

Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council Board Meeting

Saturday, October 10, 2015

Holiday Inn – Torrance, 19800 S. Vermont Avenue, Torrance, CA 90502

Present: Delores Allmond (Chair), 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), Janet Mitchell (District 7), Deborah Lee (Community Organization Representative), and Richard Lee (Youth Representative)

1) Continental breakfast and sign in: Board members and stakeholders gathered in the Pacific Room.

2) Welcome, introduction of facilitator and attendees, and icebreaker: Thomas Soong, Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, called the Retreat to order at 10:03 a.m. He noted that since last year, the Department has hired some additional staff, including Octaviano Rios, who was formerly on the staff of Mayor Garcetti. This fiscal year, Neighborhood Councils have increased financial resources of \$42,000. He held up the three awards which the Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council has received in recent years: EmpowerLA award in 2012 for the work done to defeat a zoning change in District 1 which also created a new City ordinance requiring special review of all residential projects located within 1,000 feet of a freeway, the 2013 award from the Harbor City-Harbor Gateway Chamber of Commerce for the work done on the Figueroa Corridor Business Breakfast, and the 2015 EmpowerLA award for the November 2014 Emergency Preparedness Neighborhood Survey which involved 63 block leaders and information left at 1700 households throughout the HGNNC.

For the icebreaker, he then asked the group to break up into four groups to come up with one word to describe the goals of that group in relation to neighborhood improvements and then to choose a mascot. Districts 1 and 2 chose “change” and Wonderwoman, District 3 and 4 chose “service” and Watchdog, Districts 5 and 6 chose “respect” and Tiger, and Districts 7 and 8 chose “clean” and Dumpster.

3) Evaluation and review of 2014-2015 activities and neighborhood improvement projects and how we will meet our 2015-2016 fiscal year goals: Thomas read out from the 2014-2015 Self Assessment and asked various Board members what the future plans were to continue working on those goals. For example, hearings on the South L.A. and Southeast L.A. Community Plans may take place during 2016, the HGNNC may join with Bel Air and Tarzana Neighborhood Councils to further develop a Ham radio network for emergency communication, the Toastmaster leadership skills for youth workshop may be offered in 2016 by the HGNNC and it is being offered by People for Community Improvement, the Vermont Avenue parkway planting and beautification may happen in 2016, and the issue of developing an HGNNC logo will be taken up in 2016. Most of the funds allocated to HGNNC in 2014-2015 were spent (Thomas noted that altogether, Neighborhood Councils left \$500,000 unspent, which was returned to the City’s General Fund. The HGNNC goal for filing Community Impact statements was three and three were filed. Thomas said that the summary of activities for 2014-2015 demonstrated an active Neighborhood Council.

The **2015-2016 goals** for the HGNNC are outreach to 15 stakeholders via **planning and land use issues**, using flyers, door-to-door meetings, and social media as appropriate to the residents

of each District (the Merit Tract has 150 members on NextDoor while stakeholders in Districts 7 and 8 have much more limited internet access); the action taken will be for the Planning and Land Use Chair to let each District know about the planning and land use issues coming up in their District and then the District representative will outreach to the impacted stakeholders. Thomas suggested a Special Board meeting to focus on outreach strategies, including outreach to the Spanish-speaking. Deborah suggested that each District representative identify at least one Spanish-speaker who could work with them on outreach. The second goal in the planning and land use area is to provide more training for Planning and Land Use Committee members and interested stakeholders, via networking with other Neighborhood Councils on training on best practices and possibly holding a Planning 101 workshop. Another goal is to achieve progress on a left turn signal on 135th Street westbound at Vermont Avenue, which involves networking with the City of Gardena and the County of Los Angeles. Betty Hawkins noted another terrible accident at that location two days ago.

Each District will host one event in the spring which focuses on some aspect of **emergency preparedness**, such as showing the Emergency Management Department's dvd on emergency preparedness. District 7 stakeholder Vanessa Johnson suggested involving the District's children and also hosting block parties. Another suggestion is to hold a Neighborhood Council-wide emergency preparedness fair.

For **youth** programs, the HGNNC is helping to fund the Saturday playground supervisor at the Environmental Charter Middle School and there will be a financial literacy workshop in the spring. Pamela Thornton suggested involving HGNNC youth in all of the HGNNC activities.

A Save the Drop-related program will be the goal for **community beautification**.

The goal this fiscal year is to file five **Community Impact Statements**.

Thomas then introduced Octaviano Rios as he arrived at the Retreat.

Thomas urged the HGNNC to appoint a Public Works liaison and also a liaison for the Animal Services Department. The first priority of the Public Works liaison will be to work on the Clean Street Initiative. There should be about six meetings a year.

A break was taken for lunch, during which **4) Small group discussion of plans for goals for each of the eight internal districts** took place. After lunch, the reports were given: Districts 1 and 2 will each show the emergency preparedness dvd at their neighborhood watch meetings. In regards to planning and land use, District 1 will focus on engaging stakeholders with the proposed 15 homes on the former Caltrans lot at 17236 S. Hoover Street while District 2 will focus on the illegal sales of vehicles along Redondo Beach Blvd. and Alondra Blvd.

Districts 3 and 4: District 3 will focus on the illegal car sales along the south side of Rosecrans Blvd., the taco truck which is parked next to Rosecrans Recreation Center on the east side of Vermont Avenue, the trash generated by McDonald's, and having the easement east of McDonald's regularly cleaned. District 4 will focus on having all of their alleys cleaned, the left-turn signal at 135th and Vermont Avenue, controlling speeding along 135th Street in front of the 135th Street School, reinstating a crossing guard for the 135th Street School, and controlling tractor-trailer truck traffic through the residential streets.

Districts 5 and 6: District 5 will work towards inclusion and transparency between Council District 15, the LAPD, and District 5 stakeholders and also enforcement of the recycling center at 120th and Figueroa Street. District 6 will work on the illegal marijuana clinic at 115th and Vermont Avenue and the homeless encampment along the 105 Freeway and 117th Street west of Figueroa Street and enforcement of the recycling centers at 110th and Vermont Avenue and 111th and Figueroa Street.

Districts 7 and 8: District 8 will work on the proposed 7-Eleven at Imperial Highway and Avalon, the illegal marijuana clinic at 119th and Avalon, and illegal dumping at Stanford under the 105 freeway.

District 7 will work on the illegal piling of mattresses outside the Green Barn at 117th and Main Street and illegal dumping under the 105 Freeway at Main Street, San Pedro Street, and along 117th Street.

5) Reports from Congress of Neighborhood workshops on outreach, elections, and more:

This was postponed until item 7.

6) How to provide stakeholders with quality City services? Best ways to refer stakeholder requests and track them:

Octaviano Rios, Neighborhood Council Advocate, introduced himself. He was previously with the Office of Mayor Garcetti for two years as Harbor Area Representative and before that was a Field Deputy for eight years with Councilmember Dennis Zine. Mayor Garcetti has said that he can't do his job alone; he and the City need resident involvement.

To serve their stakeholders, Neighborhood Councils need to know your partners, know your resources, engage community members, and ensure that government is aware of your community's needs so that they may address them. As an example, for City Hall, the partners are the 96 Neighborhood Councils, the Mayor, City Attorney, City Controller, City Council, the various Commissions, and the City Departments.

The role of partners: City Departments are your main service providers and first responders. Neighborhood Councils, Commissions, and elected officials are advisors, Department overseers,, advocates, and policy makers.

Elected Officials have their office support staff, policy staff, and field staff to carry out their duties. City Departments have a General Manager overseeing support staff, supervisors, and field staff. Neighborhood Council Boards have members and stakeholders assigned to handle stakeholder requests for service, liaison role with various City Departments, act as policy advisors on issues, and function as community organizers.

Case management of stakeholder issues allows a Board member the opportunity to develop a relationship with the stakeholder during the process of resolving the issue and possibly for the long-term. Ideally the stakeholder information and issue should be recorded at the HGNNC office and then the request assigned to one of the District Representatives or another Board member. Sometimes a team of Board members can handle the more complex requests. Let the stakeholder know which Department the request has been referred to. Use e-mail to the Department or other agency so as to keep a record. Log in names of people talked to and any reference numbers for later follow up . Ask that the Department directly follow up with the stakeholder via a telephone call or e-mail. Utilize MyLA311 to report requests. Be sure that you first understand the problem so that you can best identify the solutions, such as whether the problem is just a pot hole or actually a major emergency such as a sink hole.

The ways to report stakeholder requests are via 311, www.lacity.org, in person, or via e-mail. Some issues require contact with Caltrans or the Federal Highway Administration for railroad issues.

Finally, be honest with your stakeholders and do not make promises about services which you know will not be kept.

7) Further reports from Congress of Neighborhood workshops on outreach, elections, and more: Rey Paduani, Nancy Trojan, Rosalie Preston, and Joan Jacobs summarized the workshops which they attended.

8) Wrap up/next steps: Thomas Soong noted that the annual Congress of Neighborhoods offers many workshops which can assist Board members carry out their responsibilities to their stakeholders, such as “Lobby like a Pro.” Octaviano Rios suggested setting up office hours on a monthly basis with the Harbor Area Mayor’s representative or with Council District 15 staff so that stakeholders have easier access to them. Hold Town Halls on important issues. Meet with Council District 15 staff informally.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes taken by Rosalie Preston, Recording Secretary