

OPNC Notes 6-2-14

Regular Session Board Meeting took place beginning at 7PM at Queen Anne Park Community Room

Board Member Jocelyn _____ is resigning as a representative of the Eastern portion of OP and wishes to be installed in the education seat instead. Jerry Pass would like to assume Jocelyn's position as a west representative on the board.

Jocelyn spoke about her experience as a local resident and why she would like to take the education seat. She is the PTA president at Wilshire Crest Elementary and is an alumna of Queen Anne Elementary and Los Angeles High School. She currently has children at Wilshire Crest Elementary. Pam Whittenbury nominated her and made a motion to install her in the Education Seat. Ke seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve Jocelyn _____ installment in the Education Seat of the OPNC.

Jerry Pass spoke to the board about his commitment to his neighborhood. He is a homeowner and a local resident involved in the Film & T.V. Industry. Daphne _____ motioned to approve his installment as a board member, Ke seconded the motion. The Vote to install Jerry Pass as a western representative in the OPNC Board was unanimous.

Ray Virtus from the Southern California Gas Company addressed the board explaining a new program of automated meter devices that will be retrofitted onto existing meters and installed citywide. An Advanced Meter brochure was distributed to the attendees. He brought a sample meter with him to show the board and stakeholders present. In 30-60 days residents of the OPN will be receiving a letter from the Gas Company announcing that the upgrades will be taking place. The new meter device will read the meters automatically, sending a signal to a communications link mounted on neighborhood street lights, greatly diminishing the need for meter readers. The installation of the unit will take about 15 minutes. The individual units are expected to merge with the greater network by the end of the year, so expect meter readings to continue until that time.

The new meter will be able to integrate with people's smart phones so that they can monitor usage data. The new automated fixtures will not be able to shut off people's gas flow. That is done by either a gas company service representative, at an individual residence or by a centrally located earthquake shut-off valve governing a larger area. The devices have two 25-year batteries and communicate directly with the gas company on or about the time the battery expires. Customers will not be responsible for communicating battery function to the Gas Company.

No third party vendors will be contracted to install the automated meter retrofit. Only Gas Company employees in uniform with Gas Company trucks will be authorized to install the device at people's residences. If anyone that does not meet

this description approaches a resident to install the device, that resident should not admit them onto the property and should immediately call the police.

Negotiations with the affected union have caused a retraining effort to be put in place. Meter readers will have an opportunity to be retrained for higher paying skilled positions within the gas company if they choose to remain.

Candidate Loznick came before the board to promote her candidacy for one of the elected judge positions in tomorrow's election. She has a great deal of experience as a commissioner in the children's court system here in our area. She is a "local girl" and lives in the area. According to Ms. Loznick, commissioners have responsibilities that are nearly identical to judges.

Police Officer Cho from the Northeast area of the Olympic division spoke to the board. His area runs along the north side of Country Club Park Dr., from Crenshaw to Arlington. The main issues he wished to discuss with us were regarding ongoing burglaries of homes, of cars and of personal property left inside of cars. Violent crimes in the area have been and remain very, very low. Recently an eight unit apartment type residence was burglarized while being tented for termites, even though security was present.

Stolen Cars used to end up supplying parts for chop shops but are now used primarily for joy rides, or actual transportation needs and then abandoned.

Officer Cho urged the residents of OP to use alarm systems and surveillance cameras to thwart these perpetrators. Apparently You-Tube has proved to be a very effective instructional tool for teaching thieves how to steal cars and defy locks, keys and other crime prevention methods. He urged us not to leave valuables visible in our vehicles and to keep them locked at all times.

T.C. Kim from the city attorney's office came to speak with us about Ms. Armistad, another candidate in tomorrow's election. He told us about her compelling life story and her qualifications. From battered single mother, to the top of her class at UCLA Law School, Ms. Armistad has apparently made use of her own personal experience to reach out to others in need. She has initiated alternative programs such as the HALO program to help homeless and veterans get off the streets and stay out of jail. She trains judges in sensitive issues such as dealing with mentally ill defendants, etc.

Ke suggested that the campaigners engage the board earlier, as many have already voted by mail.

Approval of Last week's minutes was tabled until the notes can be corrected and the speakers, voters, "motioners" and "seconders" can be correctly identified. The notes will then be reviewed for approval when they are completed.

Pamela Whittenbury the Treasurer gave her report.

The month of April was reviewed, the bank statement discussed. Daphne _____ motioned to approve it and Baty _____ seconded the motion. The vote to approve the treasurer's report was 11 yes and 2 abstentions.

The month of May was reviewed. Public Storage was explained, the "jumper units" were explained as were the food items. Sky Kelly motioned to approve the report and Mark _____ seconded the motion. The vote approving the treasurer's report was 11 yes and 2 abstentions.

11 board members have completed the requisite training in order to vote for the funding items. 2 board members have yet to complete the ethics and funding training required to vote on funding issues.

There were no more questions for the treasurer.

Board members were asked to all introduce themselves and did. John announced that the board members were now all officially seated on the board.

Thomas Soong (from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment aka DONE) passed out information packets to the board members. The board members recited an oath with Thomas Soong leading the recitation. All board members participated.

Mr. Soong explained the "Executive Committee Kit" consisting of time cards to limit the stakeholder comments to a reasonable time period. It also included a condensed version of the "Parliamentary Procedures."

He emphasized the importance of the Brown Act and how it needs to guide our conduct as a board. The public has a right to know what we, the board, do. A Hard copy of all the procedures is in a large loose leaf 3 ring binder that will be at all OPNC board sessions. There are speaker cards that the stakeholders use to initiate their right to speak about issues both on and off the agenda.

Barry Stowe, who has been our DONE representative, is currently on leave. We were reminded that only 5 DONE representatives are available to assist 95 neighborhood councils.

Mr. Soong called out attention to the Neighborhood Council Development Handbook pages in the information packet. There were references to the City Charter and how the NCs got started in 1999 when the City Charter was revised. Kenneth Hahn wanted to give the constituents a greater voice in their own governance, responding to political fall back from the Harbor and Valley areas that felt neglected. The NCs were created to give people a voice.

Purpose Section. 900 was reiterated.

We will be getting \$37,000 for the next fiscal year. Our primary objective is to help make our city government more responsive by getting people more involved. Organizing a town hall or contributing a neighborhood purpose grant to a public school to acquire more library books were examples used. Neighborhood watches and promoting civic involvement were also used as examples.

The By-Laws were called to our attention, with special notice given to what kinds of board member communications were sanctioned and what kinds violated the tenets of the Brown Act requirements. We have 19 board members. 10 board members need to be present to form a quorum where agenda items can be discussed and voted upon. 50% plus one of a quorum are necessary to approve a motion.

There was a discussion of absences. What is an excused absence? Section 6 .A.1 was referenced.

The grievance process is for stakeholders to hold against board members. It is not intended to be used as an instrument between board members.

Laura _____ wanted to go on record reminding the board of our shared neighborhood resources that are held in combination with our neighbor to the South "MINC". The entire Mid City Crossing development from Lowes to La Brea Blvd, between Pico and Venice, is a shared resource in the OPNC and MINC districts. Apparently it is in our official charter. Shared spaces are O.K. but not shared jurisdictions. These shared areas are called "shared resources."

The definition of a stakeholder was reviewed. It has been changed to those who "live, work or own property in the district." Its purpose is to establish a convincing basis for community interest in the location. The question of whether this extended to worshippers in district churches or students at local arts classes pointed out how vague the term is. An attempt was made to distinguish between someone who merely engages in commerce in a community from people who have a more significant stake in the community. It was pointed out that people who pay for classes in the area are also engaging in a form of commerce.

Mr. Soong discussed the Brown Act requirements. The Agenda for regularly scheduled board meetings must be posted in a 24 hour accessible location 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The board will have to determine a posting location and let DONE know where that is. Posting must also be done electronically so that it is available on the internet. The electronic version must be sent to DONE so they can post it on the Early Verification System. If the NC misses 3 postings the entire board will need to be subjected to a retraining process. We were instructed to E-Mail the notification posting to DONE as a verification.

Ke asked questions about the OPNC website and whether we could have a WordPress type page that is associated with the other L.A. NCs. John Jake informed us that a website is currently in the works by an outside company. And should be

ready by the end of June. There will be a bulletin board for posting on it exclusively for board members. The session agendas will be posted there as well. It was noted that a special session agenda requires only 24 hour advance posting. The first Monday of every month is our regular scheduled session.

The question was posed “How many board members can be on joint committee?” Pamela Whittenbury remarked that it would need to be less than a Quorum of a Quorum, which in our case is 6 board members. 6 Board members are all that are required to approve a motion in a board vote, hence 6 members cannot form a single committee. These laws are in place to avoid the possibility of a “cabal” of overly influential board members from wresting control of the NC board. Therefore, 5 board members are the maximum number that can be on any NC committee.

Stakeholders are allowed on committees. There are two types of committees, Standing (ongoing) and Ad Hoc (temporary-having a finite end date). If only board members are on the committee, the agenda does not have to be posted. Shareholders can become standing committee chairs (with the exception of Finance and Budget related committees). Ad Hoc committees need the chair to be a board member and must adhere to the rules of the Brown Act. Agendas must be posted.

Board members can not discuss agenda items when socializing. Stakeholders can not talk about an agenda item if there are 6 or more board members present. The concept of Serial Communication was also explained. The board members can talk with only 4 other board members to avoid a de facto quorum of a quorum. Apparently planning and land use is always a hot issue.

A Joint board/committee meeting won't be governed by board meeting rules. Intra Board Meetings (Meetings between Board Members of different NCs) are not subject to the Brown Act.

Do not communicate about board issues with other people via e-mail. Meeting dates and locations are the only approved discussions that can take place via e-mail. Judith Wyle asked if “one on one” procedural questions are approved topics of discussion between board members via e-mail. She was assured that they were, as they are not agenda items.

The bottom paragraph of the Brown Act sheet needs to be included (in 12 point font –ADA) on the bottom of every agenda publication.

The agenda is not a checklist for us, but a guide for the public. It must suggest an action. “Discussion and Possible Action” were the suggested wording. The OPNC was commended for its consistent use of this phraseology. There is a 20 word minimum per agenda item.

Public comment is invited, but public discourse is not encouraged as the board must get through its stated agenda in approximately 2 hours. If a stakeholder gets

aggressive, we are instructed to call police officers to remove them from the location.

Judith Wyle asked how items could be added to the board's agenda. It was stated that a request for agenda items will be circulated to the board members in time for the responses, in order to make it into the agenda.

Mr. Soong called our attention to the fact that any meeting place the board chooses must be within the OPN or its shared resources and be ADA compliant, with ADA compliant bathroom facilities. Sign language and interpreters can be provided, upon request, by the city.

The Freedom of Information Act provides the board with 10 days to furnish requested information. Please contact Mr. Soong or the appropriate official at DONE, immediately, in order to ensure that the appropriate response is achieved in a timely fashion. Thomas Soong's phone number is 213-978-1481.

We will be getting opnc.gov.org e-mail addresses when our OPNC website is up and functioning.

The concept of conflicts of interest were discussed, and examples given by Mr. Soong. He also spoke about recusal in the event that there is a conflict of interest. Recusal involves not merely abstaining from a vote, but also removing oneself physically from the discussion so that facial gestures and body language cannot unduly influence other voting board members. Property proximity was mentioned as one of the possible causes of conflict of interest. The Office of the City Attorney can resolve questions regarding potential conflicts of interest and we were urged to seek their counsel should we have any questions regarding whether or not we are at risk of violating this ethical responsibility.

There will be a live Ethics training session for NC board members on June 18th somewhere in a nonadjacent neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. We will be getting \$37,000 for the year paid to us in quarterly installments. A budget needs to be submitted. Neighborhood Purpose Grants were described in brief. They can be administered to non-profit organizations, schools and religious organizations for projects in the public interest and of direct benefit to the OP community. We will be approving a new budget in July. We should be formulating our "Big 5 Goals" for the year in order to form a strategic plan.

We were told by Mr. Soong that when voting on controversial matters it is wise to begin with the "No" vote, so that discussions can ensue. We were informed by Mr. Soong that we are officially out of "exhaustive efforts" status and were furnished with a letter from the city attesting to this.

It was determined that the secretary needs the completed roster, with contact information, before it can be distributed amongst the board members.

The location of the community retreat dinner and installation of board members was discussed. A stakeholder registered displeasure that her suggestion that El Cholo was a suitable location for the event was not pursued in the recent past and that it was no longer a viable option due to the required voting calendar and budget constraints. It was pointed out to the stakeholder that if pursuing this was important to her should could have formed a committee to further investigate and pave the way for that or a similar result in the future. She was encouraged to participate as a board or committee member in the future.

4 Agenda items were then discussed, numbers 11-14. Sung Park motioned for their approval and Ke 2nded the motion.

Before the vote took place the expense to balance ratio was explained to one of the board members by the treasurer. It was pointed out that the approved expenses were “up to” a certain amount but need not be the entire sum.

The vote resulted in 9 Yes 1 abstaining and 1 ineligible.

The Longwood Neighborhood Association, running from 12th to Dockweiler in our district, will be having an event sponsored by the OPNC. It will be this Saturday from 1-4PM. We will be providing “swag” items to promote the OPNC and the stakeholders investment and awareness in contributing to OP civic engagement. Three people are needed to man the OPNC table for an hour each. Three people stepped forward. Sky Kelly, Ke _____ and Laura _____

A new location for our board meeting should be available next week. It appears as if it will be at the Legal Aid Foundation building at Crenshaw and Country Club Park.

Both the President and the Treasurer will be resigning from their positions as they were assumed to get us through the exhaustive efforts phase and back on track. They will continue to be members of the board.

A motion to adjourn was made by _____. It was seconded by Ke. The meeting ended at about 9:15 PM.

