

**STNC Education Meeting**  
Mt. Gleason Middle School  
10965 Mt. Gleason Avenue - Sunland  
Wednesday, June 13, 2007 - 6:00 PM

STNC Education Rep. Lydia Grant called the meeting to order: 6:22 p.m.

Introduction of School Officials:

- L.A.USD District 2 Superintendent Jim Morris
- Mt. Gleason Middle School Principal Debra Acosta

Open Discussion:

**Positive Programs:** Lydia reviewed some positive programs that are now taking place at the local schools: One which teaches proper table manners to children and another which features a class project depicting a rainforest.

**Loss of Small Learning Communities:** Lydia spoke about the importance of having Small Learning Communities for elementary school kid. She said that this is going to change as LAUSD has announced to parents that all sixth graders are going to be moved into a single building. She said that parents were distraught that they were not consulted about this and asked for their input. This is one of the changes now being put in place affecting local school children.

Parents then joined the discussion with their comments:

Deborah Ray said parents were concerned about not being involved or informed about this change and recommended school officials provide an open format. She asked how parents could be included in the decisions being made about how the local schools are being run.

Another parent spoke about the community's perception of violence at the Sunland/Tujunga schools. Superintendent Morris agreed that this is the current perception of the Sunland/Tujunga schools. He believes that by providing accurate information to parents, it will help improve the perception, which is not based on fact.

A Mt. Gleason teacher spoke about the issue of discipline. She said it disturbs her to see teachers losing control and the rules not being enforced. She believes there is a safety issue with the six graders transitioning into Middle School.

Another parent spoke about how the kids who are bussed-into the community are perceived as being troublemakers. She said that the truth is that it is the local kids, not the bussed kids, who are causing problems. Teacher, Mr. Schoen, added that they have some wonderful kids being bussed into the community.

Lydia said that this issue of trouble being caused by kids who are bussed in has more to do with recent incidents that have taken place at VHHS, rather than the Middle School.

**Teacher Recognition:** Another issue Lydia brought up was the seeming lack of interest on the school department's end, in supporting teachers with recognition awards. Lydia has been trying to get input on deserving teachers so she can present them with certificates of recognition at the STNC, honoring them before their community. She said she hasn't received input from the schools and that leaves the perception that they are not that interested in doing this type of thing for the teachers. She asked what they could do to improve the situation.

**Sixth Graders:** Speaking on behalf of the new program for sixth graders, Mt. Gleason Principal Debra Acosta said her expertise is in Middle School, as both an educator and an administrator. She said that research shows that if 6<sup>th</sup> graders are more "nested" with smaller groups, they have a better time transitioning. She admitted that her school hasn't done the best job they could in transitioning the kids to high school from middle school. However, she has been working with the National Middle School Association on the 13<sup>th</sup> characteristics of successful middle school for adolescents from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She said that the current trend is that most middle schools have their 6<sup>th</sup> graders together in a little nest where school staff can better watch over them and it facilitates the teaching process, as well.

Superintendent Morris agreed that the small setting is in the best interest of the kids and that it is an achievement factor that can be measured. As space opens up, he said, this is something that they will be looking at.

**Parents Request:** Overall, the parents requested a communication channel to talk to their school administrators.

Mr. Schoen mentioned the updating Summer Academy, a three-day orientation for students August 1 – 3. The Mt. Gleason Summer School Program provides training and preparation for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders to get a tour of the campus, practice using their lockers, and make new friends before school starts.

A parent asked about whether it is healthy for sixth graders to be segregated from the rest of the students. She wanted to know if it was an administrative decision. Principal Costa said that they talked to the classified staff, councils and teachers and that's how they arrived at that decision.

Regarding the issue of room changes. Principal Acosta noted that there are always room changes; teachers are always changing rooms. This room change was based on Middle School philosophy. She said the kids would still have opportunities to mix with other age kids because they need those experiences to learn how to get along with others. The principal suggested that parents who want to give input become involved on the Advisory Council or the Title One Council or the School Site Council. She takes input from them before making decisions. In addition to serving on a council, parents or anyone in the community can attend the council meetings.

STNC Board Member Mark Seigel asked whether there were ways to counsel the kids who are causing problems. The teachers mentioned that they currently have a Peer Counseling program, where students counsel other students. There is also the new Heart Program.

Finally, Lydia mentioned an upcoming fundraiser for Verdugo Hills HS and asked the school officials for help in getting the flyers out to the elementary school kids. Superintendent Morris said he would help Lydia with that if she sends him a copy of the flyer.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:03 p.m.

Minutes taken by Pat Kramer, Apple One

Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council  
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING Minutes  
Mt. Gleason Middle School  
10965 Mt. Gleason Avenue - Sunland  
Wednesday, June 13, 2007

83 in attendance: 68 stakeholders, 15 board members

**Call to Order - Cindy Cleghorn, Chairperson: 7:08 p.m.**

STNC Board Present Cindy Cleghorn opened the meeting by acknowledging all the veterans of military service present in honor of Flag Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. Photos were taken by the local press.

1. **Introduction of STNC Board:** Richard Stewart, Saro Minassian, John Blue, Allen Rodriguez, Victor Castro, David Cain, Mark Seigel, Lydia Grant, Nina Royal, Shirley Kellstrom (parliamentarian), Dan McManus, Bill Manning, Olina Lowe, John VanEs, Cindy Cleghorn, Linda Brand and Ricky Grubb. Quorum established. Absent: Janet Linsalato (working), Tim Borquez, Chrissa Villaneuva (school finals).
2. **Safety Report & Committee Recommendation:** Allen Rodriguez introduced the LAPD officers associated with the Voluntary Surveillance Team (VST), which allows local residents to help the police on volunteer surveillance details. With the VST, who have provided over 700 hours of work to date, LAPD Foothill Division has made 65 arrests. The officers returned this month to request STNC's support in contributing to the purchase of various equipment items for VST details. A total of five neighborhood councils are being asked to contribute to this funding: Arleta, Pacoima, Sun Valley, FTDNC and STNC. (More info is available at: [www.Foothillvst.org](http://www.Foothillvst.org)). In addition, they currently need more volunteers for day and nighttime details. **Safety Committee recommendation "That STNC allocate \$7,000 to the Volunteer Surveillance Team." The motion passed unanimously.**
3. **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT),** Nina Royal announced that a new CERT training would start up the third week of August. Twenty-five or more people are needed to hold a CERT class Contact Nina for more info. She also noted that they almost lost their budget (due to City politics) but an active letter writing campaign saved the funds.
4. **Introduction of local City officials:** Dale Thrush and Angela Motta from Council District 2, and Amelia Herrera-Robles from DONE.
5. **The minutes of the last meeting were approved as presented.**

## 6. Public Comment:

- Tomi Lyn Bowling, realtor, announced that there were 38 real estate sales in this area in May, up from 28 last year (and 56 in May 2005), and 162 to date this year. Price per sq. ft. is at \$443.00.
- Claire Knowlton, McGroarty Arts Center, announced the opening of their 4<sup>th</sup> annual ceramics exhibition and benefit show Saturday, June 16 and continuing until July 3rd. The show includes professional artists and benefits the McGroarty's Ceramics Guild.
- Lloyd Hitt, Save the Verdugo Hills Golf Course. Mr. Hitt is working with several entities to try to keep the golf course in Tujunga from being turned into a large, condo complex that would heavily impact traffic at Lowell and Tujunga Canyon Blvd. The groups are trying to raise money to buy the golf course. A camp will be held to raise money for this: The Verdugo Hills Summer Golf Camp for Juniors offers golf instruction to kids. He also had a petition for stakeholders to sign.
- Fran and Ray, Century 21, Sunland office thanked STNC for contributing to a successful Historic Homes Tour recently. Fran reported that Century 21 awarded scholarships to Verdugo Hills High School's graduating class recently. She announced the Chamber of Commerce Mixer, Wednesday, June 20 at Century 21 in Sunland. The Honorary Mayoral candidates will be there from 6 – 8 p.m.
- Mike Carpenter, All Nation's Church, announced their upcoming Family/Community Concert in Lakeview Terrace.
- Veronica Wallace, a parent of a VHHS student, is starting a campaign to get the VHHS pool open year. Currently, the pool is only open June 23 for ten weeks.
- Elaine Brown, stakeholder, reported on the Commerce Owners Builders Restoration Association, which is getting its 501C3 status. They plan to hold a fundraiser in the near future to paint a mural of Old Commerce.
- Lydia Grant announced the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks festival at VHHS. It's a collaboration of STNC and the VHHS Boosters. Admission is \$5.00. Gates open at 4 p.m.

### **DONE Update:** Amelia Herrera-Robles:

- Announced the City Attorney Round Table to be held on "Effective Land Use Advocacy" at ST Municipal Bldg. 7747 Foothill Bldg. June 20, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
- Hearing are coming up for former and current board members to share their experienced with the Neighborhood Council Review Commission on proposals for improving the system.
- The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners also is holding meetings to take suggestions on what education would be helpful for board members.

### **Committee Reports:**

David Cain: Reported on the DWP rate increase proposal and the need for upgrades to improve maintenance and water quality.

Victor Castro: VHHS Boosters Club President, spoke about the work going on to produce the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks spectacular in Tujunga. Victor is also the new Head Football Coach at VHHS.

Olina Lowe: Gave an overview on the Bureau of Sanitation meeting she attended for their six year plan to improve waste disposal and make L.A. a “green” city. She said L.A.’s goal is to become a ‘zero waste’ city and along those lines, there are plans to reduce the use of landfills and develop new technologies for renewal fuels and resource recovery.

Lydia Grant, Education Rep: Reported on her efforts to improve communication between the community and the LA School District. Mt. Gleason Middle School is changing in many ways including increasing classes from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Also, the sixth graders are going to be pulled out and put into a separate facility. She asked for community support for her efforts.

Ricky Grubb: Environmental Rep: Asked the community to conserve water and plant native plants that don’t use much water. Also, conserve energy during the heat of the day.

David Cain added a note on safety saying that gang activity is increasing in his District by Commerce. He asked stakeholders to get involved by calling the police when they see graffiti being created or crimes of any sort to keep this problem at bay.

Nina Royal, Safety Committee: Announced a \$1,000 reward to anyone who can identify and prosecute someone who is creating graffiti on a building. Update on LAPD Officer Darren Costi – he is still in serious condition and is being treated at Kaiser, Sunset. A fundraiser is planned to auction gifts at the upcoming July 4th fireworks display. The next Safety meeting is June 21, (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday), 6 p.m., at North Valley City Hall. The public is invited to attend.

Dan McManus, Outreach: Their next committee meeting is Saturday, June 16, at 1 p.m. at Joselitos, Tujunga. They are looking to select members for this year’s committee and want help getting the word out about the fireworks display on July 4<sup>th</sup>. They would like to invite the community to become sponsors of this event.

Victor added that the Sunland/Tujunga fireworks is now an ‘approved’ City recognized Special event. Burbank and Hansen Dam have cancelled their fireworks displays.

### **Presentations:**

a. A group called “Vital Research, LLC” circulated a survey on HIV awareness to the board and stakeholders asking for information regarding attitudes, public opinion on HIV, and whether STNC should be actively involved in educating the public about HIV awareness.

b. Executive Committee recommendation: “To appoint a committee to organize educational material and presentation on, “How to Preserve Our Protected

Trees," (to be completed by September 2007 STNC meeting) was moved to the DAC's upcoming agenda.

c. Design Advisory Committee (Victor M. Castro, IV, DAC Chairman introduced

1) Dale Thrush from CD2 who gave the following update:

The Home Depot appeal hearing before the Planning Commission this month was cancelled due to overcrowding. Dale has asked that the Planning Commission hold the rescheduled July 19<sup>th</sup> hearing in Sunland at Mt. Gleason Middle School.

Angeles National Golf Club Update: There have been numerous delays by the Golf Course in Sunland in responding to issues regarding monies they agreed to transfer to the Santa Monica Conservancy, trail improvements for equestrians and environmental mitigation measures. Angeles National has not complied with their responsibilities. The City Council has approved a measure that will result in the transfer of the property in question in about six weeks to the Santa Monica Conservancy (this is a parcel attached to the current Golf Course but not currently being used by them). Angeles National has agreed to deposit an initial \$100,000, of the total monies owed, into a special account for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy next week for maintenance of trails.

2) Joe Barrett, No2HomeDepot: Joe described how the Home Depot Appeal hearing before the North Valley Area Planning Commission was shut down on June 7 when Home Depot filled the room with non-residents of Sunland – Tujunga. These people were bussed to the hearing and upon further investigation, were issued some type of document (possibly for payment) when they got off the buses. The Van Nuys hearing generated positive media coverage for the No2Home Depot campaign and STNC on TV and radio, some of which were shown at the meeting. No2Home Depot has made a formal request to have the hearing moved to Mt. Gleason Middle School, which has twice the capacity of the Marvin Braude Building.

3) DAC Recommendations: **The STNC unanimously approved written Chair and DAC report recommendations as presented including expenses to date and committee member recommendations for 2007-08 year.**

- a) DAC recommends the STNC Board approve the following DAC Committee members who have all expressed a willingness to serve on the DAC: Vic Castro, Debby Beck, Tomi Lyn Bowling, Lloyd Hitt, Vic Aghakhanian, Saro Minnassian, Bill Manning, Cindy Cleghorn, and Mark Seigel. Two positions remain open as well as four alternate positions.
- b) That the STNC encumber up to \$1,300 for bus transportation to July 19 North Valley Area Planning Commission hearing for STNC stakeholders.
- c) That the STNC approve DAC expenses as follows:
  - Meeting refreshments: \$100
  - Parking fees to attend public hearings \$29.00
  - Copying oversized drawing \$21.20

The next DAC meeting will be held Monday, June 18 at 7 p.m. at North Valley City Hall. The big issue is that a new FAR/CIO for Sunland-Tujunga is drafted to continue the existing FAR/ICO's intent.

d. Bylaws (Skiles/Seigel) Committee forwarded two recommendations to the Board to adopt two Standing Rules which, after discussion, **the board adopted unanimously.**

**Recommendation 1:**

Any Standing Committee chairman, with the support of a majority of that committee, may establish an ad hoc sub committee for a specific purpose within the scope of responsibilities of that committee. The membership of this ad hoc sub committee shall be appointed by the chairman of the standing committee and ratified by a majority of that standing committee. Recommendations made by any such ad hoc sub committee shall in all cases be submitted to the parent committee for action.

**Recommendation 2:**

Any committee member who has three consecutive unexcused absences forfeits his seat on that committee, at the discretion of the chairman of that committee. The committee chair shall be responsible to notify the committee member of his removal. Removal will not require the ratification of the Board, however any replacement on the committee must be ratified by the Board.

The Board may remove any committee member from a standing or ad hoc committee when that person has violated the STNC Bylaws, the STNC's code of responsibilities (adopted by the board on Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> 2006), or when that person has repeatedly engaged in dilatory tactics.

This rule may not be used to remove Board members from committees. Board members may be removed from committees by a majority vote of a quorum of the STNC Board.

e. Executive Committee: **Treasurer (Brand/McManus) moved, "That a stakeholder's request to the Department of Recreation and Parks be made to make Verdugo Hills High School's swimming pool a year-round facility so that the swim team and the community can benefit from the use of the pool, rather than sending students to the Van Nuys HS pool."** Vic Castro requested an amendment, "That this issue be moved to the DAC Committee as a land use issue." Linda then amended her motion to say, **"That STNC write a letter be sent to Mayor Villaraigosa, Parks and Rec, Council member Wendy Greuel, and the School Board that the VHHS pool be kept open all year. And that subsequently, the DAC follow up on the letter."** The motion to accept the amendment was approved. Then the amended motion was unanimously approved.



Stakeholder Veronica Wallace, Lydia Grant, Bill Manning, Saro Minassian, and Victor Castro expressed interest in this issue and willingness to attend any meetings. Nina Royal will draft the letter.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- a. **STNC unanimously approved the appointment of the STNC 2007-2008 Budget Committee: Bill Skiles, Mark Seigel, Ed Rock and David Cain.**
- b. **STNC unanimously approved the Budget Committee's recommendation for the STNC fiscal year 2007-08 budget of \$70,000,** (which includes the current yearly allocation of \$50,000 plus a \$20,000 rollover of funds for operations, outreach and community improvement.

The Budget Committee had previously approved a budget for \$81,000, however a problem surfaced with DONE's access to Bank of America records regarding approximately \$11,000 in expenses. Linda explained this had to do with their debit card being shut down after it was lost and that DONE had not completed reconciliation for the additional expenses. Linda reported that DONE using a new credit card now, as opposed to a debit card, and this requires that all expenses for petty cash go through STNC's Ed Rock as well as herself, Linda Brand.

### **Board Announcements:**

- Saro introduced his guest, Sevada Hamelians, who hopes to become active with the STNC.
- John Blue introduced his guest, Michael Weston, who also is looking forward to becoming an active volunteer.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:50 p.m.

**Next STNC Meeting - Wednesday, July 11, 2007**

*Minutes prepared by Pat Kramer, Apple One.*