

## Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

135<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School Auditorium

801 135<sup>th</sup> Street, Gardena, CA

Present: Rosalie Preston (Chairperson); Delores Allmond (Vice Chairperson); 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); and Gloria Christmas (District 8)

The Meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. by Rosalie Preston (Chairperson).

1) **Public comment:** Ramon Montoya reported on an apparent chemical drainage coming from A & B Auto Repair at 16220 S. Vermont, causing the asphalt to erode on 163<sup>rd</sup> Street, just east of Vermont Avenue. The situation has been reported to Street Services.

Betty Hawkins called attention to the confusion the Department of Transportation has caused in the way they handled a request for “no parking” signs in an alley across from the 135<sup>th</sup> Street School. D.O.T. posted parking limitation signs on the north side of 135<sup>th</sup> causing those living along the south side of 135<sup>th</sup> Street to park their cars blocks away on street sweeping day and during school pick up hours in order to avoid parking tickets. She also commented that trucks with trailers are still using side streets to connect between Rosecrans and El Segundo Blvd.

Delores Allmond pointed out that the City resurfaced the alley west of 135<sup>th</sup> Street School, rather than just fill in the potholes.

Acting Senior Lead Officer Carmen Gutierrez of the LAPD reported that between 2/05/12 through 2/11/12, the following crimes were reported: **Theft:** 120<sup>th</sup> and Figueroa (stolen dog); Seven Eleven on Rosecrans and Vermont (stolen products from the shelves); **Robberies** (3): Vermont and El Segundo Blvd. (bodily force); El Segundo and Figueroa (bodily force); 700 block West of 139<sup>th</sup> St. (home invasion - use of gun); **Burglary** (1): 700 block of 156<sup>th</sup> Street; **Car theft:** 800 block of 129<sup>th</sup> (stolen Suzuki auto); 700 block and 173<sup>rd</sup> Place (Chevy).

2) **Introduction of new Field Deputy for Council District 15 – Quincy O’Neal:** Mr. O’Neal introduced himself and gave a brief description of his background, which includes secondary school teaching. Newly elected Councilman Joe Buscaino and his staff have a strong commitment to serve Watts and all of the Harbor Gateway. The Watts Neighborhood Council meets the second Tuesday of every month, so he will not be able to attend all of our Board meetings. His email address is: [quincy.oneal@lacity.org](mailto:quincy.oneal@lacity.org).

O’Neal summarized the status of the horse stable located inside the County lines, east of Figueroa Street and north of 131<sup>st</sup>. He has contacted Animal Services and other City agencies about the horses riding on City streets, sometimes at night, and also the horse droppings with no clean up by the riders. The L.A. County Regional Planning Dept. is familiar with the stables due to prior litigation. New City laws may have to be created relevant to the horses, as the only laws that now come close pertain to cleaning up after dogs.

3) **Reconsideration of Board position on alcohol sales at the restaurant at 12750 S. Figueroa Street, El Antojito Grill, (ZA 2011-2120 CUB) in light of new information:** Board members reported on the Planning Department hearing, held in San Pedro, where LAPD Vice Officer Jenal expressed great concern about alcohol sales at this location within the Figueroa Street Corridor. No one present had a copy of his letter, so new Field Deputy O’Neal, will attempt to locate a copy in order to assist the Council office in forming a position on this issue.

(Adrian Valenzuela arrived at 7:45 p.m.)

A summary was given by Rosalie and Neodros Bridgeforth on the history of this conditional use issue. The HGNNC Planning and Land Use Committee had reviewed the application at its September 13, 2011,

meeting and recommended that the Board oppose alcohol sales from the market and support alcohol sales from the restaurant, with certain restrictions. However, now that the restaurant has been completed and opened, Board members have visited the restaurant and realized that the restaurant is more like a fast food restaurant, where orders are placed over the counter by the customer, with no formal waiter/waitress service, in contradiction of the Board's original understanding. Further, the customer has the choice of indoor or outdoor seating. This undermines the original understanding, where it was believed that waiters and/or waitresses would serve food and drinks to seated patrons inside a regular restaurant-type environment. It now seems that it would be difficult for the restaurant staff to keep track of the maximum number of beer and wine served and also that beer and wine could easily be taken off site from the tables outside the restaurant.

The owners were present with a translator and objected to this viewpoint saying that staff do bring the food and beverages to the customer's table and that they will have adequate oversight of alcoholic beverages, that their restaurant is a restaurant in the legal sense, and that the State Alcoholic Beverage Control records indicate that the location does not have a high rate of crime.

(Joan Jacobs arrived at 7:52 p.m.)

The owners had agreed on September 13, 2011, not to sell more than three beers per person. They had agreed to a security system both inside and outside with cameras planned for installation. Further, they added that their license would prohibit them from selling alcohol to minors.

Rosalie Preston reiterated that the Board's original position was that no off-site sales of liquor be allowed from the market with onsite sales of liquor in the restaurant allowed with certain restrictions. However the newly acquired evidence by Board members indicates that the restaurant is more fast food service in nature and that everything is ordered at a counter with the option to take the food to either indoor or outdoor seating. Further, the LAPD has identified this area as a high crime area and the Board now has to consider if the restaurant arrangements will contribute to offsite consumption of alcohol and to people hanging out near the restaurant and market, especially at the outdoor tables. Ramon Montoya expressed concern over how the owners would monitor the drink restrictions if customers are allowed to take food and drink outside. Quincy O'Neal pointed out that from his experience bartenders usually know what people are drinking. Ramon Montoya pointed out that the location is the problem. Llewyn Fowlkes, the Representative for District 5 in which the restaurant is located, reminded the Board that he originally voted "no" because the community does not need more locations where liquor can be sold. He also pointed out that it is possible to exit the restaurant both through the adjacent market and also through the main door of the restaurant.

The owner reminded the Board through the translator that liquor is not being sold at this time. He said there will be training for the staff who serve alcohol as required by the ABC. He also said that he considers the restaurant to be a family restaurant. District 5 stakeholder Lu Watson reminded him that the LAPD was against the alcohol sales. The final day for comment is February 15, 2012, but O'Neal said another extension may be possible, so that the new Council District 15 staff can have time to orient themselves on this case.

The final statement made by the owner was that the ABC has said that there is not an over-concentration of liquor licenses in this census tract. They still would like to have the opposition of the Board explained. Llewyn Fowlkes said that the Board, as representatives of the community, had turned down many applications for liquor sales. O'Neal summarized that what he understood was that "a certain type of restaurant was agreed upon when the Board made its recommendation and it turned out to not be what the body thought they had decided upon." The Board agreed with this assessment.

Llewyn Fowlkes moved and Ramon Montoya seconded to now oppose the onsite sale of alcohol at the El Antojito Grill restaurant, 12750 S. Figueroa Street, reversing their previous vote at the September 13, 2011 Board meeting, because the restaurant is not a sit-down restaurant with waiter service as previously thought before the restaurant was opened and this may allow for off-site consumption of alcoholic beverages at a location within the Figueroa Street Corridor. Motion passed with 9 votes in favor, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

**4) Report of the Planning and Land Use Committee on 81 senior affordable units, with 43 parking spaces, in the C2-1 zone at 16304 S. Vermont Avenue (DIR 2011-3197) in District 1, including the impact on parking in the surrounding neighborhood:** Anna Scott, Senior Project Manager for Affirmed Housing

Group, and Jesus Hernandez, Director of Housing for PATH Ventures, addressed the meeting with a brief PowerPoint presentation about the affordable apartments designed for seniors living on Social Security or those who are in danger of becoming homeless or who are homeless. Information presented included the following: the project includes 81 units with 43 parking spaces, three levels above ground, with at-grade parking, creating a total height of four stories. Facilities include: one bedroom units with 500-575 sq. ft. and one two-bedroom unit for the manager of 850 square feet. Rents include utilities, unfurnished but with appliances, communal gardening plots, barbecues, social services delivery onsite by Path Ventures, on-site manager, two elevators in one location, two stair wells, full sprinkler system, security cameras throughout, all according to code. The age of the manager is to be at least 62 years of age.

Discussion and concerns from the Board focused on the need for four stairwells instead of two, the need for an elevator on the east side of the building, the small size of the one bedroom units, the lack of parking (guest and caregiver parking will be along Vermont Ave.), and the height of the building. Miss Scott pointed out that “by right” means that a builder is allowed to do certain things within a zoning code. This property is zoned C-2, where no “set back” from the street is required, for example. Miss Scott said to the extent that they can accommodate recommendations of the Board and other bodies, they will. The square footage of the units is within the acceptable criteria for affordable housing. Estimated income of potential tenants may range from \$20,250 to \$33,250 and so it is doubtful if many can afford car ownership. A Flex car, available for tenants to rent hourly as an alternative to individual car ownership, will be provided, and the Gardena bus travels along Vermont Avenue with a stop near the new apartment building. Torrance and Metro buses travel along Gardena Blvd. The project has Los Angeles Housing Department and AHP funding. Affirmed Housing group is also seeking Section 8 vouchers. The construction will create jobs during the construction period and there will be local hiring. Neodros Bridgeforth read out a draft letter of tentative support with a list of conditions for improvement or change that the Board would like to see the developer consider. Rey Paduani moved, Gloria Christmas seconded and it was passed 9 in favor, 0 against, and 1 abstaining that the Board give tentative support to the project with the following conditions: either three levels of residential apartments with below grade (underground) parking or two levels of residential apartments with at grade parking, either of which would lower the height of the project and also add more parking spaces on site; the lowest possible height for the elevator (5 feet) and other mechanical equipment structures; an entrance on Vermont Avenue which is the major street and more traveled than the 163<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance; this would be for safety reasons, especially after dark; more than two stairways for emergency exit; we support four, with two on the north side of the building and two on the south side of the building; at least one elevator on both the west side and the east side of the building for closer access to individual apartment units; construction of sidewalks on the Vermont Avenue, 163<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Ainsworth Street sides of the building; undergrounding of utility poles along Vermont Avenue between Gardena Blvd. and 163<sup>rd</sup> Street; local hiring for construction; deed restriction of leasing to those 62 years of age or older; deed restriction of affordability of the housing for a period of at least thirty years from the date of the first leases for residents; another public hearing be scheduled once Affirmed Housing’s application and financing documents are complete so that the HGNNC and others of the community will then be able to thoroughly review its design, FAR (floor to area ratio), and evaluate whether this density bonus is necessary for the economic feasibility of this project; and while this project is in escrow, that the Purchase Transaction be part of the public record so that the economics of the project can be more easily analyzed in the context of the pending purchase and the concessions sought by Affirmed Housing Group for this SB1818 project.

5) **Approval of the January 10, 2012 Board Minutes:** Delores Allmond moved, Llewyn Fowlkes seconded, and it was passed 10-0 to approve the January 10 Board minutes as submitted.

6) **Treasurer’s Report:** Joan Jacob’s gave the Treasurer’s Report. Page 1 was the Bank Statement of January 23, 2012; page 2 was the expenditures for from July 1, 2011, to February 10, 2012, with expenditures totaling \$24, 634.01 and with approximate outstanding expenditures totaling over \$6,000. Page 3 was Expenditure Details for the month of January 2012; and, Page 4 was the Budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 approved July

12, 2011. Neodros Bridgeforth moved, Gloria Christmas seconded, and it was passed 10-0 to approve the Treasurer's Report.

7) **Update on the L.A. City budget survey and work of the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates:** The Budget Advocacy groups are still meeting and the Survey from the Mayor's office is almost reaching its completion deadline of February 25<sup>th</sup>. Joan Jacobs stressed how important it is for the Board members to complete the online survey. She will be sending an email reminder as, at last count, she could only identify five (5) completed surveys from our Board. Please complete the survey. Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2012LABudgetSurvey>

8) **Update on planning issues, including proposal for livestock slaughter at 12920 S. Figueroa Street and commercial condo conversion at 15101 S. Figueroa Street:** A visit to market at 12920 S. Figueroa Street is recommended to see how the poultry slaughter is currently carried out. The market wishes to add livestock slaughter. The Planning and land Use Committee will schedule a meeting with the owner on this issue.

The owner of a group of warehouses on the west side of Figueroa Street in District, 15101 S. Figueroa Street, wants to change from leases to condominium ownership. The appearance and upkeep of the property would not change as there would be an association created to fund upkeep and landscaping.

9) **Report on the Harbor Alliance meeting of February 1 – NC 2012 elections:** DONE has been given the oversight of Neighborhood Council elections for 2012 and they may be held in September. The HGNNC Board indicated that most members wanted to continue in their positions until 2012 but after so much effort was put into guaranteeing the NC elections for this year, the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners may not allow for neighborhood councils to opt out,

10) **Update on HGNNC Events (Emergency Preparedness, ethics training):** Fire Station 64 at 10811 S Main Street will be the site of seven weeks of CERT training beginning on Wed. March 7. Most Board members need to re-take their required ethics training and DONE is offering a workshop on Sat. February 25.

11) **Announcements:** The City Planning Department will hear the proposal on the proposed 81 affordable senior apartments at 16304 S. Vermont Avenue on Tues. February 21 at 6 p.m. at the Constituent Center, 8475 S. Vermont Avenue.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl J. Wendell, (Kelly Services)