

Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

135th Street School Auditorium, 801 W. 135th Street

Present: Delores Allmond (Chairperson), Pamela Thornton (Vice Chairperson), Rosalie Preston (Recording Secretary), Neodros Bridgeforth (Corresponding Secretary), Joan Jacobs (Treasurer), Ramon Montoya (District 1), Adrian Valenzuela (District 2), Rey Paduani (District 3), Betty Hawkins (District 4), Llewyn Fowlkes (District 5), Marvin Bell (District 6), Rosario Rico (District 7), Deborah Lee (Community Organization Representative), Richard Lee (Youth Representative), Donald Cook (Outreach Representative), and Gloria Christmas (At-Large Representative)

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Chair Delores Allmond. Delores led the group in the salute to the flag and a moment of silence and then reviewed the code of civility.

1) Public Comment: Deborah Milligan, who lives just outside the HGNNC boundaries in Los Angeles County and is active with environmental justice groups, spoke of her recent attendance at a conference on environmental justice in Sacramento. She presented the issues of the HGNNC in regards to the Rosecrans 3D Imaging Project and potential fracking to Governor Jerry Brown's staff. Deborah also alerted stakeholders to the various chemicals being released from small planes over the area, including mercury and arsenic, and which leave unusual cloud formations in the sky known as chem.-trails.

Luisa Gratz, District 4 stakeholder, showed the composite map of closed and working oil well sites which she has created of the HGNNC area from the State's DOGGR website. She has called Rosecrans 3D Imaging about the damage which the sound wave testing vibrations have done to her house and not gotten a response. She is photographing the progression of cracks to her home and the subsidence of some walls.

Art Cramer, District 1 stakeholder, discussed the 18-wheeled trucks which travel near his home on Figueroa Street and how they also create strong vibrations which have caused cracking to his patio. He has tried contacting Jacob Haik of Council District 15 to follow up on his request for street signs prohibiting the parking of the 18-wheelers on the west side of Figueroa next to his home and the other residences. After three years of raising this issue, there has been no resolution. He also said there is a need for a traffic signal at the intersection of 168th Street and Figueroa Street and pointed out the illegal double-parking which often occurs in front of El Antojito on the northwest corner of that same intersection. He also pointed out how there is continual illegal dumping and trash under the 110 Freeway at 168th Street and other 110 Freeway overpasses.

Chair Delores Allmond reminded stakeholders that the election of all seventeen Board members will take place on Tues. May 6 from 2-8 p.m. and that candidates are needed. Filing will begin in late February. She also pointed out that the HGNNC Finance Committee will meet at 12:30 p.m. on Sat. February 8 to revise the 2013-2014 budget. Stakeholder groups and non-profits can submit requests for funding.

2) LA Police Dept. Report: Officer Burkett said that there have been quite a few burglaries in District 5 and the northern part of District 4. He urged stakeholders to use 911 to alert the LAPD of suspicious activity. There have been a number of GTA's (grand theft autos) of older model Hondas near Alondra Blvd. and Orchard on the border of Districts 1 and 2. LAPD and CD 15 are working on the issue of truck traffic on 135th Street and some illegal truck parking issues along Figueroa Street. The LAPD will be utilizing its industrial enforcement unit for these issues.

Under questions and concerns, a District 4 stakeholder reported that it took two hours for an officer to respond to a call when her home was broken into. Officer Burkett said that most of the crimes which occur in the HGNNC area are of a lower priority than those such as domestic violence and street robberies because in home burglary cases, the suspects have already left the area. Treasurer and Budget Advocate Joan Jacobs wondered if the HGNNC should make more patrol officers for the area a budget priority. District 1 Representative Ramon Montoya called attention to the intersection of 168th and Figueroa Street and the double parking of 18-wheelers near El Antojito Tacos. He noted that LAPD officers set a bad

example for others when they park in the red zone to run in to purchase their lunch there. A District 6 stakeholder (800 block of 117th Street) said that she has had things stolen from her car parked in front of her home and other vehicles nearby have also been broken into. They need more lighting in the area. There is also loitering in a nearby alley. District 4 Representative Betty Hawkins remarked that it is difficult to hear that the HGNNC is not a high-priority area for the LAPD because the area is not considered a high-crime area.

(Pamela Thornton entered the meeting at 7:40 p.m.)

3) Council District 15 report: Jacob Haik, Deputy Chief of Staff, and Daisy Ybarra, Field Deputy for the Harbor Gateway area, reported that the electronic sign on 135th Street will be working again to monitor the speed of traffic traveling along that street past the 135th Street School. The ribbon-cutting ceremony to re-open the Rosecrans Recreation Center sports fields and new walking path will take place on Sat. February 15 at 10 a.m. Volunteers are needed to help plan the event, so contact the HGNNC. There is progress on putting up a gate at Figueroa Street and 121st Street to provide better security to the Athens on the Hill neighborhood; that is in the Public Works Committee.

District 3 Representative Rey Paduani reported that there are trash and rats at 809 W. 149th Street and that illegal street vending is occurring at 861 W. 149th Street. There is an RV parked at 700 W. Rosecrans with an electrical cord running from it so it is probably being lived in.

(Donald Cook entered the meeting at 7:35 p.m.)

Jacob Haik said that with a new Mayor, it is a new day in Los Angeles and that the City is open to new ideas. He encouraged use of the new 311 app to report issues needing resolution. It is important to use 311 or the on-line service requests so that a service number is received and follow-up can be made using that number. All crime and attempted crimes need to be reported so that LAPD knows where service is needed. If you feel that the Harbor-area staff of CD 15 are not responsive, call the Chief of Staff, Jenny Chavez. He said that CD 15 is considering reducing the secondary highway status of 135th Street but that will cause more traffic on Rosecrans and El Segundo Blvd. For the District 1 issue of the 18-wheelers parking along Figueroa Street, CD 15 has passed a special ordinance so that the signs can be created. LAPD can cite for double-parking. If Parking Enforcement is not doing their job, then call CD 15. As to the many reports of transients throughout the HGNNC area, CD 15 is sympathetic to the plight of the homeless and offer information and referral to housing and other services. However, if the homeless do not respond to these suggestions, then call CD 15 so that homeless encampments do not develop. LAPD is putting its resources into the five housing projects in Watts and this has really reduced the murder rate down to just two over the past four years. If there are needs for additional lighting to help reduce crime, let CD 15 know

(A break was taken so stakeholders could get some refreshments)

4) Speaker: Bureau of Street Service – solutions for problem alleys: The head of the Bureau of Street Services, Nazario Saucedo, was not able to attend, so instead George Gonzalez, Chief of Urban Forestry, Bureau of Street Services discussed the four core functions of the Bureau (street cleaning, pavement resurfacing, and potholes, investigation and enforcement for illegal vending and illegal dumping, and oversight of the urban forest). With the improved City budget, trees can now be trimmed on a faster cycle—now every 25 years, down from every 70 years. Councilman Buscaino has been very supportive of additional tree trimming within CD 15: 1500 trees have been trimmed within the HGNNC over the last two years. However, whereas before July 1, 2008, Urban Forestry had 220 staff, now there are just 99, so they can only respond quickly to emergency tree situations, such as dead trees or loose branches, and they use outside contractors for these services.

The upkeep of City alleys is a difficult situation for everyone because many need repaving and are the site of illegal dumping. The City's re-surfacing budget is currently used for major streets and secondary streets, so alley re-surfacing becomes a low priority. Currently alley repaving utilizes RAP (recycled asphalt product) which is not ideal but provides a useful alternative to regular asphalt.

What should a homeowner do about getting parkway trees trimmed? Homeowners can get a no-fee permit from the City and pay to have them trimmed themselves to City standards. Only the Board of Public Works can authorize a tree removal. If the tree roots are causing structural damage, then the

Bureau of Street Services will ask for its removal at the Board of Public Works. Then the homeowner can repair the sidewalk at their own cost and replace the tree. Dead trees and those trees that are partially uprooted can be removed by Urban Forestry, as well as broken tree limbs. Even if a tree has greatly raised the sidewalk, the City can only do an asphalt patch. Only during 1974-1978 did the City have funding to repair the sidewalks itself. Before and after, it is a State law that the property owner is responsible. The homeowner has to get an A permit and pay the fee although Council District 15 may be able to waive the fee.

Stakeholders asked why there are no cameras under the 105 freeway at Main Street and along 117th Street where so much illegal dumping occurs. Mr. Gonzalez said that there had been money in their budget for cameras but due to the recession those funds had been cut. Alley clean ups should be requested from the Bureau of Sanitation.

5) Speaker: Bureau of Engineering and Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community on the Rosecrans 3D Imaging Project which used sound waves to test for oil and gas reserves below our neighborhoods and may result in future hydraulic fracturing “fracking”: Jacob Haik, Deputy Chief of Staff for Councilman Joe Buscaino, said that Lawrence Cuaresma is the District Engineer who was to speak, but that although CD 15 first thought that LA Seismic had pulled a permit for the Rosecrans 3D Imaging Project, actually none was completed because none was required for this testing project. The police escort for the testing vehicle could have been retired police officers or off-duty officers. If regular LAPD officers, then they would have been paid. CD 15 has met with the Mayor’s office on this issue. Old oil wells were filled with concrete and capped. City staff is not sure exactly what type of testing was carried out.

Dr. Tom Williams, a geologist, emeritus Board member of the LA-32 Neighborhood Council, Sierra Club member, and currently a part of the Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community, remarked that as regards DOGGR, the California State Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, all wells that are known about are regulated by them, but not all wells and oil-related activities are reported to DOGGR. In Council Districts 1, 8, 10, and 15 there are many badly operated oil wells and oil well fields. There is an oil field under the Beverly Center. Oil interests do not tell you what they are doing. The Citizens Coalition is trying to organize people to learn about oil and gas regulations and the full suite of well stimulation methods. Some of the new methods can lead to oil well blow outs. There are supposed to be spill contingency plans for oil fields. Oil field operators have these plans but often do not release this information. Residents should report oil wells that look badly operated and/or release odors. Some wells are located within twenty-five feet of homes.

Who owns oil rights? The property owner of the subsurface property and the Los Angeles County Assessor has a record of this. Each oil field may have twenty different leases. Subsurface property owners should be held responsible for any damages. Abandoned wells are the responsibility of the State of California—DOGGR.

Slant drilling can have a very wide impact. A drilling pad can cover seven acres which translates to 4000 acres underground. Such a drilling pad can accommodate 200 wells. Slant drilling can be done safely but to do so costs more. A permit to drill will be issued in ten days after application at the counter and could be from two miles below ground to two miles across.

“Fracking” or hydraulic fracturing can trigger earthquakes and our area already has a lot of microfaults. If such oil extraction techniques cause earthquakes, then who pays for the damages?

Jacob Haik noted that under DOGGR regulations, there are limits on the drilling that can be done on town lot units.

A District 7 stakeholder noted that at her home on 118th Street near Main Street, her pots and pans that are hung from her kitchen ceiling on hooks now rattle frequently whereas they did not do so before the Rosecrans 3D Imaging Project.

Deborah Milligan, part of the LA Environmental Justice Network, advised that the Governor Jerry’s Brown’s office can assist the HGNNC and that the HGNNC is part of the LA Environmental Justice Network.

Octaviano Rios, Harbor Area representative for Mayor Garcetti, said that he was present to listen to the concerns of residents.

Ramon Montoya, District 1 Representative, said that better notice should have been given to residents in advance of the testing. He also noted that LA Seismic has not been responsive to complaints of property damage.

Jacob Haik, Council District 15 Deputy Chief of Staff, said that since no permit was issued, there is no liability for Rosecrans 3D Testing. He advised residents to contact their homeowner's insurance company to have damages repaired. But he said that the Council office will be looking into the matter further and working with the Mayor's office.

Dr. Williams noted that 30-day notice must be given before any well stimulation activity and that all geophysical surveys are required to give 30-days advance notice to those living within 500 feet of the surveying boundaries. The Los Angeles City Code covering this is 13.01 but is 50 years old and outdated in regards to the new types of well stimulation activities, including fracking.

6) Approval of the October 22 Membership meeting minutes: It was moved by Joan Jacobs, seconded by Marvin Bell, and passed 15-0-0 to approve the minutes as presented.

7) Treasurer's report: Treasurer Joan Jacobs reviewed the expenditures from July 1 to January 27 which total \$15,653.24 of the \$37,000 provided by the City. The Finance Committee will be meeting on Sat. February 11 to consider requests for funding improvement projects within the Neighborhood Council and to revise the 2013-2014 budget to reflect current spending priorities. Districts and community groups are encouraged to submit requests for funding and to attend the meeting. It was moved by Neodros Bridgeforth, seconded by Llewyn Fowlkes, and passed 15-0-0 to accept the Treasurer's report.

8) Report on HGNNC activities and planning issues: This report was not given due to the late hour.

9) Announcements: District 7 Representative Rosario Rico announced that District 7 will hold a clean up day on Sat. April 5.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes taken by Rosalie Preston, Recording Secretary