

**Neighborhood Council Valley Village  
Board Meeting  
12-03-03**

**Draft**

Meeting was called to order by Matthew Fitzgerald at 7:10 pm.

Board members in attendance were: Mr. Tony Braswell (renter), Ms. Debra "DJ" Harner (cultural organization), Ms. Ginny Hatfield (community senior organization), Mr. Paul Hatfield (at large), Ms. Jody Hidey (residential homeowner), Ms. Ann Hull (business), Mr. Walter Katz (residential renter), Mr. Tom Paterson (residential renter), Mr. Chris Pechin (residential homeowner), Mr. Nick Pool (business), Ms. Breice Reiner (community service organization), Mr. Peter Sanchez (residential homeowner), Mr. Stuart Simen (business), Dr. Daniel Wiseman (faith based),. Board members absent were Mr. Sean Jasso (education).

Mr. Fitzgerald reviewed his responsibility to chair the initiation of the meeting, and coordinate the meeting along the agenda until the election of officers of the Board.

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcoming Remarks.** Mr. Fitzgerald welcomed the newly elected Board members, and the public in attendance, and thanked them all for their participation in the meeting.

**Agenda Item 2 – Introduction of Board.** Each Board member was asked to introduce themselves and the stakeholder affiliation, and state in brief manner their commitment to Valley Village and their desire to serve on the Board.

Mr. Fitzgerald thanked the Board for their commitment and congratulated them on their election. It was noted that packets were sent to the Board members in advance of the meeting and that the information would be reviewed over the course of the meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald further stated he would continue to be available as a resource for the Board if any members had questions in the future related to their service, responsibilities, or function of the Board itself.

**Agenda Item 3 – Introduction of Distinguished Guests.** Mr. Fitzgerald introduced Maricela Gomez, representing City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel's office. Ms. Gomez extended congratulations from Councilwoman Greuel and presented the Board with certificates of recognition from The City of Los Angeles.

Mr. Fitzgerald reviewed for the Board the history of the formation of Neighborhood Councils. He added that there are unique ways of conducting business within each Neighborhood Council and over time we will develop structure that is correct for our Board.

**Agenda Item 4 – Adoption of Bylaws as Certified.** Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the bylaws were developed by the Formation Committee. Chris Pechin asked if we could open the floor to comment from neighborhood representatives who were in attendance at the meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald expressed his appreciation for the request and respectfully declined the suggestion, deferring to the agenda item for public comment later in the meeting, as he felt the Board should move through the administrative items as listed on the agenda.

Mr. Fitzgerald reminded the Board that they should have received mailed copies of the bylaws prior to the meeting, and asked the Board to move approval of the bylaws. *A motion was made by Stuart Simen, and seconded by Tom Paterson, to approve the bylaws.* Mr. Fitzgerald called for discussion.

Chris Pechin complimented the Formation Committee on their hard work. He asked if upon approval of the bylaws were they still malleable. Mr. Fitzgerald answered affirmatively by referring to article X of the bylaws.

Walter Katz asked for clarification on the requirement of two-thirds majority to approve any amendment – was this a standard for all Neighborhood Councils? Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the requirement does vary with different Neighborhood Councils, and the intent is to require a significant effort to change any bylaws. Mr. Katz asked for clarification of what constitutes the two-third number, and Mr. Simen stated that the number is indeed two-third of the entire voting membership of the Board. Further discussion reminded the Board that significant changes to the bylaws would require approval of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners and Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

*The question was called by Mr. Pechin.* Dr. Dan Wiseman asked if a quorum required nine members present at any meeting and should the quorum number be revisited? Mr. Katz referred to Article 8, subsection 4, asking if there indeed be 6 Board members and 3 officers to constitute a quorum of nine. Mr. Simen answered affirmatively. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if all Board members were clear in their understanding of what constitutes a quorum. No further questions were raised. Mr. Fitzgerald reminded the Board that if this or any issue were unwieldy in the future it could be addressed through the work of a Board Bylaw Committee.

*The question was called. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the Bylaws For Neighborhood Council Valley Village as submitted.*

**Agenda Item 5 - Review of Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils.**

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if there were any immediate questions related to the function and operation of Neighborhood Councils. Mr. Pechin asked for clarification on communication between Neighborhood Council and City of Los Angeles. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that all communication should begin with the City Council and The Office of The Mayor. Feedback would include quarterly meetings with the Neighborhood Council Executive Board (e.g. by Ms. Gomez). The City also expected the Board to learn about

issues like City budgets, so that issues that arise related to Valley Village can be properly connected with correct resources (Ms. Gomez reminded the Board of the popularity of the day to fill pot holes in Valley Village). Mr. Pechin expressed concern that more public attendance could be achieved with additional city resources. Ms. Gomez stated that public events are a great motivator to get the public involved, and that the city would support specific activities that address issues related to Valley Village, and committed resources such as printing flyers and neighborhood mailings.

Ms. Jenny Hatfield asked if minutes of Board meetings would be distributed. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that meetings are public and Board would determine how minutes would be available.

Mr. Fitzgerald advised that if the Board had a specific action item for which it wished to advocate, a position statement be constructed and presented to The City Council. There are many ways to communicate a position (e.g. of a street light), from a phone call of a Board member or Board President/officer, to the formation of a formal resolution to be presented to The City Council. The latter would be most effective and carry more weight with The City Council.

#### **Agenda Item 6 - Review of The Ralph M. Brown Act.**

Mr. Fitzgerald briefly reviewed the background, intent and importance of The Brown Act, a statewide law designed to eliminate "back room deals" in governance. He reiterated the importance of all meetings being conducted in public, and in a place where the public can participate. The Board was encouraged to read and familiarize themselves with The Brown Act. Consequences of conducting business in a manner that violates the Brown Act could result in a Board action being reversed. This should be taken very seriously, and includes other issues like posting of meeting agendas.

Ms. Breice Reiner asked if all committee meetings must also be conducted in a public place. The answer was yes. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that there would be exceptions but referred the Board to attend a workshop on The Brown Act for a better understanding of the law.

Mr. Paterson asked if there were anyone in attendance from the office of City Councilman Weiss. The answer was no.

**Agenda Item 7 - Review of Ethics Code.** Mr. Fitzgerald mentioned to the Board that the Ethics Code, as presented in the mailing to Board members prior to the meeting, was very specific. All Board members would be held to conflict of interest guidelines as applied to The City Council. Dr. Wiseman added that he had attended the Committee Meeting of The City Council that reviewed this issue and there was some concern voiced even upon the vote of approval. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that as elected officials the Board members would want to pay close attention to the Conflict of Interest Policy. Dr. Wiseman asked that this be a future agenda item for further discussion.

Mr. Fitzgerald reminded the Board of Form 770, and that it was constructed to apply to any citizen of The State of California, making it very broad. Specific questions related to the application of Form 770 to individual Board members should be referenced to the phone numbers in the Form 770 packet. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that Form 770 has yet to be approved by the full City Council, and once it is approved, there will be a 30-day implementation period during which Board members will be required to complete the form. This should take place sometime in January or February.

Mr. Paterson asked if Form 770 and The Ethics Code are related. The answer was yes.

Dr. Wiseman asked if there would be educational assistance for completing the form. The answer was yes.

Mr. Pechin asked for clarification on how notification of future meetings would be distributed. Mr. Fitzgerald answered that his office and Board officers would be responsible.

Mr. Fitzgerald added that elected Treasurer of Neighborhood Council Valley Village would be required to attend additional training from the City. This training must be completed before the NCVV budget could be approved.

**Agenda Item 8 - Election of Officers.** Mr. Fitzgerald referred the Board to the Bylaws, which review the role of elected officers. There are four officer positions – Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

Discussion reminded the Board of the responsibilities of elected officers, and election format. Question was raised by Mr. Katz related to the responsibility of The Treasurer, answered by reference to Article 11. Dr. Wiseman asked for clarification on how the Board would break a tie vote.

Mr. Fitzgerald interrupted discussion to move the agenda back to Item 3, and introduced John Bwarie from Mayor Hahn's office. Mr. Bwarie ([jbwarie@mayor.lacity.org](mailto:jbwarie@mayor.lacity.org)) extended on behalf of The Mayor congratulations to all elected Board members, and expressed the Mayor's excitement about and commitment to the work of The Neighborhood Councils. Mr. Bwarie will attend as many meetings as possible, and pledged his support and that of the Office of The Mayor.

Mr. Pechin asked that the Board thank the offices of The Mayor and Councilwoman Greuel for their attendance.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved the meeting back onto the agenda, Item 8. The discussion continued on the mechanism for breaking a tie vote.

Mr. Katz stated his perception of a lack of guidance in the bylaws for removal of officers, and member vacancies. Mr. Fitzgerald recommended that this issue be assigned to a committee.

Mr. Pechin motioned that the election of officers be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order. A mention was made of ballot voting. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that voting should not be secret.

Dr. Wiseman referred the conversation back to the discussion of how to break a tie vote, expressing concern of the even number in attendance. Mr. Paul Hatfield asked if absent member could be contacted. The answer was no. Mr. Simen reminded the Board that proxy vote is not permitted in the bylaws. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that most of these issues could be addressed after election of officers and refining of the bylaws.

A concern was raised from an audience member – no public discussion was held on any of these issues or any other agenda item. Additionally, there were not public comment/question cards in the room. The person was allowed to express their concern to the Board – her comments stated that the bylaws do not allow for removal of officers, and that a formal manner of breaking tie votes needs to be established, and that the inability of more than one officer to attend any future meeting could hinder ability of the Board to properly conduct meetings. The comments were based on experience from meetings of other Neighborhood Councils.

Ms. Jenny Hatfield thanked the person for her public comments, and asked that these issues be referred to a committee to be addressed.

Mr. Katz stated the importance of voting for officers, and his lack of comfort voting on persons with whom he was not familiar. *A motion was made by Mr. Katz to elect officers for one month, and utilize the January meeting to elect permanent officers. Second by Mr. Pechin.*

*An amendment was made by Mr. Katz to table Agenda Item 8 for one month, in an effort to remain within the bylaws.*

*An amendment was made by Ms. Anne Hull to extend the election to a term of one quarter (three months).*

Mr. Simen stated that he believed the motion to be out of order. It would be a violation of bylaws and that a motion would need to be made to disregard the bylaws, specifically sections 7 a, 7 b and 7 c.

Clarification was requested if the election must be held at this evening's meeting. The answer was yes. Question also raised if Agenda Item 8 could be tabled. Mr. Simen replied no.

Mr. Katz asked for clarification on the definition of terms of officers. Mr. Sanchez referred to the bylaws to state terms are for one year. Dr. Wiseman voiced his support for a three month term for initial election of officers. Mr. Simen reference Article 7 in stating that terms must be for one year.

*Mr. Paterson called the question on the amendment to the motion. The motion to conduct the vote carried by a vote of 9 – 5.*

*The vote on the amendment failed by a vote of 14-0.*

*The question was called by Ms. Hull for a vote on the motion. Discussion was held on the motion. Mr. Paterson asked that anyone interested in serving in an officer position should publicly state their credentials. Mr. Fitzgerald recognized a call to vote on the question. A vote of 12-0 to approve the vote on the motion.*

*The vote on the motion was to deny the motion, 13 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention.*

*Mr. Paterson made a motion that anyone who has interest in running for an elected office publicly present their credentials for the office, explain why they want to serve in the office, and that the election be conducted in rank order of office, from Chairman to Secretary.*

*Mr. Hatfield seconded the motion. Discussion was held. Mr. Sanchez offered an amendment that nominations from the floor for officers be accepted – as opposed to only self-nomination. Mr. Paterson accepted the amendment.*

*Mr. Katz again asked for clarification of how to break a tie vote. Dr. Wiseman asked if we could conduct the vote and discuss breaking a tie at a later meeting.*

*Ms. Reiner asked for clarification on public statement of qualification. The question was called, and the vote was 14-0 to approve the motion and the amendment.*

*The floor was opened to nominations.*

*Tom Paterson nominated Peter Sanchez for Chair. Upon no further nominations, a motion was made by Dr. Wiseman to close the floor to nominations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hidey. Mr. Sanchez shared his qualifications for and desire to serve in the office of Chair. Mr. Paterson called for a vote. Mr. Sanchez was approved as the Chair of the Board by a vote of 14 – 0.*

*Mr. Fitzgerald turned the meeting over to Mr. Sanchez. Mr. Sanchez thanked the Board, and thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for his assistance in conducting the meeting.*

*The floor was opened for nominations for Vice Chair. Mr. Pechin nominated Mr. Paterson. Mr. Paterson declined. Ms Hatfield was nominated, she declined. Ms. Heidi was nominated, she declined. All thanked their nominators and stated conflicts in schedule or inability to commit required time as their reasons. Mr. Sanchez nominated Ms. Reiner. The nomination was seconded by Ms. Hatfield. Ms. Reiner shared her qualifications for and desire to serve in the office of Vice Chair. Upon no other nominations, Mr. Katz motioned to close nominations. Seconded by Mr. Pechin.*

*Mr. Pechin motioned to vote on nomination of Ms. Reiner for the office of Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hale. The motion carried by a vote of 14-0 to elect Ms. Reiner Vice Chair of the Board.*

Mr. Sanchez opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer. *Dr. Wiseman nominated Paul Hatfield. The nomination was seconded by Ms. Reiner. Upon no further nominations, Dr. Wiseman called for the vote. Mr. Hatfield shared his qualifications for and desire to serve in the office of Treasurer. Mr. Hatfield was approved as Treasurer by a vote of 14 – 0.*

Mr. Sanchez opened the floor for nominations for the office of Secretary. *Dr. Wiseman was nominated by Mr. Simen. Mr. Braswell was nominated by Mr. Paterson. Upon no further nominations, Mr. Pechin motioned to close the floor to nominations, seconded by Ms. Herner. Dr. Wiseman and Mr. Braswell shared their qualifications for and desire to serve in the office of Secretary. Ms. Hatfield called the question. Dr. Wiseman received 4 votes, Mr. Braswell received 6 votes, and there was 1 abstention. Mr. Braswell was elected to the office of Secretary.*

Dr. Wiseman expressed concern of an even number on the Executive Committee (4) and should there be a division of duties of The Secretary? *Motion made by Mr. Pechin for Secretary position to delegate duties for alternate secretary as allowed in the bylaws, seconded by Ms. Hale. The vote was 14-0 to approve Dr. Wiseman as alternate secretary. Mr. Katz offered point of order that Executive Committee remained a committee of four.*

**Agenda Item 9 – Discussion and vote for establishing meeting dates and venues for future meetings.** Peter Sanchez pointed out the Colfax elementary school is available for our meetings, and meets city requirement related to physical access. However, the meetings must end at 9 pm as the janitor must lock the doors at that time. Mr. Paterson asked what the time frame for the meetings would be? *Ms. Hale motioned that meetings begin at 6:30. Dr. Wiseman asked for further clarification whether the meeting has to be held the first Wednesday of the month. To remain in discussion of meeting dates, Ms. Hale withdrew her motion to change the meeting time. Several motions related to change and date were filed, and all withdrawn. The Board was polled by Mr. Sanchez to the dates that they could make the meeting without any conflict.*

The results of the poll were 7 with no conflicts on the first Wednesday, 12 with no conflict on the second Wednesday, 13 with no conflicts on the third Wednesday, and 14 with no conflicts on the fourth Wednesday. It was decided that the third or fourth Wednesday would be voted on.

*Mr. Pool motioned for a vote between the third and fourth Wednesday of each month as the scheduled meeting time. Ms. Hull seconded. Six board members voted for the fourth Wednesday, three for the third Wednesday. Ms. Hale motioned and Dr. Wiseman*

*seconded that the fourth Wednesday of each month be the regularly scheduled meeting time of the Neighborhood Council of Valley Village. The motion carried 14-0.*

Mr. Sanchez reminded all Board members that they are expected to attend all meetings. If for any reason they cannot make a meeting the Board member must call the Secretary prior to the meeting day.

Mr. Sanchez distributed two identification lists – one for Board distribution only and one for distribution to the public. All Board members were asked for address, phone and email if available.

Mr. Fitzgerald reminded the Board that VVNC has a P.O. Box at the Valley Village Post Office. The Box number is 4221, Valley Village, California, 91617. Mr. Sanchez reminded Board members of the unique zip code for the Post Office.

*A motion was made by Ms. Reiner, and seconded by Mr. Paterson, to hold all Board meetings at Colfax Elementary School. The motion carried 14-0.*

**Agenda Item 10 – Discussion and vote on establishment of Mailing address for NCVV.** *A motion was made by Dr. Wiseman and seconded by Ms. Hidey to make the Valley Village Post Office box the official mailing address of the Valley Village Neighborhood Council. The motion carried 14-0.*

Mr. Sanchez pointed out that Valley Village Neighborhood Council already has a web address, NCVV.info. He asked that Board members review Studio City web site for ideas of how to enhance our own site.

Dr. Wiseman reminded the Board that DONE produces a listing of Council members and identifies them on their website.

Mr. Pool asked how items are added to meeting agendas? Mr. Sanchez asked that any Board member who wishes to add an item to the agenda send that request to Mr. Braswell.

**Agenda Item 11 – Discussion and Possible Action to Support/sponsor local community (“Holiday”) events.** Ms. Hatfield asked the Board for their approval to use NCVV Board name for a community-based event that would be a fund raiser. The program is a support for Senior Citizens in our community.

Ms. Harner added that this would not only raise funds, but also awareness of the need to support this cause and the services that the group provides.

*After discussion, Dr. Wiseman motioned to lend NCVV’s name to this event, and Ms. Reiner seconded. The motioned carried with nine votes yes, zero votes no and two abstentions. Mr. Braswell asked that in the future, all events that request the use of NCVV’s name be considered under a structure that lends uniformity and guidelines to the*



process, and possibly assign a committee to the issue. Ms. Hull suggested that NCVV Board host a community event in the future to raise profile of the group.

**Agenda Item 12 – Board Member Comment – Comments from the Board on subject matters within the Board’s jurisdiction.**

Mr. Paterson asked that the Board endorse the concept of a fully irrigated and landscaped Chandler corridor through Valley Village. Other discussion added that the Board should also adopt a request for landscaping other than “drought resistant”, and that a jogging path be endorsed.

*This was made into a motion by Mr. Paterson, seconded by Mr. Pool. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Board should bring this issue up as a future agenda item, and have a committee discuss.*

Mr. Sanchez disagreed, and advised that the Board needs to discuss this issue in a more immediate manner. Mr. Fitzgerald reminded the Board that under The Brown Act, an issue may be raised more immediately if it is considered an emergency. Ms. Hull reviewed her position of the need for walkways and pathways, endorsed by Dr. Wiseman on behalf of the orthodox community’s pedestrian needs, and by Mr. Katz. Mr. Paterson advised the Board of his knowledge that the MTA intends to plant drought resistant landscaping and not irrigate the Chandler corridor.

Mr. Paterson asked that the Board hear from Ms. Lori Dinkin, President of The Valley Village Homeowner’s Association, as she attended a recent meeting with MTA on this issue. Ms. Dinkin addressed the Board with a review of the issue, the MTA meeting, and reminded the Board that MTA would hold another meeting on December 8.

Dr. Wiseman asked that NCVV be represented at this meeting by himself, Ms. Dinkin and Mr. Paterson. The Board agreed. Mr. Sanchez and the Board thanked Ms. Dinkin for her hard work on this and other issues related to the community.

Other discussion concluded, and Mr. Pechin asked that the Board vote on this issue as an emergency issue outside of the agenda. Mr. Katz endorsed this idea, stating that there has already been much work on the corridor and to delay any further might do permanent harm.

*Mr. Pechin asked that the motion be amended to add “that this issue be raised in the form of a letter from the Board and presented at the MTA meeting on Monday December 8”. Dr. Wiseman was asked to write the letter and that it be given to Ms. Dinkin to deliver to the MTA meeting. Ms. Hull asked additionally that the letter be given to news outlets for distribution. The question was called, and the motion carried by a vote of 12 yes, 0 no and 1 abstention.*

Mr. Fitzgerald commended the Board on their proper evaluation of an issue under guidelines of The Brown Act, and their appropriate manner of reaching resolution.

The issue of neighborhood crime was raised by Mr. Pechin. He stated that there has been a rise in crime and we need to add this to the next agenda. Mr. Katz asked that the Senior Lead Officer (SLO) be invited to the next Board meeting. The Board agreed.

*A motion was made by Mr. Pechin to add criminal activity to the next agenda, seconded by Ms. Hull, and approved by a vote of 13-0.*

**Agenda Item 13 – Public Comment.** Ms. Kathy McCloskey, 11658 Addison Street identified herself as a current resident of Valley Village and addressed the Board on the issue of the wall at 170 Freeway above the Park. Not only is there an issue of sound abatement, but more important several holes in the fence between the freeway and the park pose a danger to children playing in the park, and the possibility of a vehicle leaving the freeway and entering the park at a high speed.

Mr. Sanchez stated that the fence should be fixed through the Neighborhood Council. He also asked that the sound wall on the freeway be added to the next agenda.

No further comment from the community, Ms. McCloskey was thanked for her patience in waiting to address the Board.

**Agenda Item 14 – Future Agenda Items and Other Calendar Events.** Dr. Wiseman stated that the Board needs to use the next agenda to study/establish/assign committee work. Mr. Sanchez assigned homework to each Board member to come to next Board meeting with 2 issues identified on which each wants to work. 1 must be public works, 1 must be community concerns. This was assigned as “homework” for the Board.

Possible committees mentioned included:

Bylaws	Traffic/Transportation
Grievance	Arts/Humanities
Finance	Beautification
City Departments	Schools
Communications	Outreach
Planning	Public Safety
Land Use	
Housing	

Mr. Sanchez reminded the Board should learn about area building codes. Mr. Katz was asked to distribute them.

**Issue 14 – Future Issues Items and other calendar event.** Mr. Sanchez stated for the record could not do the job alone, and there will be clear expectations of all Board member to do their part in each issue.

Ms. Dinkin added a final congratulations to the elected Board members, and pledged her support and that of the Homeowners Association in working on difficult issues ahead.

Mr. Sanchez advised the Board that he will delegate many tasks and duties, and expects hard work of all Board members. Meetings will begin on time, and end by 9:00 pm. All input of Board members is expected and encouraged, but comment will be held to specific time constraints to respect the overall meeting schedule.

The next meeting of NCVV is January 28.

Mr. Braswell gave his email address – [tbraswell@aol.com](mailto:tbraswell@aol.com). Mr. Sanchez asked that all Board members send the committee assignment requests/areas of interest feedback to Mr. Braswell.

Mr. Sanchez asked that any item that is to be added to the agenda should be sent to Mr. Braswell before a deadline of 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

A request was also made by several Board members to add a review of the Chandler corridor bus plan to the January agenda.

Mr. Hatfield asked that a financial overview be added to the January agenda. Mr. Sanchez agreed, and asked for a review of how NCVV secures funding.

Mr. Sanchez asked Mr. Fitzgerald how NCVV secures the computer that is to be given to Board use? Mr. Braswell will follow up with Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Paterson raised the issue of a zoning approval for a car wash to be built on Laurel Canyon. Discussion related to the issue occurred, and Mr. Paterson agreed to be at the City Council meeting to appeal to the full Council to deny the zoning. Mr. Sanchez reminded the full Board that this location for a car wash is a violation of Valley Village planning requirements. A variance was granted by a City Council committee. NCVV opposes approval.

A request was raised to hold a special meeting to review the Valley Village Community Plan, and Mr. Katz advised that The Valley Village “Specific” Plan is very easy to understand and self-explanatory.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Pechin, seconded by Ms. Hatfield. The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 pm.