

**VAN NUYS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
GENERAL BOARD MEETING
May 8, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

George Thomas, President
Marlin Medrano, Vice-President
Veronica Marin, Treasurer
Jeanette Hopp, Secretary
Jason Ackerman, Parliamentarian
Michael Browning
John Camera
Brian Edelman
Glenn Epstein
Steve Friedmann
John Hendry
Jeffrey Lynn
Kathleen Padden
Kathy Schreiner
Maria Skelton

ABSENT MEMBERS:

Josef Lazarovitz
Jerry Martin
Penny Meyer

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Thomas at 7:02p.m. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The pledge followed. **ROLL CALL:** Our secretary called the roll and a quorum was achieved.

3) As the distinguished speaker has not arrived, we skipped ahead on the agenda to review the status of the pending NPG's needing review and approval. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mr. Hopp stated we should not have discussed the NPG's at the Executive Committee because Mr. Thomas did not recuse himself. Regarding the CPAB and Vanguard work with at-risk youth advised by Alan Scher. Ms. Medrano said we could table the item. Mr. Ackerman moved that the item be tabled until the end of the meeting, 2nd by Mr. Lynn. The motion passed unanimously. **NOTE:** We were not voting whether to approve or disapprove the item only to advance it to the General Board for review and a vote.

f) This item pertaining to Vanguard was tabled, as the NPG was not available for review and a vote.

g) Mr. Howard Benjamin came to speak to us about the Mid-Valley Police Council for which he is the current president. Ms. Medrano took the reigns, as Mr. Thomas and Mr. Browning recused themselves and left the room, as did Ms. Skelton. Mr. Benjamin advised the group raised \$ 200,000. They spent \$60,000 refurbishing the gym and women's locker room. It will be \$ 150,000 by the end of the year. The station is 65 years old. The city does not provide any funds for refurbishing the stations. The money will go for the beautification of the station. The mural will be painted on the front of the building directly under the name of the city. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mr. Hopp said Mr. Thomas created a problem

by not recusing himself during the Executive Committee. Ms. Medrano explained all he did was vote to advance the item to this committee for discussion and a vote. He has properly recused himself here because this is where it is to be discussed and voted upon.

3) c Mr. Hopp says we are not properly advised about the 21 alternate seats to be added to the board. Mr. Marez feels we are the worst board ever and we do not do anything. Rachel said she believes we are doing a good job. She wants to see how will this be handled. Ms. Schreiner said the persons who did not win the election will be the first approved as alternates. Mr. Browning thinks we should hold off on voting on this until after the election. Mr. Thomas said that DONE and BONC approved the language. Mr. Ackerman said if there are several not elected, the president changes the design at the beginning of the meeting to at-large and people are appointed to the seats. Several people said the alternates should be the people not elected first.

2) OFFICERS' REPORTS, ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORTS: Kelly Gonez, School Board Member came to speak to us. He represents most of the schools in our neighborhood. She represents 155 schools in the district. The principal from Valerio Street Elementry came to speak to us, as well. Yvonne is the principal. She serves 921 students, of which 93% are disadvantaged. The principal from Sylvan Park came to speak to us, as well. They are a school-wide Title I school, which means the entire school is filled with disadvantaged youth who receive free breakfast and lunch. They were pitching a "yes" vote on Measure EE. There was no opportunity for the opposite side of the coin to speak. I tried and was shutdown by Ms. Medrano, who had no idea what I wished to say. As someone who volunteered for the district for 25 years, I am familiar with their methods of doing business and how much money is spent on things other than educating our children. More than 85% is spent on salaries, pensions and benefits leaving precious little to educate the children.

n) The VNNC to discuss both sides of the Green New Deal set forth by the mayor. The VNNC invited Stuart Waldman from VICA, who came to speak to us about this item from a business aspect. He said we are talking about goals that cannot be reached. The DWP set-up a committee to come up with a plan to go 100% renewable energy by 2055. Now they want everything to happen right away without talking to business leaders, residents, neighborhood councils, etc. They want to take away your gas-powered appliances. If you remodeled, they will not let you put in gas-powered appliances. They want you to be all-electric, which is much more expensive. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Donna said it is bad enough there is an expensive Green New Deal at the Federal level. Now they want a Green New Deal in Los Angeles. She doesn't believe they have truly thought this through. Things that can be done are not being done and things that cannot be done are being touted. They are looking at things that are unrealistic, rather than at things they can do now. Miriam said the Green New deal is primitive. Most people cannot afford an all-electric household. Ethan who is a health coordinator for a group in Los Angeles believes our opposition is due to fear. He said there is a new report on climate change. His generation is worried about the cost they will be facing from no changes. His beliefs are based in fear. Stuart said more clean, new businesses have been created by clean changes. Los Angeles has the worst ozone level.

Andrew Soloman is our new city attorney. He believes in prevention, rather than trying to handle problems and then working to resolve them.

2) CITY OFFICIALS' REPORTS: Ms. Gonzalez from Congressman Cardenas' office came to update us:

They just had their art competition and she was pleased to announce the 1st place winner came from Van Nuys High School. Her art will be hanging in the capitol. There will be an Immigration Workshop in Van Nuys on May 18th. Every 3rd Monday they have a mobile office here in Van Nuys.

Morgan came to update us: She advised they have a motion for a pilot program to work with different navigation apps. Saturday, May 10th is fire service day and they have a workshop from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. Put in your address and it will lead you to your local fire station. May 17th is Metro's second annual beautification conference.

Ms. Perez came to update us, as well: She wanted to advise there is a government center and community clean-up on May 18th. They appreciate any volunteers. It is at 9:00 am. It is from Victory south as far as possible. City Planning is moving to Suite Z. Three of the five suites in the old city hall building are now taken.

Alice Roth from David Ryu's office: He is having a coffee clutch from 8:30 to 10:00 am tomorrow morning at Mike's Café. We have a big problem with homeless and issues with trash and debris. They have their beautification team available to get the bulky items. If you see e-scooters anywhere on the sidewalk, please call 311. LAPD takes a survey. She left the dates when the councilmember will be in chambers. Ms. Padden asked about the carts left on the sidewalk by the homeless. We cannot empty them. We can call the owner of the cart; i.e., Target, Ralphy's, etc. There is an 800 -shopping cart number she will provide to Mr. Thomas. He can e-mail Empowerla.org so that it can be sent to everyone. The 150th Anniversary of LAPD is May 25th in Van Nuys at the Community Police station. There will be an open house.

Veronica said she called 311 and it takes a long time for anyone to answer. She wants to know if the app will be updated.

2) COMMITTEE REPORTS: Outreach had a meeting. Maria said we always tout the kids with good grades, but there are some students who weren't doing well that brought their grades from fails or D's to a C or C-. This is quite an accomplishment for some kids.

Park and Rec: Mr. Browning said we are one of the cities that has the least number of parks due to the lack of land. Nury is putting together land that is city-owned that could be considered for parklets or park space. There is a survey about smoking being banned in multi-unit housing. Take the survey.

Planning: Planning met and they had a number of people come out. They will have someone from Planning and Land Use coming to the Plum Committee. They have had some glitches on linking the information, but they believe they have fixed the problem.

Heritage: Mr. Hendry spoke about the Heritage Committee. He finally set-up something. Members are Mr. Browning, Ms. Schreiner and Mr. Hendry. Mr. Thomas suggested they meet with Mr. Gomes to assist them in setting-up the committee.

BUDGET AND FINANCE: We met before this meeting. Ms. Marin asked Mr. Gomes about publishing the agenda in Spanish. We discussed a number of items that were to be forwarded to this meeting.

Mr. Browning wanted to meet me at Office Depot to get supplies for his committee. It was determined they would wait until after the election.

President's Report: Mr. Thomas spoke about outstanding reimbursements and was advised downtown does not have the receipts. Re-submit for payment. He advised there are two floors that are completely empty in the old city hall building. He will e-mail Mr. Brill, the two council members and get us an office. The committee chairs would have a place to meet. Meeting would be much easier. We would have a place to store our equipment and not have to pay for that storage. He will use Terrence's contacts and wisdom to help us get the office in city hall. We are still #1 in submission of CIS's. There is every opportunity to be as involved as you want to be involved. Thank you all for helping us to be #1.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM #2: Mr. Hopp made comments about a board member again. It is his opinion that whomever the board member is, he does not state, is not transparent.

Treasurer's Report was tabled, and there was a glitch regarding the dashboard. Ms. Hopp provided everything, but she was unable to upload the MER.

3) b The VNNC to make all public transportation free in Van Nuys. Additionally, the VNNC to recommend the tax revenue collected from Cannabis sales be used to fund all free public transportation in Van Nuys. Amended language would include all public transportation in Los Angeles. Public Comment on this item: Donna believes a lot of people who do not work or live in Van Nuys would try to ride public transportation for free. She is opposed. Miriam is also opposed. Gary is not against free public transportation and feels we should be able to have said transportation for free. The subway costs \$ 65.00 to ride, but a person pays \$ 1.00 to ride. He agrees all public transportation should be free.

Mr. Thomas agreed to amend the language to read free to ride everywhere in Los Angeles. Amended language was 2nd by Mr. Ackerman and carried. Mr. Richard Marx agrees free transportation would help the homeless, children getting to school, etc. Ms. Schreiner does not agree it should be free and that the cannabis tax funds should not be hijacked for free transportation and some should go to early childhood development.

Question: How do you respond? We would be commenting on the CIS on the subject. The members of the city council would see what we did and they will hopefully take the ball and run with that ball. Ms. Medrano said this will fall under the social impact for the community.

d) Reimbursements: Mentioned earlier. Receipts must be resubmitted. All information to be given to Terrence Gomes also for follow-up. (George's out-of-pocket for December and February and Ms. Hopp's for December). She received some of the funds already.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ethan believes the change to the clean energy should be by 2030-2045. They want us to add another scenario that would lead to clean energy by 2030. Darryl lives in downtown Los Angeles. She has never been without power. Every unit in her building has solar panels. She said they are doing this in small increments. She said tell your council member you want clean energy. Tell the DWP you want renewable clean energy.

k) The VNNC to work with all three council offices to convert the pergola in front of LAPD Van Nuys station into a playground and public pocket part. Additionally, the playground to be built and ready for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the exact same time as the re-opening of the Van Nuys library. (May, 2020). This item was forwarded to Mr. Brown's committee. They were working with the councilmember's office. The area is to be fenced so that it can be locked at night. Yvonne asked the Department of Building and Safety to check the soil samples. It was moved by Mr. Thomas, 2nd by Ms. Marin and carried with a vote of 15 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

Mr. Friedmann said they ask anyone who comes to submit something to come and present their project. They then supply language to the planning department in Los Angeles, the structural engineering office, etc. We do not understand what is the problem that Mr. Hopp keeps complaining about. The language will provide what he is seeking. Richard can attend the Plum Committee if he has questions. Mr. Thomas will ask Terrence to write a memo asking what it is he wants that he thinks we do not provide. The memo will be to every committee chair. Mr. Ackerman stated months ago there were no supporting documents. Now there are supporting documents, so there should be no problem.

o) The VNNC to establish four new Standing Committees to start meeting after the election and the board has been sworn-in and seated. The four new Standing Committees shall be the Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency Plan Committee, the Homelessness Committee, the Community Cultural Engagement and Empowerment Committee and the Van Nuys Business Improvement District Committee. The chairpersons of these committees shall be appointed and/or elected at the June General Board meeting of the VNNC. The item was moved by Mr. Thomas, 2nd by Mr. Edelman and voted down. Appoint a Bylaws Chair. Mr. Browning was elected Bylaws Chair with a vote of 14 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention.

p) The VNNC to request a full report on vacant city office space at the government center. The VNNC to contact GSD for follow-up. The VNNC to file a CIS requesting office space and referencing CIS #16-0298. Moved by Mr. Thomas, 2nd by Ms. Skelton and carried with a vote of 15 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

q) The VNNC to support the Northridge Beautification Foundation Clean Streets initiative in Van Nuys NTE \$ 5,000 in order to purchase cleaning equipment and supplies and to provide lunch for the volunteers. The item was moved by Mr. Thomas, 2nd by Mr. Ackerman and carried with a vote of 14 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions (1 ineligible).

r) Reference appointing Mr. Richard Hopp as an Amicus Deputy for a three-month trial to the Executive Committee was tabled and referred to the Bylaws Committee.

t) Discussion and possible action on the update of expanding the boundaries of the VNNC. The boundaries being the Sepulveda Dam Crest and the center of the 405 freeway. The language was approved unanimously with a motion made by Mr. Thomas, 2nd by Mr. Hendry.

v) Why can't we have free parking on Saturdays? Ask the city. Tabled and referred to Mr. Hendry's committee.

f) The VNNC to vote and fund an NPG (Neighborhood Purposes Grant) for LAPD Vanguard's NTE \$ 5,000. The police department conducted a contest to develop a motto for the Police Academy in 1955. The motto was to address the ideals to which the department subscribed. The motto, "To protect and to Serve" was selected. The purpose of the grant is to help "at risk" youth. The NPG was sent to our in-box, but Ms. Marin's desktop computer was not compatible with the software used by the sender of the NPG. She finally accessed it, but it had not been scanned and sent properly so the information was blank. She requested it again. We extended the time for the NPG to be re-sent and it would be approved if received in time. Motion to approve under those circumstances made by Mr. Thomas, 2nd by Mr. Ackerman and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A probation officer came to speak to us. He stated the government center is filthy. The parking structure is littered with trash and feces from the homeless. Beautification is needed on Sylmar between Calvert and Delano. The officer's name is Maalon Stepteau.

Miriam spoke about video conferencing. Donna spoke about the same issue.

A resident of Lake Balboa spoke about illegal fireworks. Their council is getting signs made to remind residents that fireworks are illegal.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Hopp, Secretary