

Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council
Boar*d Meeting
Monday, April 26, 2010 6:30 pm
Van Gogh Elementary School

- 1) **Call to Order** at 6:34 pm by Leon Marzillier, GHNNC President. **Roll Call:** (Quorum established with 17 board members): **Present:** Mary Ellen Crosby, Sue DeVandry, Rafael Garcia, Sid Gold, Michael Greenwald, Bill Hopkins, Wayde Hunter, Gary Holmen, Ralph Kroy, Agnes Lewis, William Lillenberg, Scott Manatt, Leon Marzillier, Ray Pollok, Eric Rosenberg, Jan Subar Joe Vitti. Two members came in after roll call: Josh Jordahl, Anne Ziliak. **Absent:** Neysa Frechette, Claudio Saavedra. **Pledge of Allegiance:** was recited. **Chair Comments:** Leon Marzillier noted the procedures for public comment and general participation in the Board Meeting.
- 2) **Approval of March 22, 2010 Board Meeting Minutes:** Minor corrections were made. **Motion to approve** carried unanimously.
- 3) **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:**
 - a) **Diana Shaw**, candidate (D) for the 38th state assembly district, said she is making the rounds of neighborhood councils to get familiar with their issues. She answered questions posed by various Board members.
 - b) **Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates**, Kelly Lord (Northridge East NC) and Edmund Novy (Sunland-Tujunga NC) spoke about the on-going budget battles at the City Council regarding neighborhood councils. Their opinion is that the \$45k annual budget for each NC will pass. It seems that DONE (Dept of Neighborhood Empowerment) will be rolled into another department. A partnership of non-profits will help administer the budget and spending process. Leon Marzillier, as President, was established as the point of contact with the NC Advocates. The state of rollover funds was still up in the air. It may even be that the city will look for volunteer labor from the NCs for some services, above what they do now.
- 4) **L.A. Bureau of Sanitation**, Arman Martirosian of the West Valley Sanitation District, spoke about sanitation and recycling issues. They receive a lot of complaints about theft of recyclables from blue containers. There were some questions about why that is considered theft, if the material was thrown out? The City considers that once the material is in the blue bin and at the curb, the material belongs to the city. Freelance recyclers are therefore stealing city property if they remove items. Often these are not occasional homeless people, but organizations that take whole truckloads. Sometimes homeowners cannot report the theft because legally the material no longer belongs to them. Martirosian said they are forming a task force to increase focus on the issue. Meanwhile, residents should note license plate numbers of recycling thieves and report that. There is concern about ID theft, and in any case it's a misdemeanor. In response to questions, it transpired that the City gets about \$25 per ton of recyclables. Scavengers get about \$1 per pound (translates to about \$2,000 per ton) because they take the more valuable items.

Bill Larsen from the City Attorney's office, added to public comment and spoke about **Group Homes**. One particularly egregious example within our borders is a home with 65 felons in one house. There are efforts to amend the code to allow the City Attorney's office to have more jurisdiction. Presently a lot of the rules are made at the state level. The problem is generally not the licensed homes but the unlicensed ones opened sometimes by unscrupulous people, who get a state reimbursement of about \$1k per month per resident. Homes with 6 or fewer do not require a license. The City Council took up this matter but deferred it because of problems with the actual language of the proposed ordinance. Larsen also spoke about **marijuana dispensaries**. The City has tightened the rules for medical marijuana dispensaries to restrict proximity to schools, restrict zoning, and impose other conditions. As a result the vast majority will have to close, and only approximately 140 will be operating next month and a further reduction to about 70 is eventually expected. Bill Larsen may be reached at William.larsen@lacity.org.
- 5) **Finance Officer's Report** (Pollok): We lost all chance of getting the original \$90k in rollover funds from last year. As previously discussed, the GHNNC Treasurer put in an appeal for about \$25k which included the annual office rent of about \$15k and the approximate \$5k of expenses the City erroneously paid from

this year's funds. There is a chance we might get that. There is a 2-stage process: First the amount had to be approved by DONE, this was done. Then the City Council has to actually approve the funds for all NCs in the City. The Mayor has recommended a \$45k budget for each NC, and \$1M in total rollover funds, which includes our \$25k. The matter will be decided in early May.

- 6) **Treasurer's Report** (Rosenberg): The balance of this year's budget, unallocated, is about \$1,315. Although we can technically spend that, in reality there is no funding mechanism. Petty cash and credit cards have been frozen, and the City is not accepting any more demand warrants after April 15th for this year. So there is presently no way to actually spend the money.
- 7) **Update on Veterans' Park**, Ray Pollok: The Grand Opening of this small park at the corner of Chatsworth and Zelzah is scheduled for May 31st. Many improvements were made, including a statue, a pergola, sitting areas, and brick walks. Donors can purchase custom-inscribed bricks which become a permanent part of the park. The smallest fee is \$135. Orders by April 30 will have the bricks installed by the May 31st ceremony. Details at ghnn.org or VFW.org.
- 8) **Citrus Sunday**: The GHNNC plans to participate this year as it has done in the past. **Motion:** (Executive Committee): *That the GHNNC spend up to \$ 100 for flyers and posters promoting Citrus Sunday.* There was some discussion about the efficacy of this as an Outreach event. Gold spoke against, Greenwald in support. Last year we spent about \$500. A booth will be set up and volunteers will man it. The program sends volunteers to pick fruit from participating homeowners; the fruit is donated to food banks. Vitti called for vote. **Carried** 18-0-1.
- 9) In keeping with last month's Board decisions, all expenditures until the end of the fiscal year are to be specifically approved by the whole Board. A **Motion** proposed by the Executive Committee to approve \$200 be spent on office supplies was discussed along with item #10;
- 10) **Motion** by the Executive Committee, *That \$400 be approved for meeting refreshments for the May and June Board meetings.* There were disagreements on the amount, as we have very little budget left. A call was made to close debate, which passed 14-4-0. The **Motions** (items 9 and 10) **carried** 14-4-0.
- 11) **Motion** by the Executive Committee, *to spend up to \$100 per month for copies at Postal Plus.* Discussion followed as to amount. Ziliak pointed out that the PLUM Committee expects a huge issue with the JETS project (Jewish Educational Trade School) which will require lots of copies. Gold offered an amendment *to spend up to \$300 on copies for the balance of the fiscal year (ends June 30th).* The amendment was accepted 18-0-1. A vote on the motion as amended carried unanimously.
- 12) **Motion** (Kroy) *That the GHNNC Board approve a new policy that all future Board votes should only allow "Yes" or "No" votes and not "Abstain" votes ; provided however, that recusals will still be allowed when conflict-of-interest exists.* Discussion made the point that an "abstain" vote is functionally equivalent to a "no" vote. It was pointed out that Robert's Rules of Order does have abstentions. Since no record is kept in the minutes of who the abstain votes were, there is no particular reason for an "abstain" to be cast for purposes of not identifying a Board member with a particular vote. Various members pointed out that sometimes they don't know enough about an issue and that they feel an "abstain" is appropriate. **Amendment** (Ziliak) to refer to Policy and Rules Committee. **Carried** 13-4-2.

13) **Committee Reports:**

- a) **PLUM** (Ziliak): The JETS (Jewish Educational Trade School) project was discussed again this month at PLUM. Progress was made in reaching agreement on some points. Applicants have been responsive, and the major issue has been the height and number of buildings in this 280-person boarding school. They have agreed to change from two new high buildings (one was 4-story) to three building with the highest at 3-story, and placing the higher buildings at the back of the property so that the height is further minimized from Rinaldi Street. A large wash separates the back from neighbors. PLUM would like to organize a neighborhood meeting to look at the revised drawings and discuss the project. Applicant suggested their location. Ziliak asked for feedback on this idea, as PLUM fears that this may imply GHNNC support of the project. What we're looking for instead is neighbor comment. It was suggested the meeting might be held next door if the nearby school or church agree, so that participants can walk the property and then come to the discussion. This is to be organized not as an open house but as a neighborhood meeting so that all participants can hear the others' comments.

Discussion about cell tower request by BMS Communications for T-Mobile. **Motion** *That the GHNNC oppose the siting of this Above Ground Facility monopole installation on the East side of Sesnon Blvd*

(17550 Sesnon), south of Jolette Ave. because it was moved not a booth further west and does not have flush vents as discussed with the applicant, T-Mobile and BMS Communications. **Amendment** (Rosenberg) to reword the motion, *Whereas the monopole has not been moved further west and does not have flush vents as discussed, be it resolved that the GHNNC opposes approval.* Amendment **Carried** 12-5-1. Vote on the Motion as amended, approved unanimously.

- b) **Outreach Committee** (DeVandry): GHNNC participation at the Spring Egg Hunt yielded 3 pages of new member sign-ups. At the booth were Crosby, Lewis, Vitti, and Hunter, with some help from Vaughn Frechette. Discussion of Citrus Sunday and our participation in it. Scheduled for June 1, 2010 at Fire Station 87 on Balboa Blvd south of Devonshire St. DeVandry is asking for volunteers to man the booth between 10 am and 3 pm.
- c) **Citywide Issues** (Gold): There was no quorum at the last meeting, therefore no Motions were brought forward. Gold pointed out that the GHNNC should give the City feedback on urgent city issues such as the LADWP rate increases; the way the LADWP executive director is selected; the way the City Council voted on the rate hikes; and other similar issues. Several members commented that they were unaware of the meeting. It was posted at the web site, but there was no e-mail notification. The next planned meeting will be on the second Tuesday of next month.
- d) **Youth Groups** (Holmen): The last meeting in conjunction with AYSO and the north valley Baseball groups exhausted all possibilities of finding an alternate site in Granada Hills when the ball fields are taken back by the DWP. Looks like the new shared location in Sylmar will have to be reluctantly accepted [see more complete explanations in previous Board minutes.] They spent another few hours with Mitch Englander of council district 12, but there is no other solution than Lakeside Park. Because there is no further action, and because of the election errors by the City Clerk that prevented anyone from voting for the Youth Group seat, Holmen said he would not be seeking reappointment when the new Board is seated. Many Board members objected, saying that there is still valuable liaison required with the youth groups. This issue was not resolved.
- e) **Public Safety** (Greenwald): Spoke about the cameras installed in many cities not just for traffic purposes but also for policing. For example, Glendale has installed many cameras at major intersections contained within pretty glass bubbles. In general people are not aware of their existence, though it's been made public. Suggested a similar use in our area. There was no resolution, because in any case we have no budget.

14) Board Member Comments: (Hopkins): stakeholders may participate in a program like Citrus Sunday all year long, because Food Forward volunteers are willing to pick fruit any time of the year. Comment that the watering restrictions of the past year have resulted in water use down to 1979 levels. Single-family use is down by about 30%, commercial by about 16%. (Gold): Attended a meeting at District 5 with many community groups and Councilman Smith and the head of the LA Building and Safety, where information was disseminated. (Manatt): The fence was taken down at the property at the end of Shoshone that was owned by Cooper and Cooper. This group had often ignored Building and Safety and Planning enforcement. Concern that this will become a trash dumping ground. PLUM will look into what could be done. (Hunter) As a PLUM member, attended a North Valley Planning Commission hearing. The 4-lot project for Ridgeway was approved by the Commission (we supported it). The Lopez Canyon appeal against approval of a truck driving school on the site of the closed landfill, which was supposed to be Open Space, was denied, so the school will get its conditional use permit.

15) Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm. Next meeting on May 24th (early because of the Memorial Day holiday the week after); at Van Gogh Elementary school.