

PORTER RANCH
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

General Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 6, 2009
Shepherd of the Hills Church
19700 Rinaldi St., Porter Ranch, CA 91326

1. Welcome and Introductions

President Mel Mitchell called the Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Board Members present: Mel Mitchell (President), Paula Cracium (Vice-President), Christopher Cooper (Treasurer), Bright Aregs, Mandhata Chauhan, Irv Cohen, Sue Hammarlund, Becky Leveque (late), Ron Nagai, and Vas Singh.

Board Member absent: Ali Dabirian (Secretary) (on vacation).

Ten of the 11 Board Members were present at the beginning of the Meeting, which is a quorum, and the business of the Council could be conducted. Also attending were up to 35 Stakeholders and Guests.

Mr. Mitchell led a brief question and answer period of Stakeholders attending their first PRNC General Board Meeting.

3. Motion to approve proposed Agenda

MOTION (by Ms. Cracium, seconded by Mr. Mitchell): to approved the proposed Agenda for this General Board Meeting.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous voice vote.

[The following Agenda Item was addressed after Item #2.]

4. Motion to approve unapproved Minutes

Mr. Mitchell suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** this Item to the next General Board Meeting, since the Secretary is not present.

[The following Agenda Presentation Items were addressed after Item #5.]

6:15 pm - Presentation by John Dierking, L.A. City Office of Finance, Tax Compliance. Mr. Singh explained about the L.A. City Finance Department and introduced Mr. Dierking, who “serves as a taxpayer advocate working with business throughout the City.” Mr. Dierking distributed slide show hardcopies and a “New Business Tax Reforms” brochure. The Department regulates 400,000 businesses and approximately 6% of the City’s annual budget. Businesses in Los Angeles have “experienced a 15% decrease in City taxes since 2001” as part of City tax reform. No taxes are due if “the total gross receipts are less than \$100,000.” Tax categories have been simplified from 50 to six. If you “do seven or more business days per year in the City,” you may need to get a business license. If you do business in and outside of the City, 100% of Los Angeles receipts and 20% of outside-Los

Angeles receipts are taxable. The first question they ask is whether the activity, such as a hobby, is a business activity. Filing a Federal Schedule C may trigger an AB 63 requirement to submit eight years' worth of business receipts to the City. Mr. Dierking can be reached at (213) 738-9270, john.dierking@lacity.org, or www.lacity.org/finance.

7:15 pm - Presentation by Mr. Joe Avila, Executive Assistant to DWP General Manager, presenting information on the Solar Initiative, joined by Simone Taylor. Jim Savitz, Stakeholder, introduced Mr. Avila and Simone Taylor, Dept. of Water and Power Government and Neighborhood Relations Liaison. Mr. Avila distributed a "Green Energy and Good Jobs Initiative Presentation for City Council" handout. He reported that there's been a DWP solar panel program since around 1998 and the rebate given is almost twice the State requirement. The cost can be deducted from taxes over 10 years. The new program would be the biggest in the country. He described various solar panel installations around the City. Two-thirds of the program will be available to the private sector and the program will be covered by the DWPMOU [DWP Memorandum of Understanding]. An old refrigerator can use 45% of home energy and cost.

There was extensive discussion regarding the program's feasibility and costs. Mr. Avila said that the DWP will work to attract more business to the City to manufacture and install solar panels, and that the program shows a commitment to solar technology that will attract those businesses. He added that the recent rate increase is being fully used for infrastructure upgrading. Ms. Taylor encouraged contacting them for information or if you have any questions. They can be reached at www.ladwp.com.

5. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report as presented at January 6, 2009 meeting

Mr. Cooper reviewed the "[PRNC] Treasurer's Report, 6-Jan-2009" and "DRAFT PRNC 2008-2009 Actual versus Budget YTD [FIRST DRAFT] Corrected."

MOTION (by Mr. Nagai, seconded by Ms. Hammarlund): to approve the January 6, 2009 PRNC Treasurer's Report as presented.

MOTION PASSED by acclamation without any objections.

Melvin Canas, Neighborhood Empowerment Analyst, L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) (818-374-9953; melvin.canas@lacity.org), announced that the upcoming Neighborhood Councils Congress focus will be on emergency preparedness. A Congress Planning Group of NC representatives will be formed. The Congress will be held "sometime in April, central in the Valley." He reminded those who haven't to complete the Mayor's Budget Survey either online (<http://www.lacityneighborhoods.com/promo1.htm>) or on hardcopy. There was discussion regarding survey results use and distribution.

John Bwarie, Deputy District Director for L.A. City District 12 Councilman Greig Smith (818-701-5253; john.bwarie@lacity.org), noted that "budget impacts show six to nine months later . . . We're facing the worst deficit in recent history." He explained disaster preparedness efforts.

6. Motion: to approve expenditures for safety equipment requested for Fire Station 8

MOTION (by Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. Aregs): to approve expenditures not to exceed \$2,000 for safety equipment requested for Fire Station Eight, as follows:

- 4 "Smoky Packs" for brush fire hose packs, approximately \$240;
- 2 "Folding Cots" for brush patrol and 8 for brush fires, approximately \$140;
- 1 "Reverse Osmosis Water Filter" for Fire Station 8, approximately \$200; and
- 1 "Awning for Rolling Back Door" at Fire Station 8 to keep sun off the steel door and heating up station during summer months, approximately \$1,000.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Cooper estimated that the cost will total \$1,580. There was discussion regarding equipment use and having the NC's name on the equipment.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous voice vote.

7. Motion: to approve funding for the purchase of 15 walkie-talkies.

Ms. Hammarlund explained that the biggest challenge during the last emergency was communication between classrooms.

MOTION (by Ms. Hammarlund, seconded by Mr. Singh): to approve funding for the purchase of 15 walkie-talkies (including batteries and chargers) @ 300 dollars each in order to provide for emergency communication for Castlebay Lane Elementary School.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Cohen believes that, instead of buying walkie-talkies, the LAUSD [L.A. Unified School District] needs to review emergency preparation procedures. Ms. Hammarlund noted that these are high-quality walkie-talkies, that Castlebay does not get any government funding, and that the walkie-talkies will also be used for other communications between classrooms. Mr. Aregs is concerned about allocations only to Castlebay and not also to other schools. Mr. Cooper noted that Castlebay is the only school within the NC area. Mr. Mitchell is concerned that Castlebay did not use the computers the NC got them for a year.

Mr. Mitchell suggested and it was agreed to **TABLE** this Item to the next General Board Meeting.

Mr. Mitchell asked Board Members if they had any comments. Mr. Cooper wants to agendize, for the next General Board Meeting, a Volunteer Surveillance Team request for \$830.49 for camcorders. Mr. Aregs wants to agendize purchasing emergency packs to be made available to Stakeholders and General Board Meeting attendees. Ms. Leveque noted that the new L.A. Police Dept. Senior Lead Officer will speak early during the next General Board Meeting [February 3rd]. Mr. Mitchell noted that L.A. City District Two Councilwoman Wendy Greuel (818-756-8121; lacity.org/council/cd2) will speak at that Meeting. Mr. Cohen would like a discussion regarding Committee responsibilities. There was discussion regarding whether to ask Nick Patsouras, L.A. City Comptroller Candidate, to speak to the PRNC. Mr. Nagai noted that Mr. Patsouras has not asked to speak to the PRNC, while Ms. Greuel did.

Mr. Mitchell declared and it was agreed to **ADJOURN** the Meeting at 9:35 p.m.