



Northridge East Neighborhood Council

Meeting Minutes: January 17, 2007
Andasol Elementary School Auditorium, 10126 Encino Ave.

Call to Order: 7:05pm

Attendance: Kelly Lord, Don Dwiggins, Thomas Baker, Chuck Bunnell, Steve Patel, Barry Greenberg, Lucille Meehan, Judith Nutter, Harold Ellison, Caroline Moore

Absent: Ray Calnan, Peter McCarty, James Gardner, Alice McCain, Ryan McElveen

Minutes: Chuck Bunnell made the motion to approve the minutes. Judith Nutter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda

1. Lt. Gary Nanson LAPD Gang Unit SFV Lead Officer to discuss Gang Activity in area; Prevention and Intervention “Jeopardy Program.”

Gary has spent time working on gangs, narcotics, vice in San Fernando Valley. Though this area is one of the lesser impacted areas, there are 77 gangs in SFV, and 11,000 *known* members. Average age of newly recruited youths for gangs is 9-13 year old, elementary school, junior high school kids who are very impressionable, feeling they must prove themselves, commit crimes. We hardly know the bulk of the 9-13 year olds because there is not much contact between us [law enforcement] and them. Much gang activity occurs during truancy from school, and right after school.

- The press refers to the SFV as the “epicenter” of crime in the nation. This means we’re at the forefront of evolution of gangs: crimes are changing, victim pools are changing. It is moving towards an organized crime model.
 - Gang members are becoming more involved in white collar crime, identity theft, credit card fraud, etc.
 - They are starting to look more like average people, losing the gang clothing, driving nice cars, and not hanging out in parking lots and streets. Gang members are becoming less “visible” due to the type of crimes they are committing.
 - They are using technology, computers, the internet, have their own websites.
 - As they become more involved in white collar crimes, it becomes more like a business—they get bigger, get more “employees”, stronger chain of command, make more money, franchise more, get distribution routes.
- The move to more organized crime is crucial: these individuals don’t usually have credit cards or homes, but *we* do.
 - We are now the victims, the ones personally affected. In the past, gangs used to victimize each other. How do we solve the problem? In this immediate area, gangs are rather small. There is no graffiti, the image seems safe. We feel physically safe, the violence aspect here is low.
 - We need to pay attention to *financial* crime.
- Here in SFV, the “epicenter”, gangs are evolving. Gangs are coming in from other countries, which have more organized models. They are bringing that model here. The racist gangs are involved in some violent crimes. Vikers West of Devonshire, Hell’s Angels, street gangs from other countries, El Salvador, historical gangs like

Hispanic gangs, etc. Hispanic gangs have the highest numbers. What's troubling is the racial hate crimes from rival gangs. In addition to that, conflict is starting due to race. This is partially causing the 40% increase in gang crimes.

- Just like rival businesses meet and try to get together, gangs are doing the same thing. For example, Lt. Gary stated that he once found 5 gang members, each from different gangs in the same car. Each of the 5 members in the car were "shot callers", or leaders from their gang for a "business" meeting, making business deals: who's going to distribute, market, rep.

The evolution is starting out in SFV, which is why we're the "epicenter". Others will start to see it next in their areas.

Questions from the audience

Q: Since these are white collar crimes, will there be less violence?

A: Yes, they don't want attention. They want to stay low-key. That's a positive aspect. But law enforcement was trained on looking for stolen cars, guns, narcotics. Now they must train on learning about credit card fraud, identity theft, etc.

Q: Are gangs still interested in distributing drugs?

A: Yes. Every gang is at a different stage. Some distribute, others only are involved in white collar crimes. Homeowners must learn how to protect themselves. Law enforcement, financial and judicial systems are still learning how to restore your name in a reasonable amount of time.

Q: Is there a way to stop credit card companies from sending the pre-approved credit mail to us?

A: I [Lt. Gary], keep all my mail. There is a legislation in Congress to stop that mail.

Q: A few weeks ago, the creation of a new high school was approved on Balboa. Should we be concerned about more crime in the neighborhood?

A: Some causes of crime are due to truancy, gang violence, theft. We don't know if the high school will bring more crime. There should be low concern, considering this is not a high crime area.

The "Jeopardy Program"

- The program keeps kids out of gangs—a gang-at-risk program. For the Devonshire division, kids are referred by the LAUSD or families. The judicial system recognizes us; it is one of the conditions of probation. Also, there are many gang members due to generational involvement; parents are brought in too. We offer tutoring, psychologists, counseling interns for families, anger management, conflict resolution. The afterschool program is offered 2, 3, to 4 hours during the critical hours after school. Enrichment, recreation, sports, dance, art, sailing classes (at Marina del Rey) are available.
- Traditionally, police don't do "gang prevention". Arresting gang members over and over does not solve the problem. To solve the problem, we need to keep kids out of gangs.

- The [police] badge is heavy. Everyone knows what it means. It tells the parents that we're credible. We're using the badge as best as we can, and it's working. The success rate is 86%, meaning 86% *never* go back to gangs. People don't want officers coming to their house. Arresting will never solve the problem.

Q: How do we support you?

A: Finding sustainable funding is difficult. Officers buy things out of their own pockets. L.A. City has not funded us. We look for corporate sponsors, community sponsors. Programs are largely powered by volunteer staff, coaches, art instructors, dance instructors, etc.

Q (from Steve Patel): How old are the kids in the program?

A: From nine to 17. Enrollment is from 300-600 throughout the Valley.

Q: Is there a contact?

A: For any inquiries, [Lieutenant Gary Nanson] is the contact: 838-9480. Point person is Jennifer Vass, who works administratively. You can always leave messages.

- Thomas Baker made a motion to support the Jeopardy Program through the Devonshire division, proposing \$2000. Judith Nutter seconded the motion. Thomas clarified that NENC will keep it on the agenda every January, to allocate yearly to the program.
- Steve Patel mentioned that we can partner with the Jeopardy Program with our Adopt-A-Street program. We are always looking for youths to help us maintain Adopted Streets.
- Judith added that Jeopardy is part of the "Devonshire Pals" program. She's seen kids in the program, from being in desperate trouble to being able to accomplish something. She saw how proud they are, and how they will never go back to gangs. The police are right: it's better to keep them out of jail.

2. Thomas Brown Executive Director Department of Physical Plant Management, CSUN, to talk about success in Alternative Energy Generation at the Campus was not able to attend so NENC hopes to have him rescheduled for March.

3. Proposed Amendments to NENC By-Laws from City Attorney's Office (Barry Greenberg)

Talked about uniform by-laws throughout the city. Barry is asking that the committee sets up a subcommittee to tighten up by-laws, a couple people from the Board, a couple of stakeholders. Chuck will be busy till April 15, but once members are appointed, can be involved through email.

Thomas Baker asks if the interim Board member Dorothy Boberg who was not present tonight might be interested in helping with the Subcommittee as she was instrumental in the original NENC By-laws? Kelly Lord contact Dorothy and propose it to her.

4. MTA proposal to eliminate Line 168 (via Lassen in NENC boundaries) Possible Action (Barry Greenberg)

One of the lines running down the Northeast to the West Valley is going to be eliminated. We need transportation for CSUN students. Barry talked to a domestic worker: at 7a.m., most people taking that line are domestic workers. Without this line, we will only have one on Nordhoff and one on Devonshire. It is ill-advised to take transportation out of the community. Barry is asking the Board to oppose this, and adopt the resolution sent on his 01/07/2007 email:

The Northridge East Neighborhood Council is oppsed to the elimation of the MTA 168 Lassen/Paxton line as proposed by the MTA. It is the sincere hope of the members of the Northridge East Neighborhood Council that Council Members, Smith, Cardenas, and Padilla, Supervisor Yaroslavsky, will oppose the elimination of this line.

It is further the hope of the Northridge East Neighborhood Council that other affected Neighborhood Councils (Northridge West, Chatsworth, North Hills West, North Hills East, Mission Hills, Arleta and Pacoima) take similar positions and notify their appropriate representatives to oppose the elimination of the 168 line.

This resolution is to be filed with:

Metro Customer Relations, One Gateway Plaza, 99PL4, Los Angeles, CA 90012-2932, Attn: Service Changes

June 2007.

Via Fax: 213-922-6988

- Thomas Baker has already reached out to surrounding Neighborhood Councils, and contacted California State University Northridge (CSUN), since they were eliminating trips on their Environmental Impact Report for Envision 2035 based on Line 168 being used by Faculty, Staff, and Students. With the expansion of the college, that line is absolutely needed. We should see it increase and not decrease. Propose to help the college. This is a good argument to bring up to the MTA.
- Barry stated that there was going to be a public meeting on February 7, and that we cannot sit on this. Barry made a motion for the Board to get this out on paper, fax to the MTA. One or more members of the Board, and stakeholders should contact the MTA. Don Dwiggins seconds the motion.

Thomas Soong from Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE)

Thomas Soong spoke about beautifying some community areas, making parks more appealing to the community. He passed out a blue flyer on a workshop for Strengthening

Communities. Most workshops have been far from the Valley, but this one will be in the Valley and is also free. Stated that Board members and stakeholders are welcome to attend.

Open up meeting to Board members

- Don Dwiggins: January is the beginning of election season. Need first draft election procedures. Proposed for first draft, to rewrite procedures from last year, but change dates. Open to volunteers in the committee. Chuck Bunnell and Lucille Meehan volunteer. Chuck stated that last year was a Sunday. This year, set the date for June 24.
- Thomas Baker brings up the dismantling of Granada Medical Center this week. Will be a vacant lot. Steve Patel asked if made any adjustments regarding parking requirements. Thomas Baker replied that Granada Hills old residents group didn't mention any added parking. Slated for administrative.

Open to public comment

- Please get Thomas Brown from CSUN here next meeting. NENC will reschedule him for March

Meeting adjourned: 8:30p.m.

Minutes prepared by Anchulee Raongthum, AppleOne, January 20, 2007