

Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council Special General Board Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2025, 7pm

This meeting is being held by the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council using teleconferencing pursuant to Government Code Section 54953.8(a)(2)(B).

1. **Call to Order, Welcome** - Lydia Grant, President, 7:03pm. Opening remarks by Lydia:
 - a. Report Non Functioning Street Lights <https://forms.gle/yGjnKBXDVoFDDYdEA>
 - b. New MyLA311 app – Lydia suggested downloading the new app, an app to help with service requests and improve communication with the City.
 - c. The City is conducting a citywide survey for our Parks, the LA Parks Assessment Survey. Information and the link to the survey is available on the STNC.org website. Lydia encouraged people to fill out the survey.
 - d. The STNC has created an Emergency Preparedness Committee that has an immediate focus on egress in the event of an emergency. There were 2 recent incidents where Foothill Blvd was closed down and knowing alternate routes is important.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**, lead by Leny Freeman.
3. **Roll Call, Voting Eligibility** - Karen Moran, Recording Secretary & Completion of City / DONE Required trainings status for the STNC board & committees

Board Member	Roll Call	Funding Voting Eligibility	Board Appointment
Lydia Grant	Present	Yes	President
Armen Mardirousi	Absent	Yes	1st VP
Ross Herman	Present	Yes	2nd VP
Carol Hutchinson	Present	Yes	Treasurer
Cindy Cleghorn	Present	Yes	Correspondence Sec
Karen Moran	Present	Yes	Recording Sec
Leny Freeman	Present	Yes	Region 1 Rep

Board Member	Roll Call	Funding Voting Eligibility	Board Appointment
KT Travers	Present	Yes	Region 1 Rep
Sherry McCoy	Present	Yes	Region 2 Rep.
Vacant			Region 2 Rep
Mike Goglia	Absent	Yes	Region 3 Rep
Peter Darakjian	Absent	Yes	Region 3 Rep
Jon von Gunten	Present	Yes	Region 3 Rep.
Belinda Woodruff	Absent	No	Region 4 Rep
Trevor Schmidt	Absent	Yes	Region 4 Rep
Mark Seigel	Present	Yes	Region 4 Rep
Deborah Ramirez	Absent	Yes	Education Rep
Cheryl Schmidt	Present	Yes	Public Safety Rep
Nina Royal	Present	Yes	Senior Rep
Vartan Keshish	Present	Yes	Community Interest Rep
Quorum: 12 present at roll call, 7 absent (19 total). Note that Nina Royal came in after roll-call.			

Members of the Community, including new candidates running for offices, include Regina Clark, Sue Ellen Hussung, Dante Calvo, Doug Chapin, Mikal McEnany, Susan Denning, Maggie Sietz, and Melissa Sagastume.

4. **Announce any Board member recusals or paid lobbyists in attendance.** None identified.
5. **Upcoming Community Events:** Lydia noted that events might also be in the newsletter
 - a. Our Lady of Lourdes - Fish Fry 4/11
 - b. Earth Day Events
6. **Discussion/Possible Action & Updates regarding Truck Traffic with fires debris dropping in Seven Hills - STNC Letter,** Resources: SCAQMD, LA County, Others
 - a. Lydia provided a background about the Altadena debris basin clear-out that is being dumped in the Zachau Sediment Placement Site in the Seven Hills area of Tujunga. The debris basin in Altadena is surrounded by homes completely burned to the ground. The County has stated there is no toxic hazard based on their sampling. There are about 130 truck trips on a daily basis and it has been frustrating for the community members who can smell a burning, acrid smell. There are no protections around the Zachau site and winds can blow the debris around the area. Testing from the County has been limited for what was tested and how/where it is collected. Two small samples about 4 inches into the dirt were the only tests conducted by the County. STNC has asked for a restraining order on the trucks. A council woman did write a letter in

support of Sunland Tujunga concerns. The County will not let further testing of the soil to be done by any outside requests. STNC is working with State Senator Carol Menjivar's Office and others, continuing to push concerns forward as much as possible. It is obvious that the County intends to continue until it is completed. Lydia noted that we need an air quality test and suggested that if anyone has additional information to let her know so we can include it in our continuing efforts.

- b. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) representatives, Alicia Lizarrag and Debra Ashby, were present to provide information about how to report air quality concerns. AQMD is a regulatory agency for implementing air quality per Debra. Debra said to report a complaint, you can either call at 800-CUT-SMOG (7664) or go on-line at AQMD.gov, emphasizing that the report should take place when the incident/experience is happening. When several people report the same issues, it helps to support the AQMD team in investigating the concern. During non-business hours, the system prompts for information that includes the address and wind direction. Inspectors will contact the community member as a follow up. Debra said that many follow up phone calls have gone unanswered because the person didn't recognize the phone number. Information is confidential and complaints can even be made anonymously. An app is available for mobile phones, fully translated into Spanish also. Debra is available to drop off fliers about how to file air quality complaints, or people should feel free to email her at dashby@aqmd.gov.
- c. Jon V asked what the latest info was for our Seven Hills area and commented that AQMD has known for 3-4 weeks that there is a problem and it seems that they seem to have no teeth to do anything about it. Jon noted that his wife had been outside doing yardwork but had to go inside because the smell, with the wind direction, was overwhelming. Debra encouraged reporting as the experience was happening. Lydia said a lot of people have been reporting it, and the truck drivers even concur that there is an acrid smell. Lydia said that many City agencies have said that they do not understand why dumping has to be at Zachau with so many houses in the immediate area. Karen Waters asked Lydia a question about how many homes are impacted; hundreds per Lydia. Karen asked if anyone had contacted the Assessor's Office, noting that property values are bound to be affected. Lydia will reach out to the assessor's office. Susan Denning noted that, in her experience, AQMD doesn't work after-hours and responses can be slow.

7. Discussion/Q&A with LAPD, LAFD, Elected Officials/Representatives, DONE, NC Budget Advocates, City Departments

- a. Officer Caloca LAPD. Caloca provided a status report of crimes which were down in some areas and up in others. Caloca talked about the recent Foothill Blvd shut downs and what precipitated them. In both cases there was criminal activities and the offenders were arrested. Caloca noted that she was involved with directing traffic; it was obvious that people didn't know detour routes and at times tried to navigate around her instead of following directions. Caloca will reach out to Ross Herman. Bus drivers making tight turns were the most challenged. Susan Denning inquired about DUI incidents. Caloca said that this would be under traffic enforcement and she might be able to get information from them.
- b. Sergeant Jesse Ojeda, provided a status and said that he will invite someone from the Traffic division to come to the next meeting (in June).
- c. Diane Rana, California State Assembly District Director, and Alex Avanesyan, Field Rep from the California State Assembly (Assemblymember Nick Schultz Office). Diane said they are working to get testing done of the soil and appreciates communications with STNC noting there have been concerns about transparency and conflicting public health guidance. Melissa Sagastume

noted that there is an Environment Quality Committee for the State of California. Diane noted that they have no enforcement arms. Alicia Lizarraga noted that there is a California State enforcement board which regulates mobile sources (e.g. cars, trains etc.). Lydia said that she will move forward with Environmental Protection Affairs (EPA).

- d. Ricardo Flores, Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez, CD7, provided a briefing on current bills; there are 19 bills that have been introduced. Ricardo also statused events that are coming up, including Hansen Dam clean-up and the Eggs-stravaganza event. Ricardo encouraged people to take the Park survey. The Verdugo Hills High School is pool about 90 % completed. There will be a Dog Park in the San Fernando Valley that will be opened June 7th. The Dept of Sanitation is in contact with the County and efforts to complete debris dumping should be the week of April 18th. KT asked if the council member is going to attend the Welcome Garden event on Saturday. Ross invited Ricardo to attend one of the Tuesday night meetings to discuss the 4th of July Parade, noting that there is a lot of controversy about whether the parade should be continued or not. There were additional comments from Lydia, Leny and Jon about the continued toxic dumping at Zachau.
- e. Diana Oganessian, Supervisor Kathryn Barger's Office, provided a status of on-going events, including the L.A. County Fair in Pacoima that is starting up. Lydia requested a meeting be arranged with Barger and herself. Ross commented that it was their office that should have been aware about the dumping issue and notifying the community. Diana said that the decisions were made without their input and acknowledged that they could have done a better job notifying the community. Ross asked if their office could help resolve the issue, noting that environmental issues were put to the side for the clean-up. Lydia recalled that during the Station Fire, when the fire was heading into the city of L.A., the City didn't realize it and didn't activate any of the animal service programs that would have protected the animals (e.g. egress for horses), noting that in one location 27 horses burned to death. Ricardo said they are trying to get people to register their horses with the City so they can provide information in the future.
- f. Karen Waters, Commissioner, North Valley Department of Neighborhood Councils. Karen discussed the new by-laws/rules revisions and said that there is a link in the department's website to make comments. The City attorney will work with the ad-hoc committee before final release of the By-Laws.
- g. Jose Galdamez, Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate, reminded about deadlines for funding requests that need to be approved, and provided bill status updates. Lydia asked how we would pay for events if funds were cut off. Jose said to submit requests ahead of time and also to make sure we have ordered supplies. Ross asked about budget rollover dates; Jose said that this information will be available April 21st and he will advise Ross about the rollover dates when known.

8. **CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS (FUNDING) MOTION:** The STNC Board approves the funding consent calendar:

- a. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve March 2025 Monthly Expenditure Report and Balances. (MER)
- b. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve up to \$1000 Sponsorship for Little Landers Historical Society Home Tour May 10, 2025
- c. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve up to \$288.42 reimbursement to Carol Hutchinson for refreshments for 3/12/25 General Board meeting

- d. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve moving Outreach light pole banner funds to General Outreach funds in the amount of \$4000.00
- e. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve up to \$130 for renewal of CANVA license
- f. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve \$657 invoice for candidate selection banners, Sunland Printing
- g. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve \$50 to be paid to Elks Lodge 2098 for use of meeting space for 3/12/2025 meeting
- h. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve \$418.98 for repairs to the Welcome Garden irrigation system.
- i. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve \$2000 to be set aside from Elections funds to be held in Outreach General funds in case it is needed for soil testing at Zachau dump site
- j. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve up to \$300 candy for Spring event at Sunland Park (April 20) – *Ross noted that the event is April 19, not the 20th.*
- k. Discussion/Action: Motion to approve February 2025 MER

The motion made by Cheryl and seconded by Leny, passed. Cindy recused herself from all items.

Item 8. Motion to approve Funding Calendar items A through K.					
Motion: C Schmidt, Second: Freeman					
Yes	No	Abstain	Ineligible	Recuse	Absent
Grant, Herman, Hutchinson, Moran, Freeman, Travers, McCoy, Seigel, C Schmidt, Royal, Keshish <i>11 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain, 0 ineligible, 6 absent, 19 total</i>		Von Gunten		Cleghorn	Mardirousi, Goglio, Darakjian, Woodruff, T Schmidt, Ramirez

9. **CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS (NON-FUNDING)** - MOTION: The STNC Board approves the non-funding consent calendar:

- a. Discussion/Motion: To approve March 2025 board meeting minutes
- b. Discussion/Motion: To approve Town Halls without need of board quorum

A motion was made by Cheryl and seconded by Ross. The motion passed.

Item 9. Motion to approve Non-Funding Calendar items A and B.					
Motion: C Schmidt, Second: Herman					
Yes	No	Abstain	Ineligible	Recuse	Absent

Grant, Herman, Cleghorn, Hutchinson, Moran, Von Gunten, Freeman, Travers, McCoy, Royal, Keshish <i>11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 ineligible, 8 absent, 19 total</i>					Mardirousi, Goglio, Darakjian, Woodruff, T Schmidt, Ramirez, C Schmidt, Seigel
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10. **Discussion/Motion:** Should the STNC work to coordinate/collaborate planning and production of the Sunland-Tujunga 4th of July Parade? A motion was made by Cindy and seconded by Ross.

- a. Ross gave background about the 4th of July parade, now threatened to not be carried on after 40 years. The parade is hosted by the Rotary, but there are now only about 5-6 people in the Rotary and they cannot continue to support it alone. In addition, there have been problems with members of the public throwing water balloons and using water guns on the people in the parade. The aggressiveness of these 'water attacks' has prompted a number of groups to withdraw from the parade, such as the equestrian unit. The Rotary needs help if the parade is to continue and the water events have to be addressed. Lydia, Mark, Cindy and Ross have been active in attending meetings with the Rotary and American Legion to see how the STNC can help. The Rotary provides insurance through their national chapter. Meetings are Tuesdays at 7pm at Caruso's, if anyone wants to join. 36-50 people to man the streets alone.

A motion was made by Cindy, seconded by Ross, and approved.

Item 10. Motion to approve STNC working to coordinate/collaborate planning and production of the Sunland-Tujunga 4th of July Parade.					
Motion: Cleghorn, Second: Herman					
Yes	No	Abstain	Ineligible	Recuse	Absent
Grant, Herman, Cleghorn, Hutchinson, Moran, Von Gunten, Travers, Seigel, McCoy, Royal, Keshish <i>11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 ineligible, 8 absent, 19 total</i>					Mardirousi, Goglio, Darakjian, Woodruff, T Schmidt, Ramirez, Freeman, C Schmidt,

11. **STNC Board Candidates Introductions.** Current Board members who hope to retain their positions and potential board members who are new to STNC introduced themselves and shared why they would like to be part of STNC.

- Future (potential) members included Michel McEnany (Region 3 Rep), Melissa Sagastume (Region 3 Rep), Tim Smith (Community Interest Representative). (Note: Dante Calvo, Region 4 Rep, previously left the meeting).

- Current Board members included Karen Moran (Recording Secretary), Sherry McCoy (Region 2 Rep), Vartan Keshish (Community Interest Rep), Jon von Gunten (Region 3 Rep), Ross Herman (Second Vice President, Outreach), Cindy Cleghorn (Corresponding Secretary), Nina Royal (Senior Rep), Mark Seigel (Region 4 Rep), Lydia Grant (President).

12. DISCUSSION/ACTION: Approve letter to CM Rodriguez for use of North Valley Neighborhood City Hall for STNC board meetings 2nd Wednesday of each month 6pm-10pm

- Lydia provided the background of the issue. In years past (pre-covid), the STNC could use the North Valley City Hall for their meetings, but after Monica Rodriguez's Office decided to renovate it, and post-covid, STNC would be charged about \$204/hour for use of the Hall for their meetings – a cost that is exorbitant for 4 hours that the meeting could take, and not able to be funded through the current budget.
- Cindy read the draft letter to Monica Rodriguez that requested use of the NVCH for STNC General Board meetings once a month as had previously been baselined. Vartan suggested we have an open letter in the L.A. Times. Lydia asked Karen Waters if she could share how other Neighborhood Councils were dealing with meeting places including how many were using city facilities vs. private locales. Karen has requested that all NCs be able to have meeting places at affordable costs and that city locations be available for the NCs. Karen will see what the current status is for her requests. Karen said that some fire stations have been available to NCs during hours when fire station personnel are there, and some other meeting places included City Hall (downtown L.A.), and churches. Karen suggested that, where possible, STNC should try to stay within the working hours for the NVCH.
- Lydia said that STNC has used local schools for meetings (at a total cost of around \$160), but it is very inconvenient to have to bring our own tables, etc. from storage for the meetings. There is no local police station available for STNC meetings, per Lydia. The nearest is located in Pacoima per Jon. Jose said that Security has to be in place and that is a NC responsibility. Cindy gave additional background, saying that in 2015, non-profit organizations were moved into the NVCH building, forcing STNC to vacate. STNC had previously had a small office for the Board and a meeting space for the meetings. Between the pandemic and Rodriguez directed remodeling, STNC now has to pay for LAPD security if meetings are after-hours. The Letter is asking for at least our monthly meeting to be able to be held at no charge. Cindy noted that the meeting room previously had been filled to capacity and that it would be helpful to see how other NCs are handling meeting spaces.

A motion made by Ross and seconded by Vartan which passed.

Item 12. Motion to approve a letter to CM Rodriguez for use of the North Valley Neighborhood City Hall for STNC board meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 6pm-10pm.

Motion: Herman, Second: Keshish

Yes	No	Abstain	Ineligible	Recuse	Absent
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Grant, Herman, Cleghorn, Hutchinson, Moran, Von Gunten, Travers, Seigel, McCoy, Royal, Keshish					Mardirousi, Goglio, Darakjian, Woodruff, Freeman, T Schmidt, Ramirez, C Schmidt
11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 ineligible, 8 absent, 19 total					

13. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS** - Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda that are within the Board's jurisdiction will be heard during the General Public Comment period.

14. **Committee & Liaison Reports** - by committee chairs present:

- Land Use Committee - Next Meeting April 14 @ 7:30pm. Cindy gave an overview of the LUC. Lydia said that the STNC website has a tool that allows look-up for properties (e.g. permits obtained, etc.).
- Beautification: 4/17 @ 6PM - in person @ ST Library. KT expressed gratitude for funding for repairs. Ross said that the Welcome Garden near the 210 Freeway (off Foothill Blvd) is lovely with everything blooming at this time of the year.
- Outreach Meeting - 4/17 @ 7PM - virtual Zoom. Ross encouraged people to attend the Sunland Park Easter event (April 19th) and the May 24th Small Business Bazaar. Ross noted future events including the 4th of July parade and National Night Out. Ross and Cheryl will be taking on more responsibilities from Nina for National Night out.
- STAT - 4/22 - @ 6PM - virtual Zoom
- STARC: 4/22 @ 7:30PM - in person @ McGroarty Art Center. KT noted that the speaker at the last meeting discussed what could be done to protect homes in the event of a fire; you can make a fire-hardened house but proper landscaping is critical also.
- Youth & Adult Education: - TBA
- Budget & Finance: 4/30 @ 6pm. Lydia – Lydia noted that L.A. is \$1B in the hole at this time; STNC has a team that looks at the City budget and makes recommendations.
- Community Improvement & Government Affairs - 4/30 @ 6:30PM
- Executive: 4/30 @ 7:00pm

15. **PRESENTATION & TRAINING** on the Neighborhood Council (NC) System. *Note that in the interest of time, this section was not discussed in any detail.*

- Bylaws, Standing Rules, BONC Policies, Brown Act (Meeting Agenda Posting, ENS)
- NC Meetings: Agenda Items, Presenters, Meeting Agendas, Making Motions, Community Impact Statements
- NC Alliances (Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils - VANC meets 2nd Thursday on Zoom; LANCC meets 1st Saturday at 10am; PlanCheckNC meets 2nd Saturday at 10am, STNC Community Events/Meetings, Other Training Opportunities

16. **FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Lydia reminded people that STNC Election voting will be at the Elks' Lodge on May 17th (1-4pm) and there would be an opportunity to talk with some of the candidates after voting with refreshments provided.
- Cindy reminded people that there is an "Historic House Tour" sponsored by Bolton Hall on May 17th from 10am to 4pm. (See boltonhall.org for more information and tickets).
- KT said this Saturday, from 8-11:30 am, there will be a planting event at the Tujunga Welcome Gardens located at Pali and Foothill. Volunteers will help install lush, low-water native foliage. People are welcomed to come and help with the planting. Additionally, on April 19th, Indigenous People's Day, there will be another planting event at Big Tujunga Canyon (11950 Big Tujunga Canyon Road), also from 8-11:30 am. Volunteers will participate in a large-scale land restoration planting, adding native trees, shrubs, and bulbs. KT noted that the LA Conservation Corp has already planted many trees.
- Karen Waters provided her email address: karen.waters@lacity.org.

17. **ADJOURN**, 9:49 pm