

Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council
Board Meeting
Monday, January 30, 2012, 6:30 pm
GHNNC Office

- 1) **Call to Order** at 6:40 pm by Kim Thompson, GHNNC President. **Roll Call: Present:** Carl Buettner, Patti Costa, Sue DeVandry, Edward Headington, Sid Gold, Bill Hopkins, Wayde Hunter, Rahim Kazi, Ralph Kroy, Agnes Lewis, Bill Lillenberg, Scott Manatt, Leon Marzillier, Lydia Plescia, Ray Pollok, Steve Steinberg, Jan Subar, Kim Thompson, Anne Ziliak. **Late:** Neysa Frechette, Josh Jordahl. **Absent:** Gary Holmen. Quorum established with 19, later 20. **Pledge of Allegiance:** was recited.

Chair Comments: Kim Thompson welcomed stakeholders.

The Mayor's Budget Survey takes place January 15th through February 15th, and all Board members and stakeholders are encouraged to participate; it's on the Internet.

- 2) **Approval of December 19th, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes:** (Buettner/Kroy: Mr. Hunter asked to have several additional comments about the EP committee formation in December entered into the minutes. Minutes approved as amended: 17-0-3.
- 3) **Comments from CD 12, any government agencies:** Senior Lead Officer (SLO) Janine Angeles spoke about the effort to get more Neighborhood Watch groups formed. Although crime is down in Devonshire Division, the number of house burglaries has increased, and there has been a cluster of thefts from automobiles near Balboa and Chatsworth St. There have been many instances of gang members from South Los Angeles showing up in the area. At the 15800 block of San Fernando Mission, a group of Rolling 30s gang members crashed into about 15 cars when trying to evade police, but they were eventually caught. The SLO advised people to get their neighbors' cell phone numbers so they can call and verify in case of something suspicious. For example, the area now is plagued by knock-knock burglars, who knock on doors to make sure no one is home so they can break in. She advised that people not let them in, even if they look like they have some sort of work uniform on. The area from Balboa and Roscoe east to the 405 is responsible for about 30% of all the crime reported in Devonshire Division of the LAPD. The goal of a 15% reduction in crime was met last year, and a similar goal is in place now.

There is a proposed change to the policy of impounding vehicles for 30 days when the LAPD finds drivers without a license. Some people have complained that this targets minorities, and they are discussing changing the policy. The proposed change is that the driver would have the option of calling someone with a license to get the vehicle and drive it home. In answer to a question from a stakeholder, SLO Angeles said that the DUI checkpoints are selected by the number of accidents and complaints in an area.

Bill Larson, from the City Attorney's office, remarked that more unlicensed group homes are popping up in the area. They usually rent a home and start with 2 people, then keep adding. One home recently had 100 people in a house meant for a single family. The residents are almost always parolees, and the houses are managed by ex-cons. There has been such a house on Van 'Gogh Street, and another on Woodley, with 22 people living in a two-car garage. They get reimbursed about \$850 per person per month by the government. The Community Care ordinance seems to be dead now. There is also a different problem around the Islamic Center on Encino Street. Apparently there is an internal dispute, with one group suing the people running the mosques; the Court ruled for the dissidents. Bill's contact phone number is 213-393-5561, for call by Board members. He suggested stakeholders first call GHNNC, who can relay the information.

- 4) **Emergency Preparedness Item of the Month** (Hopkins): This month's item, free to all attendees, is an emergency foil blanket.
- 5) **Public Comments on Non-Agenda items:** Joy Bizar of the Arleta Chamber of Commerce, spoke on behalf of Jack Lindblad, candidate for the 39th Assembly District. She requested that residents east of Balboa sign a petition to get his name on the ballot. Betty Moreno, a member of the Frost Middle School PTSA, asked that people bring in Betty Crocker products box tops as a fundraiser for the school. Boxes are clearly marked "box tops for education." The money goes directly to the PTSA, not to LAUSD. She

said parent volunteers are also now doing traffic patrolling – an issue pursued by GHNNC’s Public Safety committee.

- 6) **Guest Speaker: Kathleen Javaheri, Principal, Kennedy-San Fernando Community Adult School:** She spoke about the possibility that the whole adult education program of the LAUSD may be eliminated because of budget issues. This was brought up at a meeting with LAUSD Superintendent Deasy on January 15th; this is one of three proposals for closing the \$540 M budget gap. The Rinaldi Adult Center, one of the main parts of the Kennedy-San Fernando Community Adult School, plays an important part in increasing the high school graduation rate for LAUSD, as many drop-outs return to the adult school to get a GED. Last year the enrollment was 10,500, approximately 1500 of whom were concurrently enrolled in high school, who would not have graduated otherwise. Additionally, it has been shown that educating the parents of school-children raises their interest in their children’s education . They offer classes at 30 locations in computer literacy, parental education, drug prevention, anti-violence classes, tutoring in English, Mommy-and-Me, and GED programs. They also offer occupational classes at some locations like the North Valley Occupational Center, like welding, construction, airplane mechanics, automotive repair, etc. These programs promote the integration of immigrants into American society. There has been an adult education program in Los Angeles for 137 years. Lately the State has allowed the previously allocated budget for this to be merged into the general fund of LAUSD, prompting the current possible cuts. There will be another vote on this by the Board of Education on February 14th.

Motion: *That GHNNC urge LAUSD Board members and local officials to oppose the proposal [to cut the LAUSD adult education program]. (Steinberg/Hopkins).* Discussion ensued. Mr. Lillenberg remarked that opposing this isn’t sufficient; there should be an alternative proposal to balance the budget. Mr. Gold remarked that the problem is really that of allowing the diversion of funds from adult education to the general fund; it gives the Board too much power to use funds at their discretion. Ms. Javaheri clarified that up until about three years ago school funding was based on ADA – average daily attendance; now instead there is a block grant that remains the same regardless of attendance. That gives the LAUSD the flexibility to allocate the funds, which has plusses and minuses. A stakeholder asked rhetorically, what happened to all the lottery money that was supposed to benefit the schools? Politicians make that money disappear by removing budget elsewhere, so the schools are no farther ahead. Ms. Kirby, a stakeholder, remarked that the LAUSD must hear from residents that enough is enough and there should be no further cuts to school programs. Ms. Thompson remarked that an additional problem may be that adult school buildings are then empty for long periods of time. The Rinaldi campus, for example, is a big presence in Granada Hills, and if that were to close, the abandoned building would be an eyesore. Mr. Steinberg pointed out that if the program is completely closed, it’s likely that it would never be re-opened again. The Governor has now proposed to make block grants permanent. This problem seems to be an unintended consequence of block grants. Mr. Hunter said that it has been proposed to add an additional parcel tax of \$247 per property to help fund schools. Stakeholders said that fees are very low at the adult centers, and perhaps raising fees to students would help. This is not in control of the individual schools. Ms. Ziliak said that the Superintendent threatens every year to do something drastic, and it generally is not done. What is Plan B if this doesn’t go through? Ms. Javaheri said that the 30 school Principals hope that some measure of adult education is retained. She pointed out that the \$540M shortfall, though large, is only 1/60th of the LAUSD budget. The **Motion** was amended to read that the Educational Representative (Mr. Steinberg) should write the letter. **Carried 19-0-0** with one recusal (Steinberg).

7) **Committee Reports:**

- a) **Ad Hoc Committee on Goals and Priorities:** Members of the committee (Hopkins, Lewis, Plescia, Subar) gave the final recommendations for the goals to be pursued by GHNNC over the next year or two, and recommendations on how to achieve them. They clarified that an Ad Hoc committee makes recommendations, and that other committees or the Board then implements them. Several recommendations made for committees, for example, have already been voted on by the Policy and Rules committee. They pointed out that the purpose of neighborhood councils, as set forth in the City Charter, is to facilitate the two-way communication between city government and the stakeholders, and that GHNNC’s goals should be aligned with that. The oral report included examples of recommendations, and Board members were referred to the written report for many more recommendations. The report was distributed after the oral report.

Ms. Subar talked of the recommendations for Board agendas and Board meetings, to make things more interesting for stakeholders and more efficient for GHNNC. The main recommendation for agendas, for example, was to make the order flexible so that items of general interest come first; and that agendas be circulated for comment before they are published, in order to catch errors.

Mr. Hopkins reported on recommendations for the budget process, to involve more interested Board members early in the process. Several technical ideas were shared for making the budget presentations more clear to the Board.

Ms. Plescia talked of ideas for recruiting stakeholders – to projects first, and only then to meetings – and of updating the written material used to explain the function of GHNNC.

Ms. Lewis summarized the two main goals – getting more stakeholders involved; and getting Board members more engaged.

- b) **PLUM committee report (Ziliak): Motion:** *That GHNNC support Option 2 for the re-greening of the City Hall lawn.* This project is necessary because of the damage caused by the Occupy LA group. Option 1 would replace the lawn, cost \$350k, and \$90k in annual maintenance. Option 2 would add more walkways and less lawn, and add water-sparing plants, at a cost of \$700k and maintenance of \$140k. Option 3 would have native drought-tolerant plants and be more costly. Discussion indicated that the cheapest solution is not the best because it would be a bad example of water-thirsty lawns; that completely removing lawns would not be a good idea because then there would be no lawn area for peaceful assemblies, and that therefore Option 2 seemed the best balance. There is apparently an effort under way to try and get restitution from those causing the damage. **Carried 11-9-0.**

Motion: *That GHNNC submit comment regarding 17344 Signature Drive request to adjust rear property line.* This seems to be a routine transaction between two adjacent properties, and does not affect the zoning of either. The PLUM committee's only concern is that required setbacks be observed. **Carried unanimously.**

Motion: *That GHNNC oppose the proposal at 11918 Balboa Blvd, to modify existing cellular site.* Ms. Ziliak noted that the site is out of compliance with its previous conditions, so changes should be opposed. Also they propose to add several antennas to a poorly maintained stealth tree. A hearing on this matter is scheduled for February 7th. **Carried unanimously.**

Motion: *That GHNNC oppose the placement of the cellular site proposed at Jollette and Sesnon.* Staff of the CD12 office met with PLUM representatives and representatives of the cellular company. GHNNC took the position once to oppose the specific placement, and we should do it again. Mr. Hunter explained that the federal government classifies cellular companies as public utilities, and the city is given a deadline of 150 days to approve or change a proposal, before it gets approved by default. It's different on private property, as the NCs can comment during hearings. On public rights of way, the city has a shortened process and there is less opportunity to comment. PLUM members drove around to see what the visual impact would be of the cellular antennas, which would look vaguely like tall light poles. They proposed an alternative location where tall trees would partially mitigate the appearance. **Carried unanimously.**

- c) **Treasurer's Report (Kazi):** The written report was distributed. It was noted that it erroneously identified Mr. Kazi as "past Treasurer," and this would be corrected. **Motion** (Kazi/DeVandry): *To approve the Treasurer's Report.* **Carried unanimously.** **Motion** (Hunter/DeVandry) *To approve the Cash Flow Report.* **Carried unanimously.**
- d) **Financial Officer's Report (Pollok):** A report was distributed showing the remaining budget for the year.
- e) **Citywide Issues Committee (Gold): Motion:** *That GHNNC request NCs conduct elections in 2012.* Mr. Gold said that BongHwan Kim, the head of DONE, said the earliest possible vote at this time would be in 2013. It is not in 2012 because there is no budget for it. This Motion was withdrawn, because it is rendered moot by the vote of the City Council.

Motion: *That GHNNC request that any non-commercial signage (including political and ideological) in residential areas be allowed, and kept to no more than 32 sq ft, be no more than 8 ½ ft high, and not be subject to fees, permits, or other restrictions.* The issue is that the Department of Building and Safety can issue a citation for a fine, but it costs as much to appeal the fine as does the penalty, so owners can't win – the penalty is \$350, and it costs \$350 to have LADBS "review" it. Mr.

Kroy and Mr. Hunter went to a hearing where the City Council is reviewing this policy. Mr. Kroy pointed out that there may be a First Amendment issue, as no Boy Scout signs, no neighborhood council signs, and no opinion signs are allowed. (Political signs are allowed, with time restrictions before and after an election.) Motion **carried 11-3-4** (plus 1 recusal, Mr. Hunter).

Motion: *That GHNNC urge the LADWP and the NC LADWP Oversight Committee to extend the current MOU [memorandum of understanding].* **Carried 18-0-1.**

Motion: *That GHNNC affirm its participation in the existing MOU and name its representative to the LADWP Oversight Committee.* **Nominated: Sid Gold** (DeVandry/ Headington). **Carried unanimously.**

Motion: *That GHNNC support all waste collection within the City for all properties including single family and multi-unit residences be subject to a franchise district.* This was withdrawn and **tabled** until next month.

Motion: *That GHNNC support the RIO (River Improvement Ordinance) and require that they develop an MOU with NCs that includes a 90-day advance notification, and that no decisions be made without NC discussion and input.* The RIO regulates development and projects having to do with the LA River. **Carried unanimously.**

Motion: *That GHNNC oppose the expansion of the River District and that no boundary be implemented before a review by the NCs.* The original District was to extend about 200 yards from the river; now it's proposed to extend for 2 or 3 miles to either side, regulating details like what landscaping private properties can have along the way. Discussion pointed out that this potentially would mandate specific planting over half the Valley floor. It was also remarked that the river course was enveloped in concrete 80 years ago because of a flooding problem – and that, with the new projects, the river will need about 3 miles of floodplain. **Carried 18-0-1.**

Motion: *That GHNNC oppose the proposed policy change for impounding cars driven by persons without a driver's license.* Discussion ensued. The current policy is that unlicensed drivers have their car impounded for 30 days, which is very costly. Among the proposed changes is one that would allow the unlicensed person to call someone to pick up the car within a day. The LA Protective League and many in law enforcement oppose the change. Some minority groups claim that the current policy discriminates against minorities. **Carried unanimously.**

Motion: *That GHNNC support the proposed VANC Mixer with a contribution not to exceed \$250.* VANC is the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils. There was a discussion mostly about where to get the budget for this. An amendment was offered and accepted to change the amount to \$125, the money coming from the category of "general neighborhood outreach." **Carried 13-5-1.**

f) **Policy and Rules Committee (Marzillier) :** **Motion:** *That GHNNC approve submitted changes to the Standing Rules.* The time then being 10:02 PM, it was decided to table this discussion until the next Board meeting.

g) **Public Safety Committee (Pollok):** As approved at the last meeting, an Emergency Preparedness subcommittee was formed. The first meeting is February 7th, Tuesday evening at 7 PM.

8) **Board members comments on non-agenda items:**

Ms. DeVandry announced that the newsletter subcommittee would meet Wednesday February 8th at 10 AM. Board members and stakeholders who would like to contribute an article or have an idea of what should be included are invited to the meeting or can contact Ms. DeVandry. The newsletter is now scheduled for April. The Mayor's Prayer Breakfast is March 3rd and costs \$28.50 per person. Attendees will be DeVandry, Headington, and Kroy. Mr. Headington said there will be a Meet-and-Greet at the home of Dave Beauvais February 19th in support of his candidacy. Mr. Gold remarked that two major commercial tenants have left the area [of the GHNNC office], and that GHNNC should work with the Chamber of Commerce to find tenants. Others remarked that Albertson's owns a long-term lease and won't allow competitors to come in. Ms. Thompson said the new Fresh 'n Easy on Balboa will open February 15th. Mr. Lillenbergh said there is a 2-page listing of crimes in the area available.

9) **Adjourned** at 10:16 PM.