

## Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Held via Zoom webinar

Present: David Matthews (Chairperson), Joan Jacobs (Vice Chairperson), Rosalie Preston (Secretary), Piers Fairclough (Treasurer), Keith Pitts (District 1), Julia Esqueda-Arteaga (District 2), Arvie Powell (District 4), Jodette Spann (District 5), Lorenzo Johnson (District 6), William Yates (District 8), Jackie Jackson (Community Organization Representative), Richard Lee (Youth Advocate), Elijah Thomas (Youth Representative), Angela Springs (Outreach/Communications Representative), and Craig Kusunoki (At Large Representative)

**1) Call to order and roll call of Board members:** Chair David Matthews called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. This was followed by the roll call of Board members which established that a quorum was present.

**2) General public comment on non-agenda items that are within the Board's jurisdiction:** There was none.

### 3) Reports

**a) Council District 8:** There was no representative present.

**b) Council District 15:** There was no representative present.

**c) Mayor's Office:** There was no representative present.

(Lorenzo Johnson entered the meeting at 6:43 p.m.)

**d) Los Angeles County Supervisor, 2<sup>nd</sup> District:** There was no representative present.

**e) Department of Neighborhood Empowerment:** Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate Freddy Cupen-Ames said that the Department hired two new employees in November, two more as of December 20, and will be hiring one more person in January 2022. He urged Board members to check the Monthly Profile for information on mandated trainings and other important information. The date for Planning and Land Use Committee members to take Planning 101 has been extended until January 1.

(Angela Springs and Elijah Thomas entered the meeting at 6:48 p.m.)

**4) Report on a possible pocket park at 813 W. 165<sup>th</sup> Place in District 1 – Alison Suffet Diaz, Environmental Charter Schools:** Alison Suffet Diaz introduced herself and the Principal of the Environmental Charter Middle School, Dave Trejo. The school has been open at 812 W. 165<sup>th</sup> Place for eight years now. There is also an Environmental Charter Middle School in Inglewood, a high school in Lawndale, and now a high school in Gardena across from El Camino College. The mission of the Environmental Charter Schools is to reimagine public education in low-income communities of color to prepare conscious, critical thinkers who are equipped to graduate from college and create a more equitable and sustainable world. 99% of their high school graduates are accepted by colleges.

(Richard Lee entered the meeting at 6:55 p.m.)

The school has now purchased the lots at 809-813 W. 165<sup>th</sup> Place that were formally the site of a church. There is a single-family home on the east side and apartments on the west. The Harbor Gateway Community Plan prioritizes parks and recreation space. The school would like input on what stakeholders would like to see there, such as a community garden and possibly a communal

composting site. Support was expressed for the concept with arrangement made for security of the site. There is the possibility of having the site open after school hours and on weekends with an MOU agreement with the Department of Recreation and Parks. Principal Trejo said that the ECMS students will be building and maintaining the site. The timeline until opening is about one to two years. Alison Suffet Diaz said that she hoped the HGNNC could provide a letter of support at the January 11 Board meeting.

#### **5) Committee appointments:**

**a) Planning and Land Use Committee:** There were three interested stakeholders: Janeisha Robinson who lives in District 5 and previously served on the Planning and Land Use Committee, Dr. Mello Desire, who previously was active with the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council and active on Skid Row, with a membership in the King Way Bible Church in District 6, and Janet Mitchell, who lives in District 7, previously served on the Board as Outreach Representative and is currently on four HGNNC Committees. A question was raised about verifying Community Interest stakeholder status for Committee members. NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames said that the procedure should be clarified in the Standing Rules. The Board was polled on the three candidates and Janeshia Robinson received the most votes. It was therefore moved by Joan Jacobs, seconded by Richard Lee, and passed 12-0-3 (Kusunoki, Matthews, Pitts) to appoint Janeshia Robinson to the Planning and Land Use Committee.

**b) Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness Committee:** There were no applicants present.

#### **6) Outreach events**

**a) Report on November 20 Harvest Blessings:** Outreach/Communications Representative Angela Springs said that over 150 people drove through to receive food bags which included turkeys.

**b) Report on December 10 Winter Wonderland on Gardena Blvd.:** Angela Springs said that the HGNNC booth gave out arts and crafts along with cups of hot chocolate and had good volunteer support.

**c) Holiday event/parade along Imperial Highway from San Pedro Street to Avalon on Sat. December 18:** Angela Springs said that the drive through giveaway of toys, food, and warm clothing will take place on Sat. December 18 from 12-4 p.m. at the Temple of Believers Community Church, 11721 S. Avalon Blvd. Volunteers are needed for the set up at 8 a.m. The parade along Imperial Highway did not receive approval from Funding for the HGNNC to sponsor due to permit issues. District 7 stakeholder Janet Mitchell will be overseeing the parade, which starts at 11 a.m. from Charity Mission Baptist Church, 200 W. Imperial Highway and will end at the Metro station on Avalon Blvd.

#### **7) Administrative motions**

**a) November 9, 2021, Board minutes:** It was moved by Joan Jacobs, seconded by Rosalie Preston, and passed 15-0-0 to approve the minutes as submitted.

**b) December 2, 2021, Special Board minutes:** It was moved by Angela Springs, seconded by Joan Jacobs, and passed 13-0-2 (Johnson, Pitts) to approve the minutes as submitted.

**c) December 9, 2021 Special Board minutes:** It was moved by Rosalie Preston, seconded by Richard Lee, and passed 15-0-0 to table the approval of the minutes until the January 11, 2022, Board meeting as they were not yet completed.

**d) November 2021 Monthly Expenditure Report:** It was moved by Rosalie Preston, seconded by Keith Pitts, and passed 13-0-0, with two ineligible, to approve the report.

**8) Discussion and motion to accept the written resignation of David Matthews as Chairperson and fill the vacant Chairperson seat by appointment of the Board:** NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames explained that the new appointment would remain Chairperson until June 30, 2023. If a current Board member wishes to be considered for the seat, they would have to resign first and then be voted on. He also pointed out that currently the Chairperson must open all Zoom meetings of the Neighborhood Council (or arrange for another Board member to assist them) and perform the duties of Chairperson as per the Bylaws. He advised two votes, first on the resignation and then on the new Chairperson. It was moved by Joan Jacobs, seconded by Rosalie Preston, and passed 14-0-0 to accept the resignation of David Matthews as Chairperson. Vice Chairperson Joan Jacobs thanked David Matthews for his two and a half years of service on the Board.

There were two stakeholders who expressed interest in being appointed Chairperson. Miguel Vasquez, a District 8 stakeholder, said that he had been a candidate for Chairperson in the June Board election and wants to continue the work of David Matthews on behalf of the Neighborhood Council. He said that he is the lead chemist for the nation's leading anti-doping lab and oversees staff and testing schedules. Nakiesha Scott, a District 5 stakeholder, said that she has been a community activist for four years and is also a business owner. She has helped with passing out food and hygiene products in the community. She has experience as a business owner and is a team leader. After further discussion of their backgrounds, it was moved by Rosalie Preston and seconded by Angela Springs to vote on which candidate would be appointed the next Chairperson to fill the vacancy created by David Matthews' resignation. The vote ended up with 7 (Fairclough, Jacobs, Johnson, Lee, Powell, Preston, Spann) for Miguel Vasquez and 7 (Esqueda-Arteaga, Jackson, Kusunoki, Pitts, Springs, Thomas, Yates) for Nakiesha Scott. Therefore, per the HGNNC Bylaws, Freddy Cupen-Ames, as a third party, conducted an online coin toss via [headsorTAILSflipit.com](https://headsorTAILSflipit.com) (Just flip a coin) to break the tie. Vice Chairperson Joan Jacobs designated Miguel Vasquez as heads and Nakiesha Scott as tails. The virtual coin flip ended up on heads. Therefore Miguel Vasquez was determined to be the new Chairperson. There was some disagreement expressed by Board members and stakeholders about the tie-breaking process and outcome and there was a proposal to have a re-vote at the January Board meeting. NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames said that per the HGNNC Bylaws and Standing Rules, a vote of Reconsideration could be considered at the January 11, 2022, Board meeting, if the motion is made by one of those who voted for Miguel Vasquez (prevailing side of the motion). In the interim month, Vice Chairperson Joan Jacobs will hold the Zoom license.

**9) Announcements:** There were no announcements by Board members or Committee Chairs.

**10) Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Minutes taken by Rosalie Preston, Secretary