



# Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council

8250 Foothill Blvd., Suite A, Sunland, CA 91042 - (818) 951-7411 FAX (818) 951-7412

E-mail: [secretary@stnc.org](mailto:secretary@stnc.org)

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

North Valley City Hall, 7747 Foothill Blvd, Tujunga, CA 91042

1. **Call to Order** by Krystee Clark, STNC president. Pledge of Allegiance. Roll Call: Julie Cuddihy, Marlene Hitt, Kat Juarez, John Candler, Pat Kramer, Jon von Gunten, Krystee Clark, Dana Stangel, Charlie Bradley, Pati Potter, Shooshig Avakian, Rick Ramirez, Linda Adran and Ana Orudyan. Quorum established. Amelia Anderson arrived at 6:50 p.m. and Edward Miranian arrived at 7:10 p.m.
2. **President's Announcements:**
  - Krystee congratulated Shooshig Avakian for her appointment by the Mayor as North Valley Board of Neighborhood Commissioners rep.
  - Announced two open board seats: **Secretary** and **Region 4 Representative**. Any stakeholders or board members interested in filling the vacant positions must submit a statement announcing their desire to fill the vacancy and their qualifications to do so to [secretary@stnc.org](mailto:secretary@stnc.org) and [president@stnc.org](mailto:president@stnc.org) at least 24 hours prior to the next general meeting on October 11, 2017. There will be a reading of the Bylaws and Standing rules pertaining to filling positions. Current Bylaws and Standing Laws are available at our website <http://www.stnc.org>  
**Region 4 Representative** – shall be considered from stakeholders who live (either homeowner, renter, or other fixed living arrangement), work or own property South of Foothill Blvd.  
**Secretary** – shall be considered from stakeholders who live (either homeowner, renter, or other fixed living arrangement), work or own property in Sunland-Tujunga and will fulfill correspondence duties at the direction of the President, including, but not limited to, correspondence with other Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils and the various Los Angeles City government agencies. He/She will be responsible for maintaining the contact lists of STNC Board and committee members and community stakeholders, and shall coordinate with the staff Logistics Manager to ensure the timely posting of notices of Board meetings, committee meetings, elections, and other items of interest to the STNC community. He/She shall take minutes at the Agenda and Board meetings in the absence of the appointed
  - Julie Cuddihy gave a recap of the Congress of Neighborhoods on Sept. 9th.
  - She invited stakeholders to attend the Cemetery Tour put on by the Verdugo Hills Cemetery, a Bolton Hall fundraiser, on October 14, 2017
  - Announced the STNC Outstanding Community Leader Recognition event, Sept. 21, 2017.
  - Asked people who want to speak fill out speaker cards and acknowledged board member Pat Kramer for taking the minutes as Aris, the former secretary, has resigned.
3. **Event Announcements:**
  - Karen von Gunten talked about the Cemetery Tour on Oct. 14, 2017 at the Pioneer Cemetery in Tujunga.
  - Linda Ceremano of Shadow Hills asked for support opposing a container storage project on a landfill site.
  - Manuel Avilez, a member of the Junior STNC, asked for donations for their annual food drive, Sept. 23 at Vons.
  - Amelia Anderson, STNC Homeless Advocate, explained that the Mobile Medical van that was previously scheduled for a visit to Sunland, will be coming at another time. It was hijacked to another area that needed it right away.
  - Dana Stangel of Teranga Ranch announced their annual bat program, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>. 5 p.m. at a location TBA.
  - Nina Royal, STNC Safety Chair, is planning a Disaster Drill for the community on Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.



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## 4. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction

- Albert Shagonian commented on issues surrounding permitting projects on a landfill site.
- Matt, president of the Jr. STNC, asked for donations for Houston's flood victims.
- Chuck McFate said he researched the issue of the chlorine smell in the water and stated that it was the result of the tarp that covers the reservoir having been burned in the fire causing contamination to the water and the need for more chlorine.
- Lydia Grant, who volunteered at the Congress of NCs, thanked STNC members who showed up, especially the students.
- Krystee spoke about new planting of trees that are drought resistant at the Redmont Pumping Station in Tujunga which will provide better foliage to cover the building frontage. Work will begin in the winter.

## 5. Public Official and Community Representative Announcements

LAPD Senior Lead Officer Cesar Contreras said crime has dropped by 2-3% in our S-T area in the past month which has allowed LAPD to work on quality of life issues. He has been working with Building and Safety to try to alleviate nuisance situations, which is working out well. They have also been productive on towing RVs off the streets as the laws support impounding vehicles parked for a certain amount of time on public streets.

City Neighborhood Prosecutor Mark Ross introduced himself and explained how they get involved in trying to resolve ongoing nuisance situations where traditional prosecution hasn't solved the problem. His email is: [mark.ross@lacity.org](mailto:mark.ross@lacity.org).

Eve Sinclair, deputy for CD7 Monica Rodriguez, gave an update on hunting season, which has opened with bow and arrow hunting in our area. There will be increased patrols of Forest Rangers to try to alleviate any issues that come up. Regarding the recent firestorm, the Councilwoman has put forward a motion to instruct all city departments to evaluate how they did and what they could improve.

DOT, Assistant General Manager and Chief Engineer Daniel Mitchell introduced himself. He oversees emergency response, traffic signals and roadways. He asked those present what the DOT could do better and said that we have the attention of the DOT at the highest level, with safety, their highest priority.

## 6. **Motion to remove bollards and barriers and restore two lanes of traffic on Foothill Boulevard, Sunland: (Kramer/Bradley) moved:**

**"On behalf of the stakeholders in Region 1, the community of Sunland-Tujunga and in reaction to over 1000 petition signers throughout our local Foothill communities; The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council requests that the Department of Transportation and all agencies related to traffic control in the City of Los Angeles, be notified to immediately remove the bollards and barriers starting at Foothill Boulevard by Sunland Park going west to Wentworth Street, with complete restoration of two lanes of traffic in either direction.**

**"These recommendations come after experiencing the recent La Tuna Canyon firestorm which closed down the 210 Foothill Freeway at Sunland Boulevard for days and forced tens of thousands of motorists onto a single lane in either direction East & West on Foothill Boulevard while thousands of residents were fleeing their homes due to mandatory evacuations.**

**"Based on the extreme difficulties caused by the reduction of lanes on our only main thoroughfare from the installation of seldom-utilized bike lanes; and taking into account the hours of delays and gridlock traffic caused by the lane reductions during this emergency disaster; and based on how these very concerns were expressed to our City officials and Department of Transportation reps when the lane reductions took place earlier this year – specifically, our concerns about how the single lanes would cause gridlock to motorists and impact our emergency services in a disaster; and based on the**



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occurrences of at least three traffic accidents in this same area of Foothill Boulevard during the fire as motorists were trying to get out quickly we are requesting immediate action.”

Following the motion being presented, the Junior STNC showed an informational presentation on problems created by the new bike lanes: Manuel and Matt pointed out how the bike lanes accumulate trash and aren't being cleaned, creating a fire hazard. Said they were installed in early April without consulting the community and that less than 1 percent of people bike to work, among other data.

DOT Asst. GM Mitchell responded to their bike lanes presentation saying that installing green bike lanes is a contentious issue with the film industry. Also, DOT would need a special contract with a vendor to do them and it would take time. However, he acknowledged that they were able to put in the bollards, reduce the lanes on Foothill, and restripe it overnight. Regarding the bollards, he said they could be run over in case of emergency and were not so much protection for bicyclists as they were designed to be a visual separation to discourage people from driving in the bike lanes. He also presented the idea of putting in elevated bike lanes but said that option could not be done in areas where parking spaces existed.

## Comments on the Motion, itself:

- o Pat Kramer (motion maker): The lane reductions have not changed unsafe driving or lessened problems with traffic accidents; they have just created a new problem.
- o Joyce Pelland said that the intersection at Foothill & Sunland has always been a problem and wondered if DOT could improve it.
- o Chuck McFate said 99% of the time, we don't see bike riders in the bike lanes. He asked how many bicyclists have been involved in accidents on that stretch.
- o Lisa Rose, a Shadow Hills homeowner and avid cyclist spoke in favor of keeping the bike lanes however, she is concerned about safety issues and afraid to ride in this area.
- o Andy Garner, a resident of Sunland, thinks we should have safety for the bicyclists and two lanes of q traffic in either direction (total of four lanes).
- o Vonceil Allford of Sunland said had to evacuate and was caught in horrible traffic. She researched terminology from a major project in our area and found that the City of L.A. defines Foothill Boulevard as a "major highway" and that as such, four fulltime lanes of travel are required, under that definition.
- o Heidi Geyer read her letter that stated that "Vision Zero" legally disregarded the provisions of Foothill Boulevard. She presented the results of her online petition asking for removal of the bollards and barriers and restoration of the roadway to two lanes in either direction with 1200 signatures.
- o Ramie Case, a Sunland business owner, said she loves bike lanes but they are not working in our community. She noted that parents and students' commute time has doubled and tripled from the lane reductions. She pointed out that the fire just accentuated what was already an issue and wrong with the design of the DOT bike lanes.
- o Maja Trochinczyk stated that this stretch of Foothill, contrary to the DOT, is not the most dangerous stretch. She has written and sent letters to the DOT asking them to remove the bollards, four times, but gotten no response and said this issue has created a dangerous situation.
- o Joie Hancock said she was a friend of Jeff Knopp, the cyclist who was killed Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> on Foothill Boulevard by a motorist. She is in favor of the bike lanes and wants cyclists protected but feels motorists should slow down.
- o Marlene Rader talked about how she couldn't pick up her granddaughter during the fire because of the traffic congestion and she and her husband were also unable to evacuate their horses because they couldn't get their horse trailer thought due to the narrowing of the road.
- o David DePinto, president of SHOPOA (Shadow Hills Homeowners' Association), said that in many instances, horse trailers were unable to get out of the area because of the roadways being congested and the narrow lanes. He said the bike lanes are redundant and he don't believe the data supports the way the project was done or implemented. He asked who signed off on this roadway change and when that decision was made. He stated that we don't need trains or special bike lanes in this area.



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- Lydia Grant said that she was at a meeting for the Safe Streets Committee and that the public was against all of the suggestions that were proposed to slow down traffic. She said the meeting was not well attended because it wasn't properly noticed and that the comments from the stakeholders were disregarded. She pointed out that LAPD had to call for help during the fire to get their officers into the area.
- Nina Royal stated that mass evacuations would be a nightmare. She is Safety Chair for STNC and is planning a Disaster Drill in January. She said that with the narrowing of Foothill, no one could get to the Command Central post at Hansen Dam and in case of an earthquake, it would be a total disaster because there's only one way in and one way out.
- Dana Stangel felt that a lot of the congestion during the fire was caused by lookey-loos who should have stayed in their homes and sheltered in place.
- Paula Butcher talked about Foothill Boulevard being a mess and that the k-rails on the hillside are, at best, a band aid against mud slides. She thinks a study should be done of successful bike lane usages as in the Oregon State Bike Lanes.
- Pati Potter said she was against the letter because it doesn't go far enough. She talked about the impact from the onslaught of motorists on Foothill with the 210 Sunland ramp shut down. She noted that this area's infrastructure cannot support any increase in population as the streets are not built for expansion.
- Albert Shagonian said the city needs to design the roads with common sense. He pointed out that our city reps work for us and shouldn't be making excuses for these problems.
- Marlene Hitt suggested the DOT investigate city easements to see whether bike lanes would work on properties along Foothill where frontage could be taken for easements.
- Jon von Gunten noted that this areas has had 3 major fires in less than 10 years (2 in the past year) and this is a frequent occurrence – not occasional. He believes the problem began with the CA State Speed Trap Law. He said that the DOT is using cyclists to slow down traffic by installing these bike lanes and that puts cyclists at risk and is illogical. He suggested rerouting bike lanes to slower side streets and that LAPD ensure there is radar gun coverage on Foothill to slow down traffic.
- Jennifer Knopp, widow of Jeff Knopp who was killed last November on his bicycle on Foothill Boulevard, said she was never told about the bollards being put in – that was something that came from the City. She stated that she wants there to be better safety measures for bicyclists and that people should slow down.

**The motion passed with one opposed (Potter) and one abstention (Avakian).**

**7. Elected Officials announcements, cont.:** Vickere Murphy, deputy for State Senator Portantino talked about the School Start time bill and asked people to contact her with any issues.

**8. PRESENTATION:** Sarah Bell, liaison to the Los Angeles Sanitation Department handling issues ranging from illegal dumping to homeless encampments. **Tabled.**

**9. PRESENTATION:** Cindy Sower from Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council speaks on ways to help strengthen laws in regards to illegal fireworks. **Tabled.**

**10. Approval of Minutes:** (Clark/Bradley) moved approval of the minutes of the August 9th 2017 Special Meeting. The motion was tabled to the next meeting for further information.

**11. MER Approvals:** (Clark/Bradley) moved approval of the May 2017, June 2017, July 2017 and August 2017 Monthly Expenditure Reports. Shooshig explained DONE's new finance system. The motion carried with three abstentions (Potter, Anderson and Hitt).

**12. Approval of Budget:** (Clark/Avakian) moved approval of the new Budget with a current balance of \$42,000. The motion carried with two abstentions: (Potter and Anderson).



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**13. Payment of Ongoing Expenses: (Clark/Stangel) moved payment of ongoing expenses including Monthly Expenditures including the website, constant contact, the copier, general office supplies, refreshments for meetings, general Outreach supplies and swag costs to comply with new funding system. Totals shall be voted on in a rounded up manner. The motion carried with one abstention (Potter).**

**14. Board and Committee Reports:**

**a. Outreach:**

**(Clark/Candler) moved to approve \$1200 for STNC's involvement in the Armenian Cultural Festival as a sponsor on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2017. The motion carried with one opposed (Anderson) and one abstention (Miranian).**

Dana gave an update on the Appreciation Event on September 21, 2017 to acknowledge exceptional locals and committee members on their extraordinary work for our community.

**b. Land Use Committee: (Potter/Ramirez) moved approval of a comment letter to the City Planning Commission regarding the Cannabis Land Use Regulations ordinance. The motion failed: 6-8 (2 abstentions: Cuddihy & Stangel). Opposed: (Clark, Bradley, Adran, Juarez, Ramirez, Miranian).**

**c. Arts, Recreation and Culture (Clark/Hitt) moved to approve \$500 for food and beverages for those attending the free "Hanukkah In The Foothills" event sponsored by the STARC Committee to be held at the McGroarty Arts Center in December. Request that STNC have time to plug our role in the community." The motion carried unanimously.**

c. Report from Budget Advocates – None.

d. Bylaws Committee – Bylaws will be broken down into easily absorbed small sections to vote on when our necessary 15 members are present.

e. Women Empowering Sunland-Tujunga (WEST) Committee- Ana announced that the Tea Party, previously proposed for October, has been postponed until January 2018.

f. Homeless liaison – Amelia said there will be another homeless count in January. The homeless population locally has increased by 4% as opposed to 23% in the City.

**15. Closing Comments:** DONE rep Vanessa Serrano informed the board that an abstention does not count as a vote. Also, the City Council will be taking a vote on elections being pushed back to 2019. If we want to do a selection process, we can, in 2018. We can discuss it at an open Town Hall meeting,

**16. Meeting Adjourned at 10:06 p.m.**