

**Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council
Board Meeting
Monday, September 26, 2011, 6:30 pm
Rinaldi Adult School**

- 1) **Call to Order** at 6:40 pm by Kim Thompson, GHNNC President. **Roll Call: Present:** Carl Buettner, Sue DeVandry, Rafael Garcia, Sid Gold, Edward Headington, Gary Holmen, Bill Hopkins, Wayde Hunter, Rahim Kazi, Ralph Kroy, Agnes Lewis, Scott Manatt, Leon Marzillier, Lydia Plescia, Ray Pollok, Steve Steinberg, Jan Subar, Kim Thompson, Anne Ziliak. **Absent:** Neysa Frechette, Josh Jordahl, Bill Lillenberg. Quorum established with 19. **Pledge of Allegiance:** was recited.
Chair Comments: Kim Thompson welcomed stakeholders. She said the next Board meeting will be held on October 24th instead of October 31st because the 31st falls on Halloween. The speakers on the high-speed rail project have rescheduled from the October meeting to the November meeting. She reminded the Board that all members may submit comments on the neighborhood council election project, under review by the City Clerk and the City Council; see her after the meeting for details. She thanked Rafael Garcia, who resigned as District One representative, and said there would be a farewell cake later in the meeting.
- 2) **Approval of July 25, 2011 and August 22, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes:** Ms. Thompson deferred these until later in the meeting.
- 3) **Comments from CD 12, Senior Lead Officers, any government agencies:** Bill Larson, from the city attorney's office, reported that there is a prosecution now of one of the owners of a group home in the area. She ran multiple illegal homes.
On Thursday, October 6th, the OGHRG (Old Granada Hills Residents' Group) will have a guest speaker, Captain Kris Pritcher of the LAPD. The meeting is at 7 pm at the Granada Hills Charter High School auditorium.
4. **Public Comment on Non-agenda items:** There was a question from the audience on getting Sesnon cleaned up, because weeds have been allowed to grow to huge proportions, and because they are behind the properties, homeowners may not realize it's their responsibility to clean them up. Response was delayed because today's special speaker arrived.
5. **Special Guest Speaker, Councilmember Mitch Englander, Council District 12:** Ms. Thompson introduced the Councilmember. He took office July 1st. He introduced Megan Cottier, District Director. He remarked that he is "blessed" with so many neighborhood councils and service organizations in his area and such great staff. He asked NCs to bring any ideas for legislation up to him. He is just in from a budget meeting, including a discussion of the ACE program, the city's new Administrative Citation Enforcement program, which can cite people for quality of life issues such as blighted property, illegal trailer signs, and the like. Traditional law enforcement has been reluctant to write such citations, so now there is a different mechanism for addressing them. Mr. Englander said the mayor has cut out all funds for graffiti and weed abatement because of the state of the budget. CD12 has used some of its own discretionary funds to backfill some of these. This will be in the CD12 newsletter.
Question from the audience: Whose responsibility is it to address street trees? Answer from Mr. Englander: Clearly this is the city's responsibility. CD12 is replacing some of the funds needed to take care of this. It goes back to the fundamental question of what do we pay taxes for? To fully fund safety, like the LAPD, the LAFD, first responders, and then quality of life issues. In his opinion the city has been funding too many other things that are not part of its core responsibilities, and then there is nothing left to fund important programs. He disagrees with the city's attempt to shift the cost burden of sidewalk repair to homeowners. **He would like the NC to take a formal position on this.** Question (Mr. Fisk): What non-core functions does he mean? Answer: For example, the city is looking to partner with non-profit organizations to take over the running of animal shelters, as is done in many cities. The Convention Center is another example – in other states most of them are run by public-private partnerships; if LA were to do that, considerable budget would be saved. He thinks the city should "contract out and contract in." An example of contracting-in is the program where the city provides fire department services to the City of San Fernando, which brings in about \$3 million a year.

The city can also provide fleet maintenance and printing services for other municipalities in the area. Returning to the ACE program, administrative law judges will handle the administrative “tickets.” There will be a pilot program run by the LAPD, because they’re already accustomed to writing citations. This program should overcome their reluctance to write citations on non-criminal matters.

Question (Kroy): The ranch house at O’Melveny Park has been empty – is there any effort to hire someone? Answer: No, but the Councilmember would like to hear more from the NC. This is not necessarily a Rec&Parks employee.

Question (Lillenberg): There is a problem with LADBS enforcement (Building and Safety). If each NC were to contribute \$2k to an enforcement program would that help? The councilmember thought this was a poor idea, because what would happen is that the LADBS budget would likely just be cut by whatever amount this would contribute. Instead, the ACE program should address this – he thinks LADBS should be the second pilot program after the LAPD. NCs should keep their funds to foster a sense of community; he praised GHNNC’s Summer Social and GHSNC’s movie nights as examples.

There were questions about possibly having the 311 system be on longer hours. Councilmember Englander said this goes to the heart of what the city’s function is. He reminded people that the City Source program lets people take a picture of a problem (illegal billboards or graffiti, for example) and send them from their smart phones to the city. The 311 system is billed as “one call does it all,” but that doesn’t work if the hours are too short. Some departments don’t let the 311 system access their systems, and most departments have proprietary systems. He cited examples of Southwest Airlines and their great phone and web response systems, as something the city should strive to imitate.

A question about an Eagle Scout project illustrated that it’s difficult to find some kinds of information within the city bureaucracy; the Councilmember offered his office’s assistance in cases like this; they will try to break logjams.

Stakeholder Glenn Bailey asked about NC elections in 2012, and the idea of using DONE’s budgeted of \$120k for outreach to instead fund the IEA (Independent Election Administrators) to have the NCs run their own. Mr. Englander thought the \$120k is key for outreach, as even with that, turnout is very low. They need to come up with something else that works across all the NCs.

Comment (Holmen) – he thanked Mr. Englander for his help over the past 8 years in working to find a solution for the youth sports fields. Mr. Englander said that the MWD is now receptive to another 5 year extension, and that his office is working on another long-term solution, different from the previous proposals for fields in Sylmar.

Question (Headington) about the city’s manufacturing enterprise zones. Answer: The city has 42 such zones. They’re important because Los Angeles has a reputation for being very difficult for businesses to deal with. The state approved another one in Northridge and Chatsworth. Businesses relocating there get tax breaks, up to \$36k per employee hired, 35% off the DWP bill, and other benefits. Sadly even the brokers are not aware of the program. The Governor threw these enterprise zones in the pot with the CRAs (Community Redevelopment Areas) as something to cancel, but the city was able to save this enterprise zone. A question about who covers the cost was answered indirectly – the savings scale down over 5 years and the city eventually benefits.

Question (Steinberg) – heard that some of the funds for Farmer’s Field (the proposed football stadium) are to be taken from homeless programs. Answer: Looking at the proposals from an economic standpoint, the benefits of the stadium are “phenomenal.” Concerns over risk to the city have been addressed; AEG will insure the city against loss. One of the hurdles is CEQA, which prevents a lot of good developments by tying them up with lawsuits. AEG has worked out a plan with Sacramento that sends any lawsuit first to arbitration, thus providing some measure of predictability.

Comments were made about an LAUSD program where LAPD stops schoolbuses, then cites students for being late because of the LAPD stop. Mr. Englander said a judge is looking into the matter. These are expensive tickets, and then both parents and students take another day off to fight the ticket. This is bad for parents, students, and the schools, which lose a day of funding for that student.

Question (Thompson): How can we be sure to get his appearance at the NC mentioned in the newsletter? Also, the Daily News did not publish the information in their calendar. He answered that

Matt will find out about the newsletter. He has the leanest staff among city councilmembers, and also the highest number of service clubs, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.

On the new store coming in to replace the HOWS market on Balboa – when a store closes a lease that does not require LADBS hearings, the council office does not necessarily hear about it ahead of time – there is no requirement for them to notify the office.

On the mobile billboards – he started working on this many years ago, before assemblyman Blumenfeld, who has done a “phenomenal” job with it, handing the issue back for local control. The city is now expanding the ordinance to battle the ingenuity of the scofflaws, who keep dreaming up new ways to skirt the law, such as attaching the billboards to bicycles.

Question: (Wayde Hunter) Please tell us what is the Council office and the staff are doing about Sunshine Canyon in regards to the rising odor complaints? Mr. Englander said that Nicole Bernson is the CD12 contact person on the issue. The city did not issue a CUP (Conditional Use Permit), so it has proven difficult to take action. CD 12 is working with the LEA (local enforcement agency). The gas collection system seems to be totally inadequate. He indicated the City is contemplating taking actions which he could not disclose right now.

On the rising rates for utilities, natural gas companies are not municipal utilities; they’re private and regulated by the PUC. On the sanitation side, proposed increases in sewer fees are best fought in the Valley by installing sub-meters; the sewer charge will then be based only on the volume of water consumed by the house and not the landscaping and pool.

Stakeholder Glenn Bailey reported that the City Clerk’s report on NC elections will have a Valley meeting October 27th at 5:45 pm at the Valley Plaza library.

6. **Emergency Preparedness item of the Month (Hopkins):** Continuing our program of making EP supplies available to all attendees, this month’s item is a GI-style can opener. Mr. Hopkins also talked about the EP guide, a booklet available to all, on the back table.
7. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Executive Committee** (Thompson): **Motion:** *That GHNNC support Assemblyman Blumenfeld’s AB 1298 regarding mobile billboards.* **Carried** unanimously.
 - b. **PLUM (Planning and Land Use)** (Ziliak): **Motion:** *That GHNNC submit comment to the City Council Planning and Land Use Management Committee requesting that the sign ordinance be further revised to address the following issue: Signage in parks and public open spaces, regulation of electronic signs that are visible from Public Rights of Way (PROW) or private property, regulating the size and brightness of signs on buildings, and regulating signs that negatively impact traffic. PLUM supports a moratorium of this ordinance until the amendments above are adopted.* **Carried** unanimously without discussion. **Motion:** That the GHNNC Board request a public hearing be held on DIR-2011-1881-CLQ: APCNV-2004-5185-ZC. Discussion ensued: the applicant requested “clarification” of the Q conditions, but the changes requested amount to significant modifications to the approved conditions, much beyond “clarifications.” **Carried** unanimously.

Ms. Ziliak reported that on the issue of clearing hugely overgrown weeds on Sesnon, the owners are responsible, and we’re trying to find out the addresses in order to send out notifications (not obvious what the addresses are because the houses face inward streets, not Sesnon.)
 - c. **Outreach Committee** (Headington): The goal is to send out the Fall newsletter to arrive mid-November. This will be 4 pages instead of 8. The committee is working on it. The Holiday parade this year will be on December 4th. Also they’re looking at holding a Public Safety Forum perhaps in January. Ms. DeVandry circulated a sign-up sheet for the Emergency Preparedness event to be held October 1st.
 - d. **Financial Officer’s Report** (Pollok): A report was circulated on budget versus actual expenses.
 - e. **Policy and Rules** (Marzillier): The committee meets on the second Friday of the month. Bylaws approved by stakeholders were submitted to DONE months ago, and no word has been received. The committee has started work on the Standing Rules.

- f. **Public Safety Committee** (Pollok): Our CERT class will start October 19th. We can place some more neighborhood watch signs – see Jan Subar.
 - g. **Treasurer’s Report** (Kazi): September expenses were \$531. Ms. Thompson said we need formal approval of the Treasurer’s Report every month. **Motion** (Thompson/Steinberg): *To approve the September 2011 Treasurer’s Report as submitted.* **Carried** unanimously.
 - h. **Ad Hoc Committee on Goals and Priorities**: A survey is being sent out to the Board members; it is an assessment of Board members’ skills and interests. The committee asked for responses by October 11th.
8. **Special Interest Reports: Faith-Based** (Kroy): The second lunch was held with invitations going to religious organizations in the area. It was held in conjunction with Granada Hills South NC. Mostly a different group attended.
 9. **Update on NC Congress**: Several of the people attending summarized their experiences. Ms. DeVandry was on a panel to talk about Outreach efforts. Attendees were very impressed with our newsletter. Information was shared on how to organize events and where to purchase items. Mr. Gold remarked that the Mayor, for the first time, had spoken of NCs as a “core” part of city government. Mr. Kazi said he learned from the sessions, especially the one about handling difficult people; the speakers offered to come to one of our meeting. Mr. Headington was also pleased to hear the reference to NCs as “core.” Mr. Buettner remarked that most of the sessions will be available to all on their website. Ms. Lewis said that the opportunity to talk to counterparts in other NCs emphasized how often we’re all dealing with similar issues. Ms. Thompson remarked that this is the first time this event was organized entirely by NC volunteers, and it has been the best so far.
 10. **Board Member Comments: Ms. Lewis** reminded people of the SF Valley’s biggest Blood Drive on Saturday, October 1st at the GH Recreation Center and at the GH Youth Sports Complex. **Mr. Kroy** reported on the speaker at Valley Vote, Austin Buettner, who spoke persuasively about how to make LA more welcoming to businesses. **Mr. Hunter** spoke of the upcoming meeting of the Sunshine Canyon Local Enforcement Agency at 3 pm on Thursday, the 29th. **Mr. Gold** spoke about the Great California Shakeout on October 20th at 10 am; there are more than 4 million people registered. **Mr. Headington** spoke of the SOLID pasta dinner on the 14th at 7:30 pm at St. Nicholas Church (SOLID, Supporters Of Law Enforcement In Devonshire, is a service organization supporting the police). **Ms. Costa**, nominated by Sunshine Canyon Landfill as District One representative to replace Rafael Garcia, summarized her background as environmental manager, a registered civil engineer, and has worked at city, county, and state levels. Ms. Thompson welcomed her to the Board.
 11. **Adjournment at 9:48 pm.**