He reminded everyone that there were emergency kits available for everyone. Please see Bill Hopkins in the back of the room if interested.

3. Pledge of Allegiance
   ▪ Issam led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Roll Call
   ▪ Gabriel Khanlian performed the roll call and a quorum was declared.

   - Asaad Alnajjar, David Balen, Lori Choi, Brandii Grace, Jason Hector, Mihran Kalaydjian, Gabriel Khanlian, David Lasher, Becky Leveque, Hassan Memarian, and Issam Najm

5. Presentations from representatives of elected officials or city departments
   ▪ Ryan Valencia, district director for Assemblywoman Christy Smith addressed the PRNC
     - The state assembly is out of session until January. If you want Ms. Smith to partner with your association, please reach out to their office. Ms. Smith intends to attend multiple holiday events, including the December 11th PRNC holiday party.
     - While the assembly is out of session, their office is doing much casework, including issues with the DMV and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), especially for the north area of the district that needs water for livestock, crops, etc.
     - The website response.ca.gov provides a list of resources, including
       - Food Banks
       - Health Services
       - Incident Overviews
       - Preparedness
       - Resources
       - Shelter/Housing
       - Transportation Impacts
       - Wildfire Incidents
Ms. Smith is chairwoman of the assembly’s Emergency Response Committee, and fears there may be a reduction in insurance renewals. Please share with Ryan and Ms. Smith your testimonies and/or if you have any issue with your insurance company. They are especially concerned about seniors and the medically sensitive. California’s Department of Insurance offers basic fire insurance, just in case your regular homeowner’s insurance drops you. In response to Gabriel’s question, Ryan has heard of insurance companies dropping coverage, especially to those who live in Agua Dulce or within canyons.

Brandii asked if there was any law that, during a state of emergency (such as the Saddle Ridge Fire), prohibits price gouging (such as hotels and fuel costs). Perhaps hotels could waive sales tax in such events.

Regretfully, Ryan had to leave early for the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council meeting.

Stephen Duprey, Urban Forestry Division (UFD) Supervisor for the City of LA, addressed the PRNC.

He recently met Jason at a UFD meeting and expressed his concern regarding the trees around Porter Ranch.

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on this area is currently in its 4th addendum, and they are verifying that the tree report is accurate. They originally planned to remove 114 oak trees. This has been reduced to 25-trees, plus the removal of one dead tree, to be replaced by 24” healthy, young boxed trees.

Additional information will be discussed in agenda items 11.

Asaad from the city’s Public Works Department reported that, although he usually works in the Bureau of Street Lighting, he coordinated emergency preparedness tasks during the recent Saddle Ridge Fire. Debris management services are being activated under his direction. For pick-up of any rubbish from the fire, please call 311 or contact the City via the MyLA311 app on your smart phone.

6. Budget advocates report

Budget Advocate Brian Allen reported that the advocates have concluded most of their meetings with the various city departments. By the end of December, they hope to compile their findings into a white paper, which will be delivered to Mayor Garcetti and the City’s Administrative Officer prior to the mayor’s budget presentation to the city.

Brian has gotten very well embedded with the city departments; the LAPD stated that they would like quarterly meetings with the advocates.

Saturday, 20 June 2020 will be the annual Budget Day at city hall. This event is open to all; budget representatives are strongly encouraged to attend.

7. Public Comments on Matters not on the Agenda and within the Purview of the Board

Bill Hopkins, President of the Valley Disaster Preparedness Foundation, mentioned that many anticipated exhibitors and attendees were unable this year’s Valley Disaster Preparedness Fair, due to evacuations and poor air quality from the concurrent Saddle Ridge Fire. Therefore, he brought several preparedness kits, which include personal protective equipment. Please mark your calendars for the 2020 fair, to be held Saturday, October 10th.

Dr. Loraine Lundquist spoke as a CD12 candidate for the March election. She requested that concerned people sign her petition to help get her on the ballot. As a board member with the Northridge East Neighborhood Council (NENC) and the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance, she compiled a list of protected trees; this can be found at ncsa.la/trees.
Asaad asked to go to the floor and speak as a stakeholder. He introduced himself as the other candidate running for CD12; he feels that the people of Porter Ranch are not properly represented. Semee Park, PRNC’s new Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) mentioned that PRNC board members could not speak as stakeholders, and asked that Asaad stop his presentation from the floor. Glenn Bailey from the NENC reported that the silencing of Asaad was not a DONE rule, but rather a rule from the city attorney.

Glenn added that the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils (VANC) has postponed their planning forum, originally scheduled for Thursday, November 14th at the CBS Studios, Studio City. This may be rescheduled for March 2020 (or later). This month’s regular VANC meeting, on Thursday, November 14th at the Sherman Oaks Hospital, will feature guest speaker and city attorney, Mike Feuer.

Bill Neal from North Hollywood and the California Native Plant Society reported that they have recently published a 90-page guide, as they are concerned about the recovery of the Limekiln and Aliso Canyon Parks of Porter Ranch. Additional information can be found on their website [https://www.cnps.org](https://www.cnps.org)

Craig Galanti reported that several Aliso Canyon Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) members [who were in attendance] continue to do everything possible to ensure an independent, science based health study, free of all political influence. Powerful forces are fighting against everyone in this area. This was discussed at Dr. Nordella’s recent town hall meeting. Craig did not feel that the agencies act in everyone’s best interest. The CAG is aware of this and believes it has a duty to protect the community as much as it can.

The CAG is finalizing the scoring by which the nominees to the Scientific Oversight Committee (SOC) will be scored. Additionally, various CAG members are contacting leading scientists across the country to broach their inclusion on the SOC.

The CAG has already had two meetings. LAFD Health Hazmat, the South Coast AQMD, and the CPUC are investigating the ground fire that burned in the SoCal Gas facility after the Saddle Ridge Fire was extinguished. They reviewed air sample results, which showed elevated benzene levels in the neighboring community and significantly higher methane levels at the source of the fire. While this fire is still under investigation, all signs point to this being a fugitive emission that occurred far away from any other gas infrastructure. These emissions are invisible but very toxic; it proved that gas stored in the field cannot be contained with any certainty. Basic physics shows that high pressure will move to low pressure. The high pressure gas within the facility can and will escape at locations across the breadth of the facility. The actual soil samples are 100% monitored by the SoCal Gas (similar to a fox watching the henhouse).

There are two other very important issues that have been outstanding for years:

- The PRNC’s Susan Gorman-Chang championed a $3m allocation for air monitoring of the field. The agencies are pointing fingers at each other regarding who is responsible. Nothing has happened.
- The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) formed a health study group similar to our CAG, but made up of mostly regulators, with merely two community representatives. In two years, this group has done nothing.

This CAG has made it a priority to address all of these failures to the best of their ability and authority.
Stakeholder Patty mentioned that there is not much action regarding the health study, while the dairy digesters and attorneys are collecting their money. Meanwhile, the people who were affected by the Exide Battery Recycling Center in Vernon have already received their payments. She is very concerned about the lack of action regarding the monitors and the elevated benzene levels in the community.

Mikkie Loi from the Devonshire Police Advisory Board provided feedback regarding the Saddle Ridge Fire. Because it was so fast moving, many community members did not know what to do. We need folks to have a plan in place for themselves, family, and neighbors. Perhaps a telephone tree or a Ready Your LA Neighborhood (RYLAN) system, as it would be near impossible to knock on everyone’s door. We cannot be 100% dependent upon technology. The wireless emergency alert did not work in the areas where it was most needed. Everyone should own something as basic as a battery-operated radio.

For their last meeting of 2019, in lieu of monthly neighborhood watch meetings, the Devonshire Division’s Basic Car Groups will host a potluck on Thursday, November 14th at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, 17037 Plummer Street.

The local Police Activity League Supporters (PALS) Center will host a toy distribution event on Thursday, December 14th at 9AM. You may drop off toys at the CD12 office (9207 Oakdale Avenue) or at the PALS facility (8721 Wilbur Avenue) through Wednesday, December 13th.

David Brown from the Neighborhood Council Emergency Preparedness Alliance reported that Saturday, November 16th, the SOS Survival Products Store at 15705 Strathern Street will host two free classes:

- 10AM Radio 101
- 1PM Emergency Power

Additional information, including upcoming classes, is posted on their website at https://www.sosproducts.com.

We all need to know how to prepare to evacuate on a moment’s notice, not in 30-minutes. During the Saddle Ridge Fire, many people saw flames in their backyard, but did not evacuate because they did not receive the order. If you see a fire coming down a hillside towards your backyard, do not wait to receive an order to evacuate.

A stakeholder mentioned that Thursday, November 14th at 8.30AM, there would be a hearing for restitution for SoCal Gas at the Santa Clarita Courthouse.

Stakeholder Dierdre Bologna thanked the PRNC and everyone who showed up for Dr. Nordella’s recent town hall meeting. Dr. Nordella worked very hard for that presentation, and it showed.

8. Board Member Comments / Committee Updates

Brandii was so glad that the community came together during the Saddle Ridge Fire; she was especially concerned as her son is recovering from bronchitis.

Becky reported that the postponed annual Supporters of Law Enforcement in Devonshire (SOLID) pasta dinner, held Friday evening, November 1st at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church was a great success. Proceeds will go towards the things that the city does not provide our police, such as holsters, etc. She feels truly blessed to have such a great LAPD in the area.

Becky mentioned that her neighbors were wondering about the structure near the corner of Rinaldi Street and Wilbur Avenue; it is believed that this will be a Christmas tree vendor.
▪ Lori regretted that she was unable to attend Dr. Nordella’s presentation.
▪ The community potluck picnic at the Holleigh Bernson Memorial Park was a well-attended great success. This event started via Next Door when it was revealed that after an elderly neighbor’s wife passed, he felt lonely, and reached out to the community. Perhaps this non-PRNC-sponsored neighbors-meeting-neighbors picnic could become an annual event?
▪ Issam reported that he recently had a conference call with city, county, and state attorneys regarding the air monitoring under the settlement agreement. The entire $3m will not be for air monitoring in Porter Ranch only. The settlement agreement states that it is to be shared. A stakeholder asked who owns that agreement; apparently, the courts own that agreement, and have the right to nullify it. The air monitoring will likely be handled by SCAWMD.
▪ Gabriel reported that with the upcoming holiday shopping season, the Devonshire Division reminds everyone that break-ins are more frequent, and that people should be aware of their surroundings. Please harden the target to make it more difficult for thieves. Lock your cars and doors, and get cameras. If you see anything, please call the LAPD.
▪ Asaad thanked all the volunteers at the LAPD’s Devonshire Station. He also praised Gabriel who worked tirelessly to save the Renaissance community and stop the fire from jumping over Mason Avenue. Thanks to Mayor Garcetti for his resilience plan and efforts in getting the shelters in place. Regretfully, he did not see very much of our Councilman Lee on the front lines, except for photo opportunities.
▪ Racing along Sesnon Boulevard has been reduced thanks to many alert volunteers.
▪ Jason recently attended a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) radio communications meeting. The CERT team checks in every Sunday morning at 10AM on Channel 15, via their HMS radios. He felt that the PRNC should create an independent Emergency Preparedness Committee; resilience liaison Asaad loved that idea.
▪ Jason also recently attended a CPAC meeting, where they discussed the bark beetle which can affect multiple trees.
▪ CD12 will donate $8k, from Councilman Lee’s Cultural Affairs Fund, to paint six or seven traffic control boxes along Rinaldi Street. Perhaps they may come out to the holiday party to get the community excited about these upcoming traffic control boxes?
▪ David Balen was very sad to learn of the recent passing of David Hasson who built the Porter Ranch Community via his leadership position with Shapell Industries.
▪ Earlier in the day, David spoke with John Love of Shapell regarding the Vineyards
  o The theatre building was turned over to AMC and may open in March
  o Gus’s BBQ has been delayed
  o Jersey Mike’s may open in December
  o The Community Room may open in January
▪ Hassan thanked Issam for all the information that is provided via the PRNC website and email blasts.
▪ As chair of the Sustainability Committee, Hassan is concerned about the many burnt trees. He recently spoke with CSUN’s Sustainability Group. Many folks in Porter Ranch are unfamiliar with CSUN’s Sustainability Group; perhaps they could speak at a community event?
▪ As chair of the Education Committee, Mihran is working to get LAPD officers to visit the Porter Ranch Schools. He is also working on the upcoming CPR/First Aid training.

9. Motion to adopt a resolution thanking all fire and law enforcement personnel who fought the Saddle Ridge Fire and authorize the expenditure of up to $500 to print and frame four copies of a more graphical version of the resolution and present it to the two Porter Ranch Fire Stations, LA County Fire, and LAPD Devonshire Station
• Issam read the resolution that he would like to print and present to the three area fire stations, plus the LAPD’s Devonshire Station. Regretfully, the city clerk may not permit the PRNC expenditure for the paper, template, etc.
• Asaad felt it was an excellent show of gratitude; he wished that we could attach a check to these documents.
• Becky reported that council members Monica Rodriguez and John Lee would host an event in early 2020 to thank the heroes of the fire.
• Although this will be presented to the state, county, city, sheriff, LAPD, LAFD, etc. Hassan wanted to make certain that we not missing anyone.
• Issam Najm made a motion to approve this agenda item; Becky Leveque seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

10. Discussion and possible action to set a new date for the Saddle Ridge Fire Town Hall that was planned for October 28, 2019
• Issam mentioned that everyone who was going to attend the October 28th meeting would be happy to attend the rescheduled meeting.
• Hassan and Brandii would like to have the rescheduled town hall sooner rather than later, perhaps in early December.

11. Motion to file a Community Impact Statement (CIS) and send a letter to Board of Public Works and Streets LA in opposition to the removal of 24 protected oak trees at 20900 Sesnon Boulevard.
• Jason was originally told that certain documents, relating to the removal of 26-trees, were confidential. However, earlier today, he received pilot documents, maps, EIRs, DIRs, tree reports, etc.
• Jason shared photographs of the fire-ravaged Moonshine Canyon Park, and hoped that the city replaces each removed tree with four fresh, new trees, hence a 4:1 ratio.
• Stephen Duprey gave a breakdown of the status and quantity of the trees to be removed:
  | Live Trees | 25 |
  | Dead Tree  | 1  |
  | Total Trees| 26 |

• He added that the city attorney is currently reviewing the 4th addendum of the EIR.
• Becky asked if all the trees are at the 20900 Sesnon Boulevard address; the answer was negative, the trees are spread throughout Porter Ranch. However, 20900 Sesnon Boulevard was convenient to post as one central address.
• Jason Hector made a motion that the following amended CIS (requesting a review to protect trees and objecting to the removal of protected trees) be submitted (with the 1st, 3rd, and 5th paragraphs standing, and the 2nd and 4th paragraphs struck).
  
  On October 16th, the attached notification was received and on October 17th, a request was sent to CD12 for the map, pictures and protected tree report. On October 29th, a representative from CD12 informed us that UFD has deemed those documents confidential and not to be released till the agenda is posted three days before the meeting which date has yet to be determined.

  **CIS Text:** Despite requesting through CD12 and UFD, the related documents were not made available to assist the PRNC Land Use Committee in determining the specific tree locations, tree health, or justification for the removals. There is NO “replacement” for native oaks. Nursery stock that is planted will be much smaller and IF they survive, will take decades to provide the equivalent ecosystem services within
this wildlife corridor. Planting new trees does not replace all the other green cover and wildlife in that area that may be lost. Lastly, there is an outdated EIR from 1990. This protected tree ordinance cannot and should not be used as a substitute for an EIR. We therefore request a proper California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review with an EIR documenting what will be lost and potential mitigation so that the PRNC can have the necessary information to determine the impact on the community.

- David Balen seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

12. Discussion and possible action by the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council regarding a 1,500 square foot building addition to Wal-Mart
   - This will be at the back of the store (behind the garden section) and will be used for express online merchandise pick-up. Clients will likely use the rear sloping driveway (which leads towards Corbin Avenue) which may help alleviate congestion in the front parking lot.
   - The public hearing to discuss this addition will be held:
     Thursday, November 14 at 4PM
     Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce
     10038 Old Depot Plaza Road, Chatsworth.
   - Issam objected to this meeting as there is insufficient notice and the meeting will not be held within Porter Ranch. When he discussed his concerns with the meeting organizers, they stated that the meeting space must be ADA compliant, and at no cost. Issam offered this free, ADA-compliant multi-purpose room here at the PRCS.
   - David Balen mentioned that Wal-Mart already owns the property for expansion.
   - A stakeholder expressed concern that she does not trust Wal-Mart. Years ago, several stakeholders did not want Wal-Mart to sell alcohol. However, the PRNC voted to allow Wal-Mart to alcohol, and now Wal-Mart sells alcohol.
   - Stakeholder Craig expressed concern that people may drive very fast up and down that ramp between Wal-Mart and Corbin Avenue, across from the YMCA.
   - Brandii suggested that perhaps [as an alternative] Wal-Mart could purchase the nearby space previously occupied by Toys R Us. However, that area is currently in bankruptcy litigation.
   - Becky feels that it is satisfactory that this meeting be held within CD12.
   - Jason and David plan to attend the November 14th meeting, and speak on behalf of the Land Use Committee (as well as the PRNC). They may present that stakeholders and board members brought up concerns regarding traffic, egress, and the displacement of the existing trailers.

13. Discussion and possible action by the PRNC on behalf of Finney's Crafthouse & Kitchen - Alcohol Application
   - This agenda item was tabled as the folks from Finney’s Crafthouse and Kitchen were unable to attend tonight’s meeting. However, they recently requested a letter of support.

BREAK

14. Update on the Status of the City Parks in Porter Ranch after the Saddle Ridge Fire
   - Jason showed a video presentation, reflecting the following destruction to Porter Ranch Parks:
     o Braemore was devastated
     o Palisades Park was obliterated
     o The hillside past the Porter Ridge (aka “ET” Park) is a mess
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- Aliso Canyon Park was annihilated
  - As evidenced by the burn scars, the fires went beneath the trees.
  - The Canary Island pine trees can re-grow. However, the damaged Aleppo pines (near Wilbur and Tampa Avenues) have already been removed. Jason added that many of the sprinklers were destroyed. Miraculously, the toyon shrubs did not burn.
  - The fire was precariously close to the townhomes at 11449 Tampa Avenue.
  - Jason wondered about the possibility of the PRNC co-hosting a town hall meeting, along with the Recreation and Parks Department, to do an assessment of the Porter Ranch parkland and trees.
  - Glenn Bailey, reported that in the 1970s, then councilman Robert Wilkinson thought of placing pine trees, rather than native plants, in Limekiln Canyon.

15. Motion to authorize the Homelessness Solutions Committee to write a CIS on the Los Angeles City Council resolution requesting Governor Newsom declare a State of Emergency on homelessness.
  - This city council resolution will enable the cities to work on projects without restraints.
  - Glenn Bailey added that the proposed CIS should include the relevant council number 19-0002-S172.
  - Hassan expressed concern that many of our fires are caused by homeless attempting to cook and stay warm.
  - David Balen and Hassan mentioned that the Homelessness Solutions Committee should have processed this prior to presenting it to the full PRNC.
  - Brandii Grace made a motion to approve this agenda item; Hassan Memarian seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

16. Consent Calendar:
  1. Motion to Approve the September 11th PRNC Meeting Minutes
  2. Motion to Approve the October 2nd PRNC Meeting Minutes
  3. Motion to Approve the September 2019 Monthly Expenditure Report (MER)

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- Issam Najm made a motion to approve this Consent Calendar; Asaad Alnahajar seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

17. Financial Report
- Treasurer Jason reported that the PRNC’s financial situation is in very good condition.

18. Discussion and possible action to approve the submittal of a revised budget to the City Clerk
- This revised budget allows for the $3,904.61 of rollover funds to be incorporated in the FY2019-20 budget.

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- The following proposed budget is conservative enough so there is no fear of any possible over-run of line items within the budget.
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- Jason Hector made a motion to approve this revised budget; Mihran Kalaydjian seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

19. Approve the expenditures for the Annual Holiday Party to be held on December 11th in lieu of the regular meeting. Listed below were approved with a budget not to exceed $4,000.

- It is expected that the total expenditures will cost significantly less than the agendized $4,000. Although this was approved during the October meeting, additional details are provided at this time.

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Pagoda Inn</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including Tax/Tip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart Holiday Cupcakes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Décor</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plates/Napkins, etc.</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding Gratuity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Taxes, Expenses, etc.</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Lori suggested a raffle prize for the holiday party, but the PRNC cannot host a raffle. Alternatively, they can have give-aways.
- Regrettfully, the PRNC will not have sufficient time to do a presentation for the firefighters, LAPD, etc.
- Lori Choi made a motion to approve these proposed expenditures; Becky Leveque seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

20. Motion to re-affirm the approval of payment up to $1,000 for a free class on First Aid/CPR training and other educational/enrichment topics at a date to be determined by the Education Committee

- This will be 2½ hours of training on adult CPR, from 1 to 2.30PM (children’s CPR can take six to eight hours) on a date to be determined.
- This was originally rejected due to the insurance costs.
- Mihran Kalaydjian made a motion to approve this agenda item; Jason Hector seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

21. Meeting Adjournment

- Issam adjourned the meeting at 9.20PM.