



**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**GRANADA HILLS SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**, Thursday, September 2, 2021  
Approved October 7, 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, Flag Salute** (Presiding Officer)

President Mike Benedetto called the Meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Brad Smith.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll Call was taken by the Secretary. Fourteen of the 17 Board Members were present online at the Roll Call: Carlos Amador (Secretary), Mike Benedetto (President), John Horn, Michael Jordan, George Karam, Christine LaMonica, Jerilyn Lopez-Mendoza, Emayatzy Oliver, Abbey Ronquillo, Carolyn Sanderson, Chantal Serrano, Brad Smith, Chavon Smith and Colleen Toumayan (Vice-President). Sally Kolstad arrived later. Launa Bogartz (Treasurer) (excused) and Verej Isanians (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: at least 12 Stakeholders and Guests.

*The next Agenda Item addressed was Item #VI. B.*

**III. Public Comment**

Stakeholder Dave Beauvais urged everyone to vote in the election. Stakeholder Cheri Derohanian announced a September 18th Museum of the San Fernando Valley [818-347-9665; <https://themuseumsvnow.org>] event at the southwest corner of Wilbur and Nordhoff. Stakeholder John Hales noted that four people appeared to be living at Devonshire and Balboa. One Generation's Alessandra Gonzales has energy and water conservation information at [AGonzales@OneGeneration.org](mailto:AGonzales@OneGeneration.org).

#### **IV. Community Speakers**

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

Tammy Ramirez, Field Representative for LAUSD Board Member Scott Schmerlson [ofc. 818-654-3785; [Tammy.Ramirez@lausd.net](mailto:Tammy.Ramirez@lausd.net); <http://achieve.lausd.net/schmerelson>], reported on upcoming events and programs, and that they are surveying the community.

**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)], reported that the City Council voted to oppose State Senate Bills Nine and Ten. The Councilman believes that “SB9 would preempt local zoning” and said that zoning “is a local issue.” He supports legislation penalizing street racing participants and attendees. He described small business financial aid available, a veterans training academy and a high school leadership program. The L.A. Conservation Corp is hiring and training people 18-25 years old. A multi-year “hundreds of thousands of dollars” project for the “218” Cedar Deodar trees on White Oak “is in the early stages . . . we’ve been working directly with Urban Forestry . . . for several months . . . we’re committed to it.” They know that two trees are dead and four stumps need to be removed; he encouraged the GHSNC not to spend money on it now. He “will look into” missing tree signage and offered to meet at the trees. They continue working on housing homeless people, however, “sometimes people are service-resistant” and “would rather be on the street.”

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

Mr. Benedetto reported that Mr. Khorsand no longer is the West Area Representative for Mayor Eric Garcetti.

**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 registration is open for the September 25<sup>th</sup> Neighborhood Councils Congress. All Board Members will “soon receive a new [Cornerstone] user name . . . and password . . . this update will not affect your transcripts.” He confirmed that Ms. Kolstad is eligible to vote on non-funding Motions. Bylaws updates can be made at this time. Funding trainings are available. BONC [the L.A. Board of Neighborhood Commissioners] is considering in-person and online meeting policies; he encouraged input and feedback on that and the Code of Conduct policy. City Redistricting Commission information is at <https://laccrc2021.org>.

**E. Budget Advocate (Brian Allen)**

Mr. Allen reported that the BA’s [<http://BudgetAdvocates.org>] Budget Day occurred.

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).  
Mr. Benedetto relayed that 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)], had to leave.

#### **V. Approval of Aug 5, 2021 Regular Meeting minutes.**

**MOTION** (by Mr. Amador, seconded by Ms. Sanderson): The Granada Hills South  
Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its August 5, 2021 Regular Board  
Meeting as written.

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

#### **Approval of Aug 12, 2021 Special Meeting minutes.**

**MOTION** (by Mr. Amador, seconded by Mr. Karam): The Granada Hills South  
Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its August 12, 2021 Special Board  
Meeting as written.

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

#### **VI. Board Issues**

A. Discussion and possible action to approve a Neighborhood Purpose Grant in the  
amount of \$3,500 to the Granada Hills Community Foundation for the Granada  
Hills Street Faire and Granada Hills Holiday Parade

**FUNDING MOTION** (by Mr. Benedetto, seconded by Ms. Toumayan): The  
Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves a Neighborhood Purpose  
Grant in the amount of \$3,500 to the Granada Hills Community Foundation for the  
Granada Hills Street Faire and Granada Hills Holiday Parade.

**DISCUSSION:** Stakeholder Bonnie Bursk explained that they are important long-  
time community events and fundraisers. The Foundation “is a 501(c)3”

organization. She said “it’s outdoors, it’s spread out.” She encouraged “following the protocols, wearing masks” and having “hand sanitizer at every booth.” “The Chamber of Commerce . . . is running these events.”

**AMENDMENT to the MOTION** (by Mr. Amador, seconded by Chavon Smith): to replace the Motion wording “for the Granada Hills Street Faire and Granada Hills Holiday Parade” with the wording “for the purposes of supporting the Granada Hills Street Faire taking place on Oct. 23rd, 2021 and the Granada Hills Holiday Parade taking place on Dec. 5th, 2021.”

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Lopez-Mendoza had said the event dates were not on the application. Brad Smith had said the Parade date is December 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Mr. Benedetto at this time recused from voting (self-declared as ineligible to vote on the below Motion due to a possible or known conflict of interest, turned over the Presiding Officership to Vice-President Toumayan and left the meeting at this time, making 13 Board Members present and eligible to vote (the GHSNC Board quorum is nine). Recusing is different from abstaining, which is declining to vote “yes” or “no.”*

**AMENDMENT to the MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a voice vote.

**AMENDED FUNDING MOTION PASSED** by a roll call vote of the 13 eligible voters present with 12 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Horn, Jordan, Karam, LaMonica, Lopez-Mendoza, Oliver, Ronquillo, Serrano, Brad Smith, Chavon Smith and Toumayan); one opposed (“No” or “Nay”) (Sanderson); zero abstained. Ms. Kolstad was ineligible to vote due to not having current Ethics Training and/or Funding Training and/or not having signed the Code of Conduct. Mr. Benedetto recused.

*Mr. Benedetto, who had recused from voting, returned to the meeting at this time and resumed as the Presiding Officer, making 14 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine).*

- B. Need for 2 or more individuals per Neighborhood Council, to volunteer to be Block Leaders for the “COOL BLOCKS” program. This is through the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance – Lisa Hart-presentation. (Block leader names due date is: 9/23/2021).

*This Agenda Item was addressed after Item #II.*

NCSA Board Member Lisa Hart, noting recent national disasters, explained the program; we cannot count on the government help in such moments. She encouraged participating and recruiting others. See <https://www.ncsa.la>.

Board Member Sally Kolstad arrived online at this time (6:52), making 15 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine). The next Agenda Item addressed was Item #III.

C. Presentation by Dave Brown – Ham Radios

Mr. Brown was not present.

**VII.A. Appointment of Committee Members and confirmation**

This Item was not addressed.

**B. Appointment of Chantal Serrano to Cultural Affairs Committee**

**MOTION** (by Ms. Oliver, seconded by Chavon Smith): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council appoints of Chantal Serrano to the Cultural Affairs Committee.

**MOTION PASSED** unanimously by a roll call vote of the 15 eligible voters present with all 15 in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Amador, Benedetto, Horn, Jordan, Karam, Kolstad, LaMonica, Lopez-Mendoza, Oliver, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith, Chavon Smith and Toumayan); zero opposed; zero abstained.

**VIII. Budget Issues**

A. Approval of Budget report and Monthly Expenditures for August, 2021

Treasurer Ms. Bogartz was not present. This Item was skipped and no report or Motion was made or vote taken.

**Committee Motions and Reports** [*There was no Item number for this.*]

Beautification Committee.

Discussion and possible action: The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council is dedicated to the caring of the trees in our area. In particular, the Cedar Deodar trees on White Oak Avenue are a City cultural landmark due to their majestic look, contributions in film and entertainment and to the local environment. Caring for these trees is of great importance to our community. Possible Motion: The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves allocating up to \$3,864.00 for a deep watering session of the Cedar Deodar trees on White Oak between by the Los Angeles City Forestry Division.

Chair Mr. Amador noted the above and that the Committee will continue to discuss long-term care of the trees.

**FUNDING MOTION** (by the Beautification Committee): The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council approves allocating up to \$3,864.00 for a deep watering session of the Cedar Deodar trees on White Oak between by the Los Angeles City Forestry Division.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Amador explained this and that the City's Urban Forestry Department presented last month. "This is a one-time watering"; long-term care is being discussed and Urban Forestry said that deep watering is "the minimum" that can now be done. He noted that the City did not give a timeline on when watering would begin. Ms. Kolstad said adjacent "homeowners need to be advised" that their watering help is needed. Ms. Lopez-Mendoza was "upset and personally offended" about specific communications spoken to several Board Members.

**FUNDING MOTION PASSED** by a roll call vote of the 14 eligible voters present with 12 in favor ("Yes" or "Aye") (Amador, Benedetto, Horn, Karam, LaMonica, Lopez-Mendoza, Oliver, Ronquillo, Sanderson, Serrano, Brad Smith and Toumayan); one opposed ("No" or "Nay") (Jordan); one abstained (the GHSNC does not count abstentions) (Chavon Smith). Ms. Kolstad was ineligible to vote due to not having current Ethics Training and/or Funding Training and/or not having signed the Code of Conduct.

*Board Member Michael Jordan left at (9:10), making 14 Board Members present online (the GHSNC quorum is nine).*

Cultural Affairs Committee.

The Cultural Affairs Committee moves the following motion: The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council commemorates Latin History Month by engaging in social media, elevating community stakeholders stories, and recommending community events and literature.

The Cultural Affairs Committee moves the following motion: The Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council in commemoration of Indigenous People's Day, will engage in social media, elevating community stakeholders' stories, recommending literature, and holding an event in the month of October.

The Cultural Affairs Committee moves the following motion: the Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council believes in the importance of bicycle riding as a means to have a healthy lifestyle. Bicycle riding also promotes caring for the environment. Therefore, the Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council will host a bicycle riding event in the Granada Hills neighborhood in 2021.

Chair Ms. Oliver reported that all three Motions will be brought back next month.

#### Outreach Committee

Chair Ms. Toumayan indicated that there was no report.

#### Public Safety Committee

Chair Mr. Smith reported that Committee Agenda input is sought.

#### PLUM Committee

Chair Ms. Lopez-Mendoza reported that

#### Homelessness Committee

Chair Mr. Horn reported that there may be a meeting “at the end of September.”

#### Education Committee

Chair Ms. Kolstad reported that the Committee will meet this month, possibly with the Seniors Committee.

#### Youth Committee

Chair Ms. Ronquillo reported.

#### Seniors Committee

Chair Ms. Kolstad reported.

### **IX. Board Members positive comments and Submission of Agenda Items.** Next Regular Meeting of the Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council- Thursday October 7, 2021 at 6:30 PM.

Chavon Smith was concerned about “the wording . . . positive” on this Agenda Item. Mr. Cupen-Ames displayed slides on “how to write an Agenda”; he will email the slides to the Board. Mr. Horn said CD12 “has not shown this Neighborhood Council any respect.” Mr. Karam said that “getting the information we’re requesting [from CD12] is really important.” Ms. Oliver resigned at this time and recommended that Chavon Smith be appointed as the Cultural Affairs Committee Chair; Mr. Benedetto will Agendize that for the next Board meeting. Ms. Ronquillo wanted the Board to re-think the possible Board Retreat.

Mr. Smith wanted to Agendize requesting a DONE report about the legalities of Neighborhood Councils, as a branch of the City, seeking outside funding, including partnering with 501(c)3 organizations; and the same regarding the legalities of creating and sustaining an NC internship program to include DONE, the City Attorney and the City Clerk; requesting a report from CD 12 and the L.A.

Department of Recreation and Parks on the status of, and plans for, improving, repairing, and/or replacing the pool at Granada Hills Recreation Center (generally known as Petit Park) (he noted that “it’s been graded by the City at a “D” level for 15 years”); and requesting a report about the City’s plan for providing for the sustainment of the White Oaks Avenue Deodar Trees, LA City Cultural Historical Monument #41, in the face of the current drought. He wanted to “adjourn in honor of those who died in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.” Ms. Toumayan told fellow Board Members that their work “is so appreciated.”

## **X. Adjournment**

**MOTION to ADJOURN** (by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Kolstad).

**MOTION to ADJOURN PASSED**; zero opposed; zero abstained.

The Meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 9:40 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>.*