

Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 13, 2012
135th Street Elementary School Auditorium
801 135th Street, Gardena, CA

Present: Rosalie Preston (Chairperson); Delores Allmond (Vice Chairperson); Neodros Bridgeforth (Corresponding Secretary); Adrian Valenzuela (District 2); Betty Hawkins (District 4); Llewyn Fowlkes (District 5); Marvin Bell (District 6); Gloria Christmas (District 8); Deborah Lee (Community Org. Rep.); and Eva Cooper (At-Large Representative).

The Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Rosalie Preston (Chairperson).

1) **Public comment:** Jose Alcala, District 8 stakeholder, announced that there will be a community meeting at Bellevue Presbyterian Church on Wed. March 14 at 7 p.m. to discuss the presence of high levels of benzene and other toxins in groundwater from the old Athens Tank Farm under the former Ujima Village site on the east side of Central Avenue. ExxonMobil Oil Company operated the Tank Farm from the 1920's to 1960's and is involved with the clean up process along with the County of Los Angeles.

Jim Dear, the Mayor of the City of Carson, attended at the invitation of District 1 stakeholder Art Cramer, who has raised the issue of an increase in large truck traffic and parking along Figueroa Blvd. from 168th Street to the 91 Artesia Freeway. Mayor Dear wanted to let the Board know that he is aware of the issue, has talked with the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation engineers and may be able to assist with some of the concerns. The City of Carson boundary is the east side of Figueroa Street in that District 1 area.

2) **LAPD report given by Senior Lead Officer Hugo Valdez, 18A97:** The newly-assigned Senior Lead Officer Hugo Valdez introduced himself. He replaces Officer Armando Ramirez, who retired in January. Officer Valdez handles the area covering Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. He has been an LAPD officer for 18 years and previously worked as a Senior Lead Officer in the mid-Wilshire Division since 2005. His cell phone number is (213) 793-0727. His email address is 31265@lapd.lacity. He brought a flyer entitled "Lock it, Hide it, Keep it" to remind businesses and residents not to leave items inside their cars, visible to thieves. The non-emergency telephone number for the LAPD is **1-877-ASK-LAPD**. Betty Hawkins of District 4 called attention to the intersection of 135th and Vermont Avenue where fatal accidents occur. Officer Valdez said that he will observe the intersection. He also recommended contact be made with the Department of Transportation. Betty Hawkins also brought attention to an ongoing problem concerning truck trailer use of Hoover Street to cut through the neighborhood, even though signs are posted banning such usage. There is also a problem with speeding cars on 135th Street.

3) **Request of Athens on the Hill (District 5) for Board support of the position that all Zoning Administration conditions placed on The Edge O Town Motel, 503 W. Athens Blvd., remain in place; and for further Plan Review (DIR 2005-0541 (RV) (PA3):** The Maason Young, the owner, Evan Zhou, the manager, and David Bilford, attorney representing the owner of the 24-room Edge O' Town Motel, were present. Mr. Young seeks a reduction in the number of mandated onsite security hours because conditions at the motel have improved since the last plan review. District 5 stakeholder Lu Watson stated that support for the current conditions remaining in place is backed by all residents of Athens-on-the-Hill, LAPD, and Council District 15. Public comment on this matter has been extended by the Zoning Administrator until Monday, March 19. After the 2005 hearing, onsite security was mandated 24 hours per day. After the second hearing in 2009, the Zoning Administrator found improved conditions and mandatory security was reduced to 12 hours per day (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. - school hours). The owner believes that the situation has improved even further since the second hearing and would like the hours reduced further to six and have the mandated security at night. He also requests that there be a security patrol rather than onsite security. The owner also wishes for a new plan check after 5-years instead of 2years because the City of Los Angeles now charges thousands of dollars instead of hundreds. Attorney Bilford stated that the improvements are attributed to better communication between the owner and management. He also stated that there are still problems in the community, but not at the motel. The manager of a nearby 13-unit building apartment building also spoke and said that prostitution and drug-trafficking has around the motel. He has been a resident of that area for thirty years. More discussion followed by the Board members whose beliefs generally hold that because the conditions are in place, the owners of the motel comply with them and that is what prevents the nuisance issues from reoccurring at that location. Eva Cooper moved that the Board's recommendation be that all existing conditions remain in

effect and that there be a plan review in five years instead of two. Neodros Bridgeforth seconded the motion and the motion passed 9 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

4) Proposition on creation of Community Plan Implementation Overlay districts for all Major streets in District 6, 7, and 8 to provide design guidelines and facilitate development in these areas adjacent to transit stations:

Background – the City of L.A. has a General Plan which has not been updated in many years, contrary to State law. The City is divided into a number of Community Plan areas. District 6 is in the South L.A. Community Plan area. Districts 7 and 8 are in the Southeast L.A. Community Plan area. All of the Community Plans are out of date. The Community Plans provide the basis for what is built in our neighborhoods. The South L.A. and Southeast L.A. Community Plans are in the process of being revised, but the process has slowed down a lot due to the City budget cuts and loss of City Planning staff. Last year the HGNNC Planning Committee began to discuss a vision for our neighborhoods in an attempt to help shape the new plans, rather than waiting to have the developers re-create them in a piecemeal fashion. Retired City Planner Richard Platkin has helped advise the HGNNC on this planning vision and creation of design guidelines.

Last year Project RENEW made a presentation to the HGNNC Board about their grant project to bring more walkability and bikeability to the neighborhoods around the Green Line stations. She and Gloria Christmas later attended a Project RENEW outreach meeting at the Watts Senior Center where the same elements were presented in more detail and stakeholders asked for suggestions. On January 31, she and Gloria attended the summary meeting at the Watts Senior Center and learned that now Project RENEW was emphasizing increased development of high-rise buildings along the Green Line transit corridors (1/2 to 1 mile from the stations), as well as improvements to sidewalks, better bike paths, and more parks. On March 6 four Board members attended the South Los Angeles Planning Commission meeting where more details of the Project RENEW proposal were presented and approved. Rosalie expressed the HGNNC concerns with the increased density, lack of current public transportation along 120th Street, and lack of community input into the process. She also attended the March 8 City Planning Commission hearing which also approved the Project RENEW proposals in concept. A larger public hearing will be held. She did speak to oppose the proposal as being incompatible with the existing nature of our current low-density neighborhoods of mostly one and two-story buildings, the lack of notice about this proposal, and its implementation before the new Community Plans are finalized. Project RENEW would restrict single-family detached homes along Imperial Highway, 120th Street, Vermont Avenue, Figueroa, Main Street, Avalon, and Central Avenue, while encouraging higher density 3 to 5 story affordable apartments over commercial units on the ground floor and limitations on on-site parking. Some of the staff of the Community Health Councils (which originally spoke with the HGNNC and provided the outreach component for Project RENEW) also were surprised by the density element which now seems to be the main focus of the proposal. Planning Department staff later came up to Rosalie and said that no zoning would be changed as a result of Project RENEW and that zoning along the major streets near the Green Line already allows for three story buildings. The City Planning Department also immediately e-mailed the HGNNC with the internal link to the current work on the Southeast L.A. Community Plan:

<https://sites.google.com/site/southlaplan/meetings-outreach>).

A number of District 6 and District 8 stakeholders were present who expressed a lot of concern over the impact on their R1 neighborhoods. The Hollywood Community Plan is the first Community Plan to be updated in many years and residents there are very upset with all of the up-zoning and proposed new density. There is concern around the City that this Plan will form the template for the others to follow. There is also concern that the City Planning Department is facilitating the new density for the profit of developers instead of the quality of life of City residents. The City Planning Department maintains that developers will not build in South L.A. areas without incentives, but they are currently offering more incentives than the State of California requires under SB1818. The Board and stakeholders agreed to make the Project RENEW CPIO (Community Plan Implementation Overlay) sub-district 4 near the Green Line the focus of the Tues. April 24 General Membership meeting and to create a special meeting flyer to make sure that stakeholders in Districts 5, 6, 7, and 8 are aware of the proposals.

5) Proposed ban on plastic bags – new City of L.A. policy: The proposed reusable bag ordinance was presented on March 7 at the Harbor Alliance meeting. The Sanitation Department supports it as a way to greatly reduce the amount of plastic bag trash on our streets and in the oceans as a result of storm water runoff. The Harbor Alliance voted to support the proposal. Every 7/11, liquor store, and market, would be required to encourage customers to bring their reusable bags or else charge for providing a paper bag. The proposal would not apply to fast food takeout or raw meats or vegetables in a market. Gloria Christmas made a motion that the Board support the proposal as made by the Sanitation Department. Adrian Valenzuela seconded the motion. During discussion there was objection to the stores gaining financially from the

sale of one-use bags. Gloria Christmas and Adrian Valenzuela accepted the amendment that paper bags also be offered for free in the store. However the vote was 3 in favor, 5 opposed, and 1 abstention, and therefore the motion did not pass.

6) **Approval of the February 14, 2012 Board minutes:** Eva Cooper moved that the minutes of the February 14 Board meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Llewyn Fowlkes and passed 9-0.

7) **Treasurer's Report:** Page 1 of the report is the US Bank statement of February 21, 2012, with two p-card purchases. On Page 2 (Expenditures) there were no changes from last month. DONE says that there is \$18,000 left in our funding. Suggestions are needed for spending the remainder before the funding deadlines for the fiscal year. We may be able to hire a part-time office assistant for a month, to help catch up with paperwork in the office. Marvin Bell made the motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, Neodros Bridgeforth seconded the motion, and it passed 9-0.

8) **Update on the L.A. City budget survey and work of the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates:** Joan Jacobs was not in attendance to make this report.

9) **Update on planning issues, including Gateway Crossroads signs and parking issue, April 10 consideration of livestock slaughter at 12920 S. Vermont Avenue:** Anna's Linens opened at the Gateway Crossroads (661 W. Redondo Beach Blvd.) The other stores are scheduled to open this spring. Meanwhile there are traffic and safety issues because of the delay in installing the traffic signal at north Orchard Avenue and Redondo Beach Blvd. UEI College students are parking in the neighborhood south of Redondo Beach Blvd. and then running across Redondo Beach Blvd. to the school. They are also eating in their cars during lunchtime and then dumping the trash onto the streets. They have also told neighbors that when they park in the school's lot, their cars have been broken into. Rosalie attended the hearing on the four large signs which will be erected around the Gateway Crossroads Center and asked that the one along Redondo Beach Blvd. be placed perpendicular to the road so that the light would not impact the apartments on the south side of the street and that was granted. The signs will remain lighted until 11 p.m.

The 135th Street Neighborhood Watch is holding their regular meeting on March 15 to hear information and consider any impact from the proposed livestock slaughter at Farmer Tran's Market, 12920 S. Figueroa Street. The HGNNC Planning and Land Use Committee heard from the applicant at their March 3 meeting and will hold another meeting on this issue after the 135th Street Neighborhood Watch has met.

10) **Report on Harbor Alliance meeting of March 7, 2012:** The Sanitation Department was present to explain the proposed plastic bag ban for stores in the City of Los Angeles. Regarding upcoming Neighborhood Council elections, the HGNNC Board had voted not to have 2012 elections as part of the City Clerk's survey on whether and how to carry out Neighborhood Council elections in 2012 and 2014. In light of the fact that it is written in our by-laws that we have an election every two years, Rosalie suggested that we should start planning for one. Other Neighborhood Councils are already planning their 2012 elections or a selection process, and the Harbor Alliance already has a committee meeting regularly to plan details and is asking for volunteers who can help out another Neighborhood Council with their voting day. The City has returned responsibility for the NC elections back to DONE for 2012 and it does not look like there will be an opt-out process.

11) **Announcements:** The Dae Hueng Presbyterian Church at 15411 S. Figueroa is hosting a Regional Food Bank distribution every third Saturday of the month. Firemen from Station 79 helped out at the February 18 giveaway. The next one will be on March 17 at 9:00 a.m. The phone contact is (310) 719-2244.

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl J. Wendell
(Kelly Services)