

## Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

135<sup>th</sup> Street School Auditorium, 801 W. 135<sup>th</sup> Street

Present: Pamela Thornton (Vice Chair), 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), Shirley Johnson (District 8), Deborah Lee (Community Organization Representative), and Richard Lee (Youth Representative)

In the absence of Chair Delores Allmond, the meeting was called to order at 7:17 p.m. by Vice Chair Pamela Thornton, followed by the salute to the flag and a moment of silence.

**1) Public Comment:** District 1 stakeholder Mark Hall reported that in regards to the proposed cell panels and Above Ground Facility next to his home at 173<sup>rd</sup> Street and Merit Avenue, April 27 was the 90<sup>th</sup> day after the application had been received by the Bureau of Engineering and therefore, his and his wife's appeal of this location was upheld and the facility would not be constructed. This would have been the first cellular facility within a residential district of the HGNNC.

District 6 stakeholder Lisa Estrada commented on the RV's and dumped trash near the Metro Green Line station at 115<sup>th</sup> Street and Figueroa Street. There is also prostitution taking place there. It is difficult for residents to park on 115<sup>th</sup> Street due to outside vehicles parking in the neighborhood. She has called LAPD many times and been referred to parking enforcement and the Council District 15 Field Office but the problems persist.

District 5 stakeholder Tony Bland said that he has not been able to get his alley cleaned after many calls to 311.

District 1 stakeholder Art Cramer commented on the many issues along Figueroa Street between 168<sup>th</sup> Street and 170<sup>th</sup> Street, including trash and parking issues leading to a loss of quality of life. There are major traffic issues at Figueroa and 168<sup>th</sup> Street due to the parking situation at the El Antojito taco truck. He also mentioned graffiti issues and how Gardena Blvd. is not walkable due to the sidewalks not being kept cleaned. He admonished public servants to serve their constituents.

District 1 stakeholder Pat Guerrero noted the perennial illegal dumping problems under the 110 freeway at Estrella to the east of the Gardena Elementary School. He calls and it is picked up but then dumping occurs again almost immediately.

**2) Report on proposed improvements to the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Metro station:** Nick Saponara, Director of Systemwide Planning/Urban Design, Countrywide Planning and Development for Metro, said that a significant investment will be made at the Willowbrook station, where the Green and Blue Lines come together, as well as 10-12 bus lines, including the Gardena bus. The goal is to improve the connections between the various forms of transportation-bus, rail, bike, and walking-and also to make improvements to safety and security at that station. There will be a May 28 public hearing at the MLK Jr. Medical Center, in the Hendon Auditorium at 6:30 p.m., 1670 E. 120<sup>th</sup> Street. Some of the improvements will include expanding the blue line platform, creating connections to the nearby shopping center, improvements to the elevators, amenities for Metro customers, and upgrades to the parking lot. The proposals are currently in environmental review. A 30-day comment period will be opening up. Construction will begin in mid—2017, with completion in late 2018. There will be some set-asides for local hiring, per Metro policy.

**4) Neighborhood Prosecutor Sonja Dawson gives an update on local issues:** Sonja Dawson said that she has been working with Council District 15 Field Deputy Daisy Ybarra on the illegal dumping issues. She has met with the mattress company on Main Street and thirteen other small businesses in that area to discuss the dumping issues and how they can help. The meetings will continue each month. The businesses are also concerned with the many RV's and homeless encampments. In regards to prostitution, she has met with Sgt. Haggerty of Vice. Sgt. Haggerty then made his report. He has six officers who work the area from Manchester to El Segundo along Figueroa Street. The same prostitutes

work a circuit from Figueroa Street to Western Avenue to Van Nuys and Wilmington. Gang members have taken over prostitution as there's less risk than with selling drugs. They entice 13-14 year olds and then force them into prostitution. Each young prostitute can make \$2,000 per night. The "johns" seek out the prostitutes in the mornings and then the evenings after work. LAPD Southeast Vice also oversees all of the locations where alcoholic beverages are sold. Sgt. Haggerty said that Vice works with Sonja Dawson to make sure the cases are prosecuted. A convicted pimp will serve more time for human trafficking than for a shooting. South Bureau has a unit that offers the prostitutes community services (Human Trafficking Task Force). The "johns" are arrested only for a misdemeanor.

**3) LA Police Department report:** Senior Lead Officer Angelo Stewart explained that he oversees LAPD services in the HGNNC Districts 7 and 8. He said that the mattress company on Main Street closes at 6 p.m. and maintains that a lot of the problems are caused by others dumping mattresses out front of their business. He explained that solving the illegal dumping problem is difficult; in 25 years on the job, he has only caught and prosecuted three people for illegal dumping. His LAPD cell phone number is (213) 793-0725. Senior Lead Officer Carmen Gutierrez's number is (213) 793-0727.

**5) District 15 Councilmember Joe Buscaino reports on HGNNC issues and answers questions:** Councilmember Buscaino said that he was blessed and humbled to serve the community for almost three years. He applauds the work of the HGNNC Board and community leaders, such as Kandee Lewis of the Positive Results Corp. and Pastor Marcus Jackson of the Home Assembly Church. He also thanked the two Senior Lead Officers, Stewart and Gutierrez, and Sgt. Haggerty of Vice. He said that it is his goal for the year to visit each of the Neighborhood Councils within the 15<sup>th</sup> Council District. However, he is always available via Jacob Haik, his Deputy Chief of Staff, and Daisy Ybarra, the Field Deputy for the Harbor Gateway, who report to him on all of the issues. In the HGNNC area, 90 trees have been trimmed and 6 removed. 1.7 million feet of City streets have been slurry sealed. There have been 200 repairs to sidewalks and 14,000 potholes filled. He said that as Chairman of the Public Works Committee, he knows the staff who can help solve those sorts of issues. In the 2015-2016 budget, there will be more resources added for street repairs and sidewalk replacement.

He then noted that the HGNNC had sent him a list of some of the current issues and gave updates on those. In answer to why there are more 7-Elevens being opened in the HGNNC area, he said that his office wants to see diversified businesses, some corporate presence as well as the small businesses. The 7-Elevens are a good idea, offering 24 jobs per each establishment. However, each store will need to work with the LAPD and the community should have input into their design. Having such a corporate presence in the community will attract other businesses to the area.

In regards to the request for a left-turn signal at 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Vermont Avenue, the study has been completed but now it is up to Gardena to find the money to help pay for it. He encouraged Jacob Haik to work with Gardena City Council members, such as Councilman Dan Medina, to achieve this.

No big trucks on 135<sup>th</sup> Street—it took legislative action to achieve this. The large trucks are now barred from traveling along 135<sup>th</sup> Street between Vermont Avenue and Hoover and there are signs to inform them of this new rule. Enforcement by the LAPD is still needed.

In regards to the red curb and "No stopping signs" along Figueroa Street from 168<sup>th</sup> to 170<sup>th</sup> Street, this was the result of the LAPD noting the many RV's that used to park along that section creating quality of life issues. Drug sales and prostitution were occurring in the RV's. The red curb and signs was the LAPD's recommended solution. Now the residents who live in the R1 homes can't park there. He realizes that a balance is needed but at least there is currently less crime occurring in that area now.

The illegal dumping under the freeway overpasses is a continuing problem. He is committed to having clean streets and alleys within his Council District. He uses his Council funds to pay non-profits such as GAP and Beacon House to clean up the illegal dumping. The Dept. of Sanitation is also called but they take two weeks to respond due to staffing. As soon as the illegal dumping is removed, someone else dumps. He said that he is as fed up as you are. A lot of the illegal dumping is from small contractors who don't want to pay the dumping fee. Mayor Garcetti has his Clean Streets Initiative which will increase funding for removing illegal dumping and also add 1500 more trash cans. However, the illegal dumpers need to be brought to justice. Cameras with license plate and facial recognition readers are needed. It will cost \$350,000 for 14 state-of-the-art cameras with images which can be electronically

downloaded. He also pointed out the \$1,000 reward to residents who provide evidence which results in a successful conviction of an illegal dumper.

When an alley needs clean up, let Council District 15 know.

Small lot houses on 164<sup>th</sup> Street in District 1 which are not following the terms set by the Dept. of City Planning, Heather Anderson is working on this and will make them comply with the determination letter.

Councilmember Buscaino then took questions. District 8 stakeholder Dr. Stella Robinson said that a previous camera installed above the Stanford 105 Freeway overpass had been shot out within a week of its installation. She has had to call the Bureau of Street Services so often about illegal dumping on Stanford that the staff know her voice. She suggested that the Dept. of Sanitation make a weekly round of the known illegal dumping sites rather than just coming out to pick up one load after receiving a telephone call. Also, the Council office needs to work with Caltrans to make sure that they keep the shrubs along the 105 freeway trimmed. Councilmember Buscaino said that currently the Dept. of Sanitation has the staffing to do three clean ups of illegal dumping per week.

District 2 stakeholder Irma Fukumoto said that there is no street sweeping on her 15500 block of Bonsallo. She also noted that she has asked many times about removal of the liquid amber tree in front of her home which has raised the sidewalk so much that she scrapes the underside of her car when she drives into her driveway. Councilmember Buscaino said that CD 15 would make a request to have her sidewalk included under the new sidewalk replacement program.

District 3 stakeholder Erica Payne commented on the dust issues resulting from the recycling work at California Waste Services. She has called AQMD and the City with no results. "Can you help now?" Councilmember Buscaino said that he is the one who called the AQMD about the dust blowing on to the 110 Freeway from CWS. That is why there is now netting along the east side of the business. He is on the AQMD Board and he will talk with Dr. Waller about these issues. There was also mention of the noise at night from CWS, after they are supposed to stop working. And the dust is also affecting the businesses in the Gateway Shopping Center, including the air conditioning systems. Councilmember Buscaino urged residents to call 1-800-CUT-SMOG to report the dust issues. He will also have Jacob Haik work with the Neighborhood Council on the issue.

District 1 stakeholder Lisa Nicholson discussed the issues with the trees and sidewalks in front of the Three Ranch Estates, 515 W. Gardena Blvd. Their condo association has worked on the issue for the past year, with very little result. Five months ago someone cut off a few branches. There are also rats on their property due to no street sweeping taking place. She sometimes asks the sweeper truck from the City of Carson to sweep the L.A. City side of the street. Councilmember Buscaino said it wasn't useful to play the blame game about past non-actions. His office will address it now. The lack of street sweeping is due to budget cuts but the Mayor's Clean Streets initiative should help.

District 4 stakeholder Essie Dillon said that she has called many times and the alley next to her home on 132<sup>nd</sup> Street has never been cleaned.

District 6 stakeholder Roscoe Tillman commented on the Vermont Avenue recycling center which attracts the homeless to the area. John Jones III, Field Deputy for Watts, will be posting street signs to prevent the homeless from setting up camp there and also offer referrals to shelters and resources.

District 1 stakeholder and At-Large Representative Charlene Marshall pointed out that under the lawsuit settlement on sidewalks, the residential areas will be repaired last. Councilmember Buscaino said that was not correct and that the residential areas would be prioritized.

District 4 stakeholder Delfina Mota mentioned the illegal car sales along Vermont Avenue at 135<sup>th</sup> Street. Councilmember Buscaino said that the City Council has approved signage which will prohibit such sales.

**3) LA Police Department:** Senior Lead Officer Carmen Gutierrez finished her report by saying that she represents the areas from Imperial Highway to Artesia, Vermont Avenue to Figueroa Street. She reported that from 117<sup>th</sup> Street to Gardena Blvd. vehicle thefts are very high right now. She also noted that Rosecrans Recreation Center will be starting softball season. Sat. May 9 will be a cleanup day in District 4.

(Ramon Montoya and Marvin Bell left the meeting at 9:05 p.m.)

- 8) Update on Ham radio training, May 5 CERT training, Small Business workshop on Sat. May 30, appointment of two Budget Representatives and an Election Chair for the May 2016 Board elections:** Ham radio training will be offered at the Sheriff's Youth Foundation, 11911 S. Vermont Avenue on Sat. June 22 and Sun. June 23. The HGNNC can pay for the instruction booklets and refreshments. Those who pass the test and receive their license may be able to use one of the HGNNC Ham radios on a long-term loan. Seven weeks of CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) classes begin on Tues. May 5 at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street School Auditorium from 6:30-9 p.m. Those who receive their certificate can receive an emergency preparedness bag from the HGNNC. The Small Business Workshop will be held from 9:30-1:30 p.m. at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street School Auditorium on Sat. May 30. It will be aimed at both the person wanting to start a small business and those who operate small businesses and want to learn how to improve on their business models. The HGNNC needs an Election Chair to chair the Ad Hoc Committee for next May's Board election. The Election Chair will also work with the Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment on election-related issues and work to encourage lots of candidates and at least 200 voters. Two new Budget Representatives need to be appointed, also. They will attend the June 27 Budget Day and also represent the HGNNC budget needs throughout the City's 2016-2017 budget process.
- 6) Approval of the January 27, 2015, Membership meeting minutes:** It was moved by Joan Jacobs, seconded by Richard Lee, and passed 12-0-0 to approve the minutes as presented.
- 7) Treasurer's report: expenditures to date:** Treasurer Joan Jacobs reviewed the HGNNC Expenditures to Date form dated 4/14/15, which shows a total of \$19,272.70 spent of the \$39,000 budget.
- 9) Announcements:** There were no announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Minutes taken by Rosalie Preston, Recording Secretary