

**Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council
Board Meeting
Monday, August 22, 2011, 6:30 pm
St. Euphrasia School Hall**

1) Call to Order at 7:02 pm by Kim Thompson, GHNNC President. **Roll Call: Present:** Carl Buettner, Sue DeVandry, Neysa Frechette, Rafael Garcia, Sid Gold, Edward Headington, Gary Holmen, Bill Hopkins, Wayde Hunter, Josh Jordahl, Rahim Kazi, Ralph Kroy, Agnes Lewis, Scott Manatt, Leon Marzillier, Lydia Plescia, Ray Pollok, Steve Steinberg, Jan Subar, Kim Thompson, Anne Ziliak. **Absent:** Bill Lillenberg. Quorum established with 21. **Pledge of Allegiance:** was recited.

Chair Comments: Kim Thompson welcomed stakeholders. She said the next Board meeting on September 26th will be held at the Rinaldi Adult School. She also said GHNNC plans to participate in the September Movie Night at the Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences to celebrate GH South's fifth anniversary as a Neighborhood Council. She reminded attendees that the next Sunshine Canyon Landfill Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting is Thursday, September 1 at 3 pm at the Knollwood Country Club. On September 24th, Saturday, there will be a Neighborhood Council Congress downtown; she urged all Board members to sign up. She reiterated that she would not follow Robert's Rules of Order for this meeting. She asked for a straw poll to see whether she should continue to negotiate for a move to another office in the same complex, which would give us 400 additional sq. ft. at the same price; but the issue is possible noise from the bar next door. Straw vote: Yes 19, No 2.

Ms. Thompson asked whether Board members would come to a Public Safety Forum to be held probably in January. The Outreach Committee wants to bring together speakers primarily from law enforcement, and have a 2-hr meeting dedicated to that. Eleven Board members indicated they would help. **Special Interest reports:** The reports from Ralph Kroy (Faith-based) and Rafael Garcia (District One) were deferred to next month.

2) Approval of July 25, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes: Ms. Thompson suggested that we strike a large portion of the minutes that covered the discussion over the process that got us a conference table, as too detailed. Mr. Gold moved to table the issue until next meeting. **Carried 10-8-2; tabled.**

3) Comments from CD 12, Senior Lead Officers, any government agencies: A number of Fire Department people were there, including Karen Richter, Battalion Chief Station 18; Rich Pierson, Captain, Station 18; David Zucker, paramedic; David Holcomb, firefighter, Station 18. There were questions from the Board on the process for requesting an inspection for brush clearance issues. The Captain clarified that if weeds are green then they are not a fire hazard; if they are dry, then stakeholders should alert the fire station.

4) Public Comments on non-agenda items: Jeanie Plumb, a stakeholder who lives in Chatsworth, alerted the Board to the Hidden Creek project in Brown's Canyon in Chatsworth that might set a bad precedent for equestrian areas. They are in the County, but they are trying to get annexed by the city, which allows denser development. The county would allow them to build only 30 units, but the city would allow 188. Residents would all exit on Mason, which would be disruptive to the whole area. The LADWP has stated that they do not have enough water to serve this community. In an equestrian zone, only 30 lots would be zoned equestrian. The first hearing is expected in September, which would not give anyone enough time to comment. Ms. Ziliak to write letter to ask for a postponement to allow enough time.

Ricardo Benitez, Sylmar NC, commented that they are trying to preserve equestrian trails in Sylmar and to have them all connect to the backbone Equestrian Trails system. He invited all Board members to come to their equestrian committee meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 at the Sylmar Recreational Center.

Eric Crippa, a stakeholder, commented that he is against the LADWP rate increases, which amounts to taxation without representation, because they send part of their profits to the City general fund. He said that the construction of Aliso Park has begun, but that they have already run over a natural spring, which may cause them to have to renegotiate the construction contract. **Formatted:** Indent: First line: 0.25"2

Eugene Hernandez, of the Green Party of the San Fernando Valley, said he is running for the seat in the 39th Assembly District. He is fighting for a “MediCal for all” and an end to nuclear power.

Richard Fisk, Old Granada Hills Resident Group said that their next meeting is Thursday September 1; their speaker will be the nutritionist for the new Sprouts market opening September 7th at the corner of Zelzah Ave. and Chatsworth St.

Jack Lindblad, architect, is also running for the 39th Assembly District. He sees plummeting jobs numbers in the state and worsening education. He pointed out that we should want to attract commercial developers to areas where there is already infrastructure, not break new ground. He said the new redistricting commission, because of the subjective criterion of “communities of interest,” has have “ripped the heart out of the valley,” cutting some communities in half. He pointed out that this was also true of Granada Hills, which is divided in two at Balboa.

5) Emergency Preparedness Item of the Month (Hopkins): This month’s item, free to all attendees, is a light stick. Mr. Hopkins also spoke about the CERT class (Community Emergency Response Team) sponsored by GHNNC starting October 19th. Signups at cert@ghnnc.org.

6) Special Speaker: Bureau of Sanitation, regarding planned rate increases. Speaking were Lisa Mawery, CFO of the Finance Management Division; and Sam Alain, of the Wastewater Engineering Services Division. There is a ten-year plan which they are presenting to residents. They handle 350 million gallons of wastewater a year; they recycle about 79 million gallons to cut dependence on imported water. By 2035 they hope to recycle more than 50,000 acre-feet of water a year, enough for about 100,000 families. They use CCTV to monitor aging sewers underground, which have a life span of about 80 years, but about a third of ours are much older than that. There are 6700 miles of sewers, one of the largest systems in the world. Sewage spills have decreased about 80% from the number 10 years ago. With the current budget, they can only replace them every 168 years. They run 4 city water reclamation plants; on the average, their equipment must be replaced every 20 years. Rates were kept flat for 14 years until 2004, when they began to rise. Adjusted for inflation, rates today are 4% less than 20 years ago. The 10-year plan is weighted to charge less in the early years and increase more steeply in the outer years. The anticipated increase would double the charge in about 10 years. The matter is now in the city’s Energy & Environment Committee, then it will go to City Council, then public hearings will be held (probably December); only then will they take action on what the rates may be. **Comments from the audience:** We can no longer afford centralized solutions; the city should require solutions like using composting toilets and increasing water absorption. They are trying to apply budgetary solutions to what is an outmoded model and bad infrastructure it seems that the Valley keeps paying more than other neighborhoods and getting less. **Answer:** Expenses are not tracked geographically; there is variation in both geography and time period. After the 1994 earthquake, a lot of Valley infrastructure was replaced and is now newer than in most areas of Los Angeles, thus requiring fewer repairs. **Question** (Gold): What would prevent further increases after the 10-year plan, such as the garbage collection plan? **Answer:** this was not an emergency request; it was made first in 2008 after a court case settlement agreement, but because of the severe recession, it was deferred. They feel pretty confident that this will be sufficient, barring new federal regulations. **Comment:** Everyone in the area uses more than the city average mentioned earlier. **Answer:** call 213-485-2374 and they will analyze your particular situation and whether a water sub-meter would make sense. (Hopkins): There is information on installing submeters at the back of the room.

Other audience comments and questions revealed that: the rate is going up proportionately for multi-family dwellings; industrial users pay a surcharge; new developments go through a sewer-capacity review, and the charge for “sewer facility charges” for new sewers is going up. They are also “pretty big on graywater” and in favor of more environmentally friendly solutions, but state mandates get in the way. There are no exceptions or discounts for charities or non-profits, again because of state regulation. The city sometimes sends “surplus” employees over to the DWP, but not their pensions; the speaker was not familiar with the cost. An audience member cited Chicago as an example of ground-water recharging, through permeable pavers. Funds from sewer fees are not sent to the city’s general fund, other than interdepartmental transfers for direct costs. They are compliant with Proposition 218, which says that funds may not be moved to another general service. An audience 3

member talked of his small company, which pays \$36,000 a year additional, to analyze their water discharge, which has always tested cleaner than drinking water. He said the cost of “useless” inspections was outrageous. The speaker said that more information can be found at www.lasewers.org.

7) Committee Reports:

a) Executive Committee: Motion: *To approve two EP backpacks to be raffled at the October 1st NVEPT Disaster Preparedness Fair.* There are no additional costs; we already have the bags and the contents.

Carried unanimously. **Motion:** *To change the October Board meeting from October 31 to **October 24 due to Halloween.*** **Carried** 17-0-3.

b) Citywide Issues (Gold): *That GHNNC oppose any water or power rate increase until the Office of Public Accountability and Independent Rate Payer Advocate, in consultation with NCs, is in place and has had sufficient time to study the proposal and has reported the findings to the residents of Los Angeles and City Council regarding the appropriateness of any rate increase.* Discussion that other NCs have already supported similar motions. **Carried** 18-0-2.

Motion: *That GHNNC oppose the proposed cement covering for Silver Lake reservoir and support the use of the less costly plastic covering.* The cost over 25 years is \$135 Million for the cement covering and 25 Million for the plastic covering (including replacements and maintenance). The plastic covering is used in most of the other reservoirs in the city, including the plans for the reservoirs in Granada Hills. **Carried** 16-1-3.

c) Outreach Committee (Headington): He passed around two volunteer sign-up sheets, one for the September 10th event that combines GHSNC's 5th anniversary and a Movie Night. Setup is from 5:15 to 6:00 pm, and the booth needs to be manned from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

He also reminded the Board of the upcoming Neighborhood Council Congress on September 24th, downtown. Carpools will form at the office.

Motion: *That GHNNC participate and spend up to \$200 for water for GHSNC's 5th anniversary event.* **Carried** 19-0-1.

d) PLUM Committee (Ziliak): Motion: *That GHNNC oppose California Assembly Bill 1178 because it takes away from our local government the authority to regulate landfills.* A friendly amendment was offered by Mr. Hunter, to add “and the importation of trash from outside a defined watershed.” The amendment was accepted. There was a comment from a Board member (Garcia), that the bill applies only to composting. Mr. Hunter responded that he is not aware of anything like that. **Motion carried** 18-1-1.

Motion: *That GHNNC ask the County of Los Angeles to issue a citation to the operators of Sunshine Canyon Landfill for accepting out-of-county trash, which is a violation of their Conditional Use permit.* Comment from Mr. Garcia that the Notice of Violation was rescinded by the County of Los Angeles Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) because they overstepped their authority. Mr. Hunter replied that CalRecycle said it's a land use issue, but the information they have is that County trash was accepted and that is a violation of their Conditional Use permit. The facts are not in question. The vote on the motion proceeded: **approved** 19-0-1.

Ms. Ziliak summarized information of the beginning of construction at Aliso Canyon Park, which is now in the grading phase.

e) Finance Officer's Report (Pollok): a report was distributed of the current status of the budget, taking into account expenses so far.

f) Public Safety Committee (Pollok): nothing to report at this time.

g) Treasurer's Report: a report of the expenses for the month was distributed.

h) Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Goals and Priorities: Lydia Plescia reported that the committee (Hopkins, Lewis, Plescia, Subar, and Thompson ex-officio) met several times. Before making its recommendations, the committee solicited ideas from the Board for questions for the upcoming Board survey. Two primary goals have been identified: to get Board members more interested, engaged, and active; and to get more stakeholders interested and involved in GHNNC activities.

8) Board member comments on non-agenda items: (Gold): the Valley News reported that a few spoke against the money issue on the proposed sports stadium. (Frechette): suggested that speakers in the future be scheduled at separate meetings, as this one ran long. (Lewis) spoke of the upcoming Blood Drive on October 1st, sponsored by the GH Rotary Club. (Ziliak) saw kids on skateboards trying to break

into parked cars. She called the police non-emergency number, but the response was slow. Other Board members suggested calling 911 in the future. (Hunter): there is a series of hearings on new proposed rules for retaining walls; the first one is August 23; he is attending and invited other interested parties. (Steinberg): the Rinaldi Adult school is offering classes on Chronic Disease self-management (6 weeks); an exercise program on walking with ease; and memory training (4 weeks). (Garcia) reported that he is resigning from the Board after the next meeting, as his job duties have changed – he is the District One representative from Sunshine Canyon Landfill.

Executives from the landfill were introduced: David Cieply, General Manager; and Jim Teter from their corporate office in Phoenix. Mr. Teeter summarized recent activities at the landfill, especially regarding the spike in complaints from the neighbors of strong odors. They're working on a gas collection system upgrade and replacing 71 valves, at a cost of \$4.5 million. This will take several months. They are inspecting the flares that combust the gas, to make sure they're working correctly; their schedule calls for completion at the end of October. They are working on a new vegetation plan; their old one is not working adequately, and the plants are not surviving and growing as they should. They're planting a "forest" of fast-growing poplar trees which require a lot of water, but the landfill produces excess water which they are required to use up. The majority of odor complaints comes from three streets, and the poplars will provide screening. They are no longer accepting green waste, which they previously used as a green cover at their working face –the decomposing green waste produced too much odor. For the same reason they are no longer accepting wallboard from demolition. Many of the complaints, they think, are caused by the drilling they have been doing to add gas collection wells and upgrade their system. Although this produces complaints now, in the longer term this should collect more of the gas and therefore lead to fewer complaints. Comment from Board Member (Holmen): he took a tour of the landfill a few years ago, facilitated by Mr. Garcia; he highly recommended it. The landfill executives reiterated an open invitation for anyone interested.

9) Adjourned at 9:56 pm.