

Northridge West Neighborhood Council  
Joint ECM and Whole Board Meeting  
7:15pm Thursday, October 29, 2020

**Minutes**

- I. Meeting call to order
  - A. 7:17pm
  - B. Present: Rana Sharif, Joel Lowell, Kelly Sooter, Gail Lapaz, Kathleen Edwards, Bill Fox, Payman Bahman, Peter Lasky, Yi Ding, Abby Bailes, Glen Wilson
  - C. Attendees: Mihran, Randy Sanchez, Assad Y. Alnajjar, Corinne Ho, Madeline Miller, Mikkie Loi, Steve, David Balen
- II. Comments by stakeholders on non-agenda items
- III. Approval of September ECM minutes
  - A. Ding would make the minor change Kelly suggested about Topiary.
  - B. Kelly motioned, Joel seconded. Rana, Ding, Kelly, and Joel voted yes and Abby abstained. Motion passed to approve the minutes.
- IV. Presidential comments
  - a. The board received a comment from a stakeholder regarding the issue with USPS. He asked the board to send an update to USPS to properly list our city and Rana will forward the information to Payman to follow up on this item.
  - b. Rana shared that the board could allow all attendees and panelists to use video but she would ask Mikkie to provide examples so that she could set up for future meetings.

Non-Business Items (non-voting):

- V. Discussion and update regarding City Clerk's review of Northridge Beautification Foundation's NPGs (Kelly and Rana)
  - A. Kelly shared that she followed up with people more higher up in the City which said that they were in process of getting better documentation on receipts. She would continue following up. She also clarified that the goal was to have work that was asked for completed and it would probably be impossible to get the money back.
- VI. Discussion and update regarding LA City Plan (Payman)

- A. Rana encouraged people interested in this topic to attend the PLUZ meeting which would also be shared more details of at the next GBM
- B. Kelly shared that the issue came up at the VISION meeting and specific issue for us is: The City Plan was from about 1998 that recognized the boundaries of Northridge now stop at East Tampa and therefore would cut Northridge West in half, making us needing to attend both Northridge and Chatsworth meetings to discuss businesses. The VISION meeting suggested the three Northridge NCs come together to reach consensus and put forward a plan to bring to Councilman Lee's Office.
- C. Payman asked for information to follow up and Kelly said she would send it to Payman

VII. Discussion and update regarding August GBM amendments:

- A. "Discussion and motion to amend the corrected August GBM minutes."
  - 1. Rana spoke with Gibson to make sure we had the correct information and confirmed that we would be revisiting this at the next GBM.
  - 2. Abby asked if we could amend the minutes after its approval and Rana confirmed.

VIII. Discussion and update from Government Affairs Committee regarding the forward progress on previously tabled items from the October GBM.

- A. Discussion and motion for NWNC to request that the City Council create a Council File to explore alternates to armed crisis for the City of Los Angeles' 911 system. For example: option 1 police; option 2 LAFD/EMS; and option 3 Community Assistance Liaison Team.
  - 1. CF 20-0769 passed City Council 10/14
  - 2. Committee decided to table and take no action at this time in order to wait and see what is proposed. The city has contracted for proposals on this matter. We can follow and update in the future.
- B. Discussion and motion for NWNC to request that the City Council create a Council File to offer transparency for the reallocated \$150M that was

defunded from the Los Angeles Police Department. Per Abby's earlier email to the board and what was discussed at the ECM:

1. CF 20-0692 original City Action passed that resulted in the \$150 million de funding of LAPD and call for transparency was discussed.
2. Abby shared that she carefully reviewed the Council File and CISs attached to it. There was little focus on transparency in most CISs. The Committee agreed on the transparency part but the majority of the members opposed to the defund the policy citing reasons of the lack of plan.
  - a. The stakeholders and Board members who attended were largely opposed to the defunding, and want the City to reconsider this action going forward, concerns for lack of planning, negative impact on crime in our neighborhood, loss of patrol cars in NWNC
  - b. Stakeholders do want transparency for use of funds.
  - c. Motion passed 3:1 to present a CIS to the GBM on CF 20-0692 from NWNC– “While we support transparency in the use of funds that were cut from the LAPD, we oppose the City’s action to defund the police. Our stakeholders are concerned about the lack of advanced planning to help the LAPD make adjustments for reduced funding, recent reports from our LAPD Division about increase calls and increased crime in our neighborhood, and the potential lack of LAPD patrols to respond to these increases.”
3. Abby shared earlier in an email to the board that GA Committee heard at least 3 items related to public safety, including the #8Can’tWait power point, suggested by Mikkie Loi that went over the LAPD policies in place since 1982 to reduce police violence here in LA.
4. Ding suggested the board focus on the transparency part and remove the loaded term “defund the policy”.
5. Abby commented it as an interesting idea and agreed that we could take out the politicized term “defund” and focus on the quality of life.

6. Assad echoed what Abby suggested in terms of opposing to “defund” the police which literally meant cutting the budget to zero. He would like to see clarification of the budget plan.
7. Kelly shared that the original intent was not to be partisan since it was such a divisive issue so it was really about transparency. The issue was incredibly charged especially if we looked at Nextdoor voices. She went through third of the 80 hundred comments under John Lee’s post, polarizing . There was no discussion about the funding. She suggested the board to be focusing.
8. Mihran clarified that “defund” does not mean “abolish”.
9. Rana pointed out there seemed to a conflating issue of defund and the transparency. She did not think redistribution of funds was the original intent. Abby explained that the reason the GA Committee brought up “defund” in addition to the transparency issue was because it was in the Council File and it would be hard not to conflate the two issues. She was not sure if the GA should do support only if amended, or opposed, or something else. Rana asked why we were compelled to use this Council File. Abby said that it would be strange not to. Rana asked the category of the file. Abby shared the actual passed Council File. Mihran pointed that any CIS should mention things about law enforcement and budget due to the content of the Council File.
10. Peter supported the term “reallocation” as less defamatory. He also shared that reallocation might result in more police in some areas and asked if the board was under the assumption that every area would be treated the same when undergoing redistributing the police resources. He suggested that our stakeholders would want to know. Abby shared that Mikkie did not share that information but there was a 69% increase of calls received at the station.
11. Kathleen suggested that we should address what was requested of the GA Committee instead of the entire document. Abby said she looked at the Council File and it was why “defund” was brought up. Rana shared the concern again that the discussion of the identification of the funds was removed from the original sentiment behind it which was only about transparency. Abby acknowledged that the GA Committee did not land

in what GBM wanted it to go but this was what was discussed. Rana said we would discuss it at the GBM and Abby asked if there was a way to avoid duplicating discussions.

IX. Discussion and update from the Outreach Committee regarding the Street Maintenance flyer printing and distribution plan (Kelly, Peter)

- A. Kelly shared the tri-fold brochure she designed based on what Glen had from Chatsworth and Peter had from previous flyers. Printing is \$175-200 for 1000 and hand distribution is \$275. She recommended that the GBM consider sending up to \$500 to create, fold, and distribute the flyers to 1000 households.

X. Discussion and update from the Elections Committee regarding 2021 election location (Glen)

- A. Glen shared that the Committee is considering two suggestions: Dunkin' Donuts and Northridge Park 12pm-8pm. The Committee still needs to figure out the logistics, but the current time slot is April 21, 2021. Abby asked who were up for election. At Large #7-11 are up for election (Peter Lasky, Joel Lowel, Bill Fox, Payman Bahman, Josue Toscano, Kathleen Edwards). Rana commented that the next steps would be for the Committee to collaborate with Outreach and Glen agreed. He also suggested a greater emphasis should be put on social media.
- B. Joel pointed out the incorrect date for Payman on the website and Ding advocated for Northridge Park as the final location for election. Joel also asked why his term ended at 2021 while Ding at 2023 and Glen commented that it just so happened the vacant position for him ended at 2021.

Business Items (voting):

XI. Discussion and possible recommendation regarding the Tampa Topiary (15-20 minutes).

- A. Randy Sanchez shared the concern that the Topiary did not look like the permit submitted to the City. The pictures Don Larson submitted were actually from the Internet. When he learned how Don Larson manipulated funds in other projects, he realized further that what Don did was inconsistent with what the Beautification Foundation should do and he should not say things that were not done. Peter commented that this was not a proper place to discuss the issue and would like to move it to the GBM. Randy said he would be willing to discuss at the GBM. Peter asked how to present physical evidence and the time he would have in a Zoom

meeting. Rana instructed Peter to upload the information to the website as supplemental materials and she was happy to discuss it further. Bill asked if we had any recommendation now, and Kelly said that multiple landscapers confirmed that the volume of the horse would not accommodate the plants so the conclusion at the last Beautification Committee was improving or removing it, which would require the City approval. Randy asked if we could have the permit available for people's review. Kelly confirmed that the information [was already up on the website under October GBM and Project Status menu.](#)

XII. Discussion and possible recommendation regarding the pursuit of censure.

- A. Rana explained that the possible motion to pursue censure was suggested at the last GBM. She followed up with the City and proceeded as suggested in terms of the technicality of the censure. Rana shared her commitment to accountability and transparency, which drove her decision to move forward with this item.
- B. Kelly clarified she brought it up not to humiliate anyone, but to only recognize the existence of and address a serious issue (the action is taken to prevent similar behaviors to happen in the future): manipulation of minutes.
- C. Abby agreed that people should be respectful, but personally did not see any evidence that anyone purposefully manipulated the minutes. She suggested that the manipulation from one's perspective could be giving feedback from another's perspective. Procedure-wise, she asked who those three board members were to pursue censure. Rana explained that we would see the names of the three members when we discussed the actual censure. It would not reflect the NWNC but only the three individuals.
- D. Kelly shared the emails she referred to that were problematic. Ding asked if we were going to discuss the reasoning document. Rana said the reasoning document was cleared by the City. Kelly said her issue was that when Kathleen suggested changes to the minutes, the communication was not transparent to the whole board.
- E. Asaad commented that his comment captured in the original minutes "zero tolerance" about name calling was actually from another meeting he was at.

He also said that censure was sometimes something we had to do and we were elected to be transparent.

- F. Kelly reiterated her judgment that minutes were manipulated since she suggested corrections in a previous minutes, but lessons were not learned to accurately represent stakeholders (to put affiliations to them) and facts in meetings. Abby agreed that board members should cc the entire board when suggesting corrections to the minutes and asked if Kelly was sure of the edits were from the board member or errors from the original minutes Frances made. Kelly said yes there were affiliations that were not from the minutes Frances sent the first time. Kelly then showed the email Kathleen responded to her. Kathleen said she never made the corrections Kelly thought she did.
- G. Rana suggested the board consistent with the accountability the board said it would commit ourselves to, like what was discussed in the past about censure. Rana advocated for an inclusive space that encourages civic, engaged discussion and she does not want things like this issue to erode what the board was trying to do.
- H. Peter asked for more clarification for what happened in August and Rana explained again that the revote of the August minutes was because Frances did not send the board the revised minutes for initial vote. Kelly corrected that the board did vote on the revised minutes but she was under the impression that she voted for the minutes similar to the original one, which was caused by the lack of transparency when corrections were suggested to Frances. Kathleen clarified that her comment was only referring to her own suggested corrections and she did not know she was supposed to send them to the entire board.
- I. Abby cautioned the board about the damage of the censure, and she suggested for a legitimate apology and adding a policy of sharing corrections to minutes with the whole board, showing mercy on both sides. Kelly said she was fine with that and she wanted it to be handled professionally and wanted the board to have integrity.

- J. Payman added that sometimes emails/texts could aggravate the problem caused by hurtful languages, which might not seem too serious when in person. Asaad said he was concerned with having his statement from another meeting in the minutes of NWNC and asked for more investigation of the issue. Kelly said that she was not trying to insinuate that someone purposefully added the statement and all she wanted was to make sure the minutes reflect what happened accurately. Peter seconded Abby's suggestion and agreed to add a standing rule about sending suggestions to minutes.
- K. Kathleen said again her willingness to share her communication with the board. She felt she was accused of something she did not do. Kelly said that she did not attribute the wrong information to Kathleen but she got such a response from Kathleen.
- L. Mihran shared his concern that Asaad said early. He also asked Gibson to open up an investigation about this issue. Rana clarified again that we did not know the source of the information. She also reiterated the importance of being mindful and respectful with one another. Kelly said that she preferred not to move to censure and appreciated the board discussing to improve our procedure. Joel seconded.
- M. The Executive Committee voted, and motion passed not to pursue the censure.

#### Announcements/GBM Preparation

- XIII. Discussion and motion to approve the October 8, 2020 GBM Minutes
- XIV. Discussion and motion to approve the October 2020 Monthly Expense Report (pending posting)
- XV. Committee Chair check-ins and possible recommendations for the September General Board Meeting
  - A. No more updates from Outreach.
  - B. Ding will share more information from Mary Melvin.
  - C. Joel shared that all invoices are received and paid.

- XVI. Additional recommendations for the September General Board Meeting
- XVII. Adjournment: 8:54