

Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council (STNC)
Mt. Gleason Middle School, 10965 Mt. Gleason Avenue, Sunland
Nov. 14, 2007 MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

72 in attendance, 15 board members and 57 stakeholders.

1. Meeting Called to Order by Cindy Cleghorn, STNC President.

Board Member Introductions: Richard Stewart, Saro Minassian, Jenny Rodriguez, Allen Rodriguez, Cindy Cleghorn, Mark Seigel, Bill Manning, Olina Lowe, David Cain, Dan McMannus, Lydia Grant, Nina Royal and John Blue. Quorum established.

CD2 Planning Deputy Dale Thrush's Report: Home Depot officially filed a lawsuit against the city on November 9th. The lawsuit claims that the city did not do something it was supposed to do; it also asks for damages. In the suit, HD alleges that Councilmember Wendy Greuel is biased toward STNC, the Sunland-Tujunga community, and therefore, should not have been sitting on the City Council case when the matter came to appeal. Dale said the City Attorney's office is backing up STNC, the Sunland-Tujunga community, and Councilmember Greuel.

In response to questions about former City Attorney Peter Gutierrez, who has joined the staff of the law firm representing Home Depot, Dale noted that Peter was in charge of overseeing the City's land use division so he played a principle role in the City's case. But because he is bound by the California Code of Conduct from advocating any position, for or against any client, he can't have anything to do with this case for a year. Dale believes Jerry Berge will oversee the case now assisted by City Attorney Tayo Popoola. There will be an aggressive defense of the City.

Abby Diamond of the Sunland-Tujunga Alliance expressed the ST Alliance's 100% support for Councilmember Greuel.

On another note, a request was made to Dale to help obtain video monitoring cameras in Little Landers Park at Bolton Hall Museum as a result of a crime incident in which several elderly men playing cards were robbed at gunpoint. There was also one man injured. (See Safety Committee report).

2. Mt. Gleason Middle School report by Mt. Gleason principal about students' trip to Florida will take place at a future meeting.

3. The Hidden Danger of Medical Marijuana To Our Children: A Mother's Story.

Stakeholder Belinda Woodruff described a series of incidents that took place over the last year involving her 22-year old son, Michael, who obtained a phony prescription for medical marijuana, eventually leading to a psychotic breakdown after a prolonged usage of the drug. Belinda said that her son's case is not unusual; all his friends also had phony prescriptions, which allow them to refill their prescription as much as they want without any regulations on the businesses that sell the drugs. She alerted STNC that there are at least two of these businesses operating in the community and that online prescriptions are also easily available. She and her husband, Ron, said they almost lost

their son to the mental health system after he was hospitalized. They said he was being controlled by being given addictive drugs that made him worse. With the help of an organization called, Citizens Commission on Human Rights, they were able to get him back and it has been a slow, gradual journey back to health. Belinda believes this issue requires legislation. David Cain suggested STNC draft a letter suggesting they put in place checks and balances to keep these dispensaries from operating without regulation.

4. Approval of October 2007 Minutes: John Blue requested a revision. The minutes were unanimously approved, as corrected.

5. Public Comment on non-agenda items:

- John Blue, a board member and Vietnam Vet, reported on the danger of a pesticide called Methyl Iodide, which is a neurotoxin capable of altering the DNA in all those who ingest it. John pointed out how it has been greatly destructive to pollinating bees that have been exposed to it in commercial growing fields. He requested a motion by STNC urging Governor Schwarzenegger and the CA Dept. of Pesticide Regulation to resist using this dangerous pesticide, Methyl Iodide and that the CA Strawberry Commission and other commercial venues to also oppose using this dangerous neurotoxin.
- Tim Borquez, STNC Arts and Culture chairman, invited the board/stakeholders to a holiday musical for the whole family: "Scenes from a Christmas Season," as presented by the Foothill Performing Arts Council on Thursday, Dec. 13 – Sunday, Dec. 16 at the New Hope Community Church, 10438 Oro Vista Ave. Sunland. Admission is \$5.00 for adults/\$3.00 for seniors and students. Free for kids under 16.
- Nina Royal, Safety Chair, participated in the recent Veterans Day activities in the Valley.
- Mark Seigel announced the conclusion of the latest Ham Radio classes.
- Sam Graham, Assoc. Pastor of Chapel in the Hills invited the public to a Thanksgiving Service and a community dinner.
- Lydia Grant, a parent volunteer at the Sunland schools, mentioned ongoing complaints by children who say bathrooms are being locked during school and are not being maintained.*
- Allen Rodriguez, ST-SERVS distributed the new "Helping Handbook" created for residents who may need to deal with emergencies. The information was put together as a source book for individuals and businesses that experienced losses from the recent CA wildfires.

6. Treasurer's Report: No report this month.

7. DAC Report by Chairman Vic Castro:

- (DAC) moved that STNC vote in favor of the DAC recommendations including:
- Approval of: 10024 Samoa, a by-right project of 16 for sale units using the Small Lot Subdivision ordinance. Requested recommendations to alter developer's plans were agreed to, as requested by DAC, which include additional guest parking and a play area in the back,

- Regarding a subdivision request at: 10525 Las Lunitas, that has continued on an appeal to the NVAPC, the DAC recommends the following be sent:

"That a letter be sent to Mayor Villaraigosa, the secretary of the NVAPC, the CD2 reps, and the entire North Valley Area Planning Commission describing the bias of the NVAPC to this issue and demanding that the NVAPC be relieved of duty and their positions reassigned.

And that a completely unbiased body, appointed by the City Council and may in fact be members of the City Council, be organized in order to fully investigate all complaints that have been or will be received concerning the NVAPC, the purpose being to establish rules and guidelines for this Body in the future to make them fully transparent, accountable, and to ensure that there is no chance of ex-parte applications being approved to the exclusion of the will of that community.

That this application be heard by the City Planning Commission in the meantime in order to assure the community that they are being treated fairly and to restore their confidence in their Planning Department."

(Blue) requested a friendly amendment to par. #2, sentence #2 changing 'members of the City Council' to 'Neighborhood Councils.' The motion did not carry: 3-9-1.

(Blue/Royal) then made a friendly amendment to say:

"Members of the City and/or Neighborhood Councils." The motion carried: 7-5-1.

The board then voted on the entire motion, as amended, as well as approval of the other DAC recommendations.

The motion carried: 11-2-0.

8. Outreach Report by Chairman Dan McManus: Dan thanked all who attended the STNC's Pancake Breakfast at Coffee Stop on Foothill Blvd. **(McManus/Cain) moved.**

"That STNC form a committee to work with the Verdugo Hills High School Boosters for the 2008 July 4th activities and that this committee then be disbanded after the festivities take place." The motion carried unanimously.

Members appointed to the new Ad Hoc Committee include: Dan – as chair, Bill Manning, Tim Borquez, Jenny Rodriguez, Allen Rodriguez, David Cain, Wally Wharton, and Emad Aboul-Hosn also volunteered for this committee.

9. Board member Reports:

- Bill Manning said that he had met with LAPD Senior Lead Officer Larry Martinez and that the crime rate in Sunland is the second to lowest for the City of L.A. for crime. However, home burglaries and auto thefts are still problems in this area.
- Olina Lowe attended the disaster preparedness meeting at the Mobile Home Park on Sherman Grove. As a result of her training, she recommended everyone go home and pack a plastic bag with their most important documents; papers that they would not want to lose in an emergency. Olina also said the STNC funded coffee urn will be presented to the Sunland Senior Center before Thanksgiving. It has been engraved showing it came from the STNC.
- David Cain asked stakeholders to help in putting together a community clean up of District 3.

- Mark Seigel commented on how well the Pancake Breakfast went. He also acknowledged S-T Alliance's Abby Diamond for being nominated Business and Professional Woman of the Year by Sunland-Tujunga's Business & Professional Women (BPW).
- Lydia Grant, Education Rep. spoke about issues she said were not being addressed by the local schools. She recently attended a LAUSD Health and Safety Committee meeting where she spoke with school officials about area concerns including non-compliance on school safety plans, non-working toilets at Mt. Gleason Middle School, and a recent problem with lead paint, found in an out building, which has since been resolved.
- Tim Borquez, Arts and Culture Chair, encouraged stakeholders to get involved for the planning of the next July 4th event stating that it takes a lot of work to make it successful.
- Saro Minassian, Business Rep. thanked CD2 and STNC for resolving a problem with water running at Valmont and Tujunga Canyon Blvd. that had been going on for many months.
- John Blue, Media Rep. referred to the motion he suggested on banning the use of Methyl Iodide in California's agricultural zones.
- Richard Stewart, Interfaith Rep., announced an open event, the Spirit of Johnny Carpenter ceremony at All Nations Church.
- Allen Rodriguez, ST-SERVS, suggested stakeholders get their disaster plans ready saying you can never be 'too prepared.'

10. STNC Chair: Report – Planning Pilot Program/Oversight Meeting: Cindy reported that she recently participated in the Planning Pilot Program/Oversight meeting. Neighborhood Council leaders throughout the city have been meeting with the City's Planning Department staff to form this Oversight Committee Group. Workshops will be starting after the first of the year to educate the public about the planning process.

11. Committee Reports:

Mark Seigel, Bylaws chair, talked about the discussion at the Oct. 22 extra board meeting regarding restructure of the STNC board to provide better service to the community.

Nina Royal, Safety Committee, announced that there is a new police captain. She also mentioned that there would be a new first aid and safety class and a CERT class in the beginning of next year. The requirement to hold a CERT class is that 25 people enroll. She stated that there is an immediate need to install the Q-Star Technology that was approved last year (in the amount of \$5,000) for the purchase of a video camera. This is due to the robbery of several elderly men who were held up while playing cards at Little Landers Park. Nina proposed that money raised from the city's Trash Tax be put toward Councilmember Greuel's program for Q-Star. This will be placed on next month's agenda for action.

(Royal/Seigel) moved, "That STNC send a letter to CD2 opposing the City Council from trying to take the money allocated by the Trash Tax." (Letter attached to agenda) The motion carried unanimously.

David Cain, DWP/MOU, presented a letter to be sent to Council members Smith and Greuel stating, "We wholeheartedly support your motion in CF 07-3512 that an independent Citizens Oversight Committee be formed to be sure that revenues resulting from the proposed rate increase will be used exclusively for long term infrastructure and not diverted to the City's general fund."

David reported that of the fifty-nine (59) NCs who signed on to the Memorandum of Understanding with DWP, all 59 opposed the rate hikes, which DWP recently approved for themselves. He pointed out that \$200 million is transferred annually by the DWP into the City's general fund. Despite this infusion of money, DWP wants to increase consumers' rates saying they need this money to rebuild the infrastructure but will not guarantee that the money raised by rate hikes will go toward that purpose. David suggested that stakeholders register their disapproval of process, speaking as citizens, separate from the MOU and as a NC as a whole. He said this would possibly add more weight to the opposition against the rate hikes when the City Council voted on it.

12: New Business

- a. Special Trash Tax implemented by the City for the hiring of 1,000 new police officers: Postponed
- b. Approval of administrative expense for wireless mike: **(Grant/Manning) moved that STNC approve no more than \$250.00 for wireless microphones. The motion carried: 13-1-0.**
- c. STNC recommends approval of the Neighborhood Council Review Commission final report and comments: **(J. Rodriguez/McManus) moved to support the NCRC report." The motion carried unanimously.**

13. Final Board Comments:

- Cindy suggested tentatively scheduling an April 5th election date in conjunction with the NCs of Sun Valley and Foothill Trails. Between now and Dec. 12, 2007, a draft copy of the STNC Elections Procedures will be prepared for review. She said it would be great to work with FTDNC and SVANC on election outreach.
- Lydia Grant pointed out a problem with students congregating after school in the Vons parking lot and on the sidewalks while waiting for the buses to come. She met with supermarket management and has brought this to the attention of LAUSD Health and Safety committee.
- Cindy reported that there are still vacancies on the STNC board for Youth Rep., District 2, and District 3.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Pat Kramer, Apple One.