



**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**GRANADA HILLS SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**, Thursday, August 5, 2021  
Approved September 2, 2021

In conformity with the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 (March 17, 2020) and due to concerns over COVID-19, this duly noticed meeting was held entirely online and telephonically.

GHSNC (and all other) Meeting Minutes are a summary; Minutes were not, are not and are never meant to be an exact, verbatim, word-for-word transcript or comprehensive record of what was said at a Meeting. Exceptions: Motions/Resolutions (as stated at the Meeting, which take precedence over versions written on the Agenda, if different); quotes (words that have quotation marks ("") at the beginning and ending of a word or words); and other wording from the Agenda such as the first paragraph(s) of some Items. Items are listed in and match the same order as on the Agenda.

**I. Call to order**

President Mike Benedetto called the Meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Thirteen of the 17 Board Members were present online at the Roll Call: Carlos Amador, Mike Benedetto, Launa Bogartz, John Horn, Verej Isanians, George Karam, Christine LaMonica, Jerilyn Lopez-Mendoza, Emayatzy Oliver, Carolyn Sanderson, Chantal Serrano, Chavon Smith and Colleen Toumayan. Abbey Ronquillo and Brad Smith arrived later. Michael Jordan (unexcused) and Sally Kolstad (excused) were absent. The GHSNC quorum (the minimum number of Board Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) was nine (see the Bylaws link at [www.empowerla.org/ghsnc](http://www.empowerla.org/ghsnc)), so the Board could take such votes. All 17 Board Seats were filled (by election or appointment). No Board Seat was vacant. Also attended: approximately 16 Stakeholders and Guests.

**III. President's Comments:**

Mr. Benedetto explained that the City Clerk has different Administrative Packet calculations; the GHSNC may have a short Special Board Meeting, possibly next Thursday, to revise and resubmit it. He would like to be proactive with City Council District 12.

*Board Member Brad Smith arrived online at this time (6:43), making 14 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine).*

He encouraged Board Members to check out how other NCs operate, and noted that other orgs such as the Chamber and the VFW have offered use of their facilities. He reported that previous GHSNC community surveys yielded few responses. He

would like the GHSNC to connect with the CERT [Community Emergency Response Team; 818-756-9674; [www.cert-la.com](http://www.cert-la.com), [lafdcert@LACity.org](mailto:lafdcert@LACity.org)] and Ready Your Neighborhood [RYLAN; <https://emergency.lacity.org/rylan>] / Map Your Neighborhood emergency preparedness programs. He noted that the Aliso Canyon [2015] blowout had “at least a 15 to 20 mile radius” effect. He would like to help seniors avoid being scammed. He encouraged Committees to work together and have joint meetings. He wanted to see VAAS [Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences] included in the GHSNC Youth Committee and would like the GHSNC to participate in community events such as school re-openings to let the community know what the GHSNC has done and is doing. He would like there to be a GHSNC Sustainability Committee. He would like to have another Movie in the Park, which can provide Stakeholder contacts.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

Stakeholder John Hales said that City Council File 12-0460-S4, regarding Processes and Procedures between the City and Neighborhood Councils regarding land use projects, “looks to reduce or remove any interaction from Neighborhood Councils to near zero . . . this specifically affects zoning and land use.”

#### **V. Community Speakers**

##### **A. LAUSD District 3 (Tara Vahdani, Scott Schmerlson)**

Tara Vahdani, Deputy Director of Community Engagement for LAUSD Board Member Scott Schmerlson [ofc. 818-654-3785; [Tara.Vahdani@lausd.net](mailto:Tara.Vahdani@lausd.net); <http://achieve.lausd.net/schmerelson>], was not present and there was no report.

##### **B. Council District 12 (Matt Vallecilla)**

Matthew Vallecilla, Field Deputy for L.A. City District 12 Councilman John Lee [ofc. 818-882-1212; [Matthew.Vallecilla@LACity.org](mailto:Matthew.Vallecilla@LACity.org); [www.CD12.org](http://www.CD12.org)], was not present and there was no report.

##### **C. Mayor’s Office (Vahid Khorsand)**

Vahid Khorsand, West Area Representative for Mayor Eric Garcetti (323-552-6730; [Vahid.Khorsand@LACity.org](mailto:Vahid.Khorsand@LACity.org); <http://LAMayor.org>), was not present and there was no report.

##### **D. DONE, (NEA Freddy Cupen-Ames)**

Freddy Cupen-Ames, Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate, L.A. Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment [DONE; 818-374-9890; [Freddy.Cupen-Ames@LACity.org](mailto:Freddy.Cupen-Ames@LACity.org); [www.EmpowerLA.org](http://www.EmpowerLA.org)], reported that Civic University training is available only for Board Members on the three Thursdays of September 9th, 23rd and 30th. Board Members have access to the “Robert’s Rules Made Simple” portal. Bylaws amendments can be requested by April 15, 2022. The Congress of Neighborhoods will be online Saturday, September 25th. BONC [the L.A. Board of Neighborhood Commissioners] is reviewing and accepting more input about the proposed Digital Media Policy, and about the Code of Conduct Policy.

E. Budget Advocate (Brian Allen)

Mr. Allen reported that the Advocates [BAs] [<http://BudgetAdvocates.org>] elected new officers and are working with the DONE General Manager regarding funding for the BAs. He explained that the BAs “review the City budget” and make recommendations in an annual “White Paper.”

F. Congressional District 29 (Osvaldo Ramirez)

Osvaldo Ramirez, Field Representative for U.S. 29th District of California Congressman Tony Cardenas [ofc. 818-221-3718; cell 818-388-0685; [Osvaldo.Ramirez@mail.house.gov](mailto:Osvaldo.Ramirez@mail.house.gov); <http://cardenas.house.gov>], was not present and there was no report.

G. Congressional District 30 (Mikalye Lowrey)

Mikayle Lowery, a Field Deputy for U.S. 30th District of California Congressman Brad Sherman [818-501-9200; [Mikayle.Lowery@mail.house.gov](mailto:Mikayle.Lowery@mail.house.gov); <https://sherman.house.gov>], was not present and there was no report.

H. LAPD Senior Lead Officer or alternate rep (Lead Officers Sellers/Parker/Volunteer Richard Fisk).

Stakeholder Richard Fisk, for Phillip Sellers, an LAPD Devonshire Division Senior Lead Officer [office 818-756-9011; [31934@LAPD.LACity.org](mailto:31934@LAPD.LACity.org); [http://www.LAPDonline.org/devonshire\\_community\\_police\\_station](http://www.LAPDonline.org/devonshire_community_police_station)], was not present and there was no report.

**VI. Presentation** by Scott Harmen from the LA Arborist department regarding the deodora trees on white oak.

Scott Harmon [not “Harmen”], Consulting Arborist and Resident Supervisor in the L.A. Department of Street Services, Urban Forestry Division, presented and showed slides. He reported that “approximately a third of [the Cedar Deodars] are in moderate decline” due to not having enough water; several have been removed in recent years. Ron Tull, also of the Arborist Division, said “it’s imperative that property owners do some deep watering” otherwise “we’re going to lose those trees.” He noted that, according to the “real estate industry,” mature trees add seven percent to a home’s property value. Property owners are not allowed to unilaterally remove trees and are responsible for maintaining trees.

*Board Member Abbey Ronquillo arrived online at this time (7:12), making 15 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine).*

Mr. Tull continued that there are “over 200 [Cedar Deodar] trees on White Oak between San Fernando Mission Rd. and Mayall. The City has maintained but is not responsible for maintaining; property owners are. Stakeholder Mark Hovater reminded that, around five years ago, he helped produce videos that were distributed to property owners regarding the Cedar Deodar trees. Mr. Tull added that property

owners, with the exception of Specific Plan areas and protected trees, “are under no obligation” to replace removed trees.

#### **VII. A. Appointment of Committee Members and conformation.**

Mr. Benedetto recommended that the following Board Members be appointed:

**MOTION** (by Ms. Lopez-Mendoza, seconded by Ms. Toumayan): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council adopts the appointment of Committee Members as follows:

Beautification: Chair Carlos Amador; Members George Karam, Jerilyn Lopez-Mendoza and Chavon Smith.

Bylaws: Chair Colleen Toumayan; Members Mike Benedetto and Brad Smith.

Cultural Affairs: Chair Emayatzy Oliver; Members Carlos Amador, Launa Bogartz, Christine LaMonica and Chavon Smith.

Education: Chair Abbey Ronquillo; Members Launa Bogartz, Varej Isanians, Mark Morris and Chantal Serrano.

Government Affairs: Chair [to be determined]; Members Mike Benedetto, John Horn, Varej Isanians and Brad Smith.

Homelessness: Chair John Horn; Members Mike Benedetto, Abbey Ronquillo, Chantal Serrano and Colleen Tourmayan.

Outreach: Co-Chair Colleen Toumayan; Co-Chair Mike Benedetto; Assistant Co-Chair Sally Kolstad; Members Varej Isanians, Michael Jordon, Christine LaMonica and Abbey Ronquillo.

Planning and Land Use Management: Chair Jerilyn Lopez-Mendoza; Members Michael Jordan, George Karam, Carolyn Sanderson and Brad Smith.

Public Safety: Chair Brad Smith; Members John Horn, Christine LaMonica, Carolyn Sanderson and Chavon Smith.

Seniors: Chair Sally Kolstad; Members Mike Benedetto and Abbey Ronquillo.

Youth Committee: Chair Abbey Ronquillo; Members Madison Cha, Nirvan Rayamajhi, Mahima Shyno and Steve.

*Board Member Chavon Smith left at this time (8:11), making 14 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine).*

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 14 eligible voters present with all 14 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Horn, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Lopez-Mendoza, Oliver, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained.

B. Discussion and possible election of a Secretary.

Mr. Benedetto announced that Mr. Amador had volunteered to be Secretary.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Ms. Toumayan): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council appoints Carlos Amador as Secretary.

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 14 eligible voters present with all 14 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Horn, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Lopez-Mendoza, Oliver, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained.

C. To Elect Abbey Ronquillo Chair of Youth Committee.

Mr. Benedetto noted that Ms. Ronquillo had volunteered for this.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Ms. Lopez-Mendoza): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council appoints Abbey Ronquillo as Chair of Youth Committee.

**MOTION PASSED** by a roll call vote of the 14 eligible voters present with 13 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Horn, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Lopez-Mendoza, Oliver, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained (the GHSNC does not count abstentions) (Ronquillo).

D. “Discussion and possible action to appoint board members to attend the 2021 Civic University for Neighborhood Councils scheduled on September 9, 23 and 30, 2021.”

Mr. Cupen-Ames explained that the University is a three-day course on City governance and activism that can be attended by “less than a majority of the Board’s quorum,” or as many as four GHSNC Board Members. All dates are Thursday’s at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Karam, Ms. Ronquillo, Ms. Sanderson and Ms. Toumayan were interested in attending.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Mr. Amador): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council appoints Carlos Amador as Secretary.

*Board Member Jerilyn Lopez-Mendoza had left by this time, making 13 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine).*

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 13 eligible voters present with all 13 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Horn, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Oliver, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained.

#### **VIII. Approval of July 1, 2021 Regular Meeting minutes.**

The Minutes were shown online.

**MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Ms. Sanderson): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its July 1, 2021 General Board Meeting as written.

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 13 eligible voters present with all 13 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Horn, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Oliver, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained.

#### **IX. Budget Issues**

##### **A. Approval of Budget report and Monthly Expenditures for July 2021**

Mr. Benedetto requested and it was agreed to TABLE this Item.

##### **B. Approval of a check in the amount of \$688.48 to Board Member Sally Kolstad for expenditures on the Senior Greeting Card project. These expenditures were previously approved at the October 2020 regular meeting (\$600.00) and the December 2020 meeting (up to an additional \$200).**

**FUNDING MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Mr. Amador): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves of a check in the amount of \$688.48 to Board Member Sally Kolstad for expenditures on the Senior Greeting Card project. These expenditures were previously approved at the October 2020 regular meeting (\$600.00) and the December 2020 meeting (up to an additional \$200).

**FUNDING MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 11 eligible voters present with 10 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Ronquillo, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; one abstained (the GHSNC does not count abstentions) (Sanderson). Mr. Horn and Ms. Oliver were ineligible to vote due to not having current Ethics Training and/or Funding Training and/or not having signed the Code of Conduct.

##### **C. Approval of a check in the Total amount of \$580.60 to Board Member Mike Benedetto for expenditures Public Storage of \$ 327.60 for July 2021 and \$253.00 for August 2021.**

Receipts were shown online.

**FUNDING MOTION** (by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Toumayan): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves of a check in the total amount of \$580.60 to Board Member Mike Benedetto for expenditures Public Storage of \$327.60 for July 2021 and \$253.00 for August 2021.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Benedetto explained that GHSNC outreach materials are kept in the storage, which is a monthly overhead expense.

**FUNDING MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 11 eligible voters present with all 11 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained. Mr. Horn and Ms. Oliver were ineligible to vote due to not having current Ethics Training and/or Funding Training and/or not having signed the Code of Conduct.

#### **X. Board Issues**

- A. Discussion and possible action to approve a Neighborhood Purpose Grant in the amount of \$1,500 for the "Volunteers Cleaning Communities," (VCC) which is a grassroots local organization headed by Jill Mather whose programs reach out to the public to Volunteer their time to help CLEAN-UP THEIR COMMUNITY.

Ms. Mather showed a short video about a VCC cleanup. To volunteer, email [JillMather@earthlink.net](mailto:JillMather@earthlink.net). She would like to start a group in Granada Hills. She described their work; they partner with other Neighborhood Councils.

**FUNDING MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Mr. Amador): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves of a Neighborhood Purpose Grant in the amount of \$1,500 for the "Volunteers Cleaning Communities" (VCC).

**FUNDING MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 11 eligible voters present with all 11 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Bogartz, Isanians, Karam, LaMonica, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained. Mr. Horn and Ms. Oliver were ineligible to vote due to not having current Ethics Training and/or Funding Training and/or not having signed the Code of Conduct.

#### **XI. Board Members comments and Submission of Agenda Items.**

Next Regular Meeting of the Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council- Thursday September 2, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Mr. Horn will have a Homelessness Committee meeting in September. He reminded of the successful 2019 Cultural Affairs Committee event regarding Black History Month. Mr. Isanians wanted the GHSNC website to be “more interactive.”

Mr. Benedetto encouraged that Stakeholders' concerns be brought to Committees. Mr. Cupen-Ames cautioned Board Members about "how you represent yourselves on social media"; he in that moment emailed to Board Members the current Social Media Policy. Mr. Karam wanted to ensure that the website calendar is updated. Ms. Oliver noted many Cultural Affairs Committee accomplishments. Ms. Ronquillo thanked people for their support of the Youth Committee. She requested to Agendize regarding standing water, which attracts mosquitoes; she encouraged bringing such places to the Board's attention. Ms. Sanderson wanted homelessness to be better addressed by the City. Mr. Smith suggested Agendizing regarding a DONE report about legalities of Neighborhood Councils, as a branch of the City, seeking funding, including partnering with 501(c)3 orgs; and creating and sustaining an NC internship program, to include DONE, the City Attorney and the City Clerk. Mr. Cupen-Ames reminded Board Members "to address each other with mutual respect." Mr. Isanians offered for the Armenian community to coordinate with the Cultural Affairs Committee and provide event space.

## **XII. Adjournment**

**MOTION to ADJOURN** (by Mr. Amador, seconded by Mr. Karam).

**MOTION to ADJOURN PASSED** unanimously by a voice vote; zero opposed; zero abstained.

The Meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 10:00 p.m.

*The first paragraph of some Items, Motions/Resolutions and other wording may have been copied from the Agenda. Minutes written by DL, possibly edited by the GHSNC. The GHSNC Board Meeting Minutes page is <http://www.ghsnc.org/resources/minutes-and-agendas>.*