

Stevens Creek Neighborhood Association - SCNA

Meeting Minutes October 27, 2008

The regular meeting of the Stevens Creek Neighborhood Association – SCNA was called to order at 6:35 on November 27, 2008 in West Valley Branch Library, Community Room by the Association President, Amy Terrill.

Present:

Pete Constant (Assistant to District 1 Councilman), Rhovylynn Cansino (Assistant to District 1 Councilman), Amy Terrill, Joan Schell, Ramiz Louis, Nagah Louis, Ed Brooks, Patty Brooks, Al Camarlinghi, Carole Camarlinghi, Robert Benscutter, Diqun Gong, Deborah Hartoon, Anni Ketterer, Lee Kopp, Elizabeth Mc Laughlin, Robert Moctezuma, Dale Porter, Don Price, Ida Sallas, Dave Snow, Kostas Stathopoulos, Tom Sullivan, Victoria Teng, Karen Thomas, David Fiero, Frances Fiero. A total of 36 people attended, but not everyone signed in.

Discussion Agenda and Action Items

1. Boundaries and bylaws were discussed.

Amy introduced herself and the board members present Ramiz Louis and Joan Schell. She briefly discussed the Neighborhood Association boundaries and bylaws and encouraged the neighbors to read the SCNA website <http://www.stevenscreekna.com/> or pick up copies available on the table. She also mentioned the SCNA yahoo group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/StevensCreekNA/>

2. Councilman Pete Constant spoke.

Pete Constant explained to us the boundaries of his district, San Jose District 1, which contains 100,000 residents. He explained that the NA's in his district help him identify issues for groups (rather than individuals) and how that helps him resolve issues. There are currently over 25 NAs in the district and leaders from these NAs meet with him every 1-2 months to find solutions to the issues and problems. He encouraged us to plan social events and get to know one another to make our neighborhood safer and stronger. He said that the more you know about your neighbors, the more protected your neighborhood is. Pete Constant mentioned the SJD1 resource center at Williams and Doyle. Regarding CAP grant funds, they are for starting up, but not for ongoing budget, so we should find sponsors or hold fund raisers. He suggested that some popular events held by other NAs include the following:

- Blood Drives
- Earthquake Preparedness
- Garage Sales
- Picnics

When a neighborhood issue is not satisfactorily addressed, he or his office staff can personally help us deal with city bureaucracy by contacting the City Manager and the problems can be addressed from the top down. Simple issues can often be addressed directly by calling the appropriate department, for example:

- Police Services and traffic calming - traffic unit phone number is (408) 277-4341
- Neighborhood Trouble-Shooter website is <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/ts.asp> and you can find a variety of city services and phone numbers

He offered to be our advocate on issues that were important to us. He asked us if we had questions.

3. Councilman Pete Constant answered questions.

Q1: What percentage of the neighborhood should be involved to make a successful NA?

A1: Percentage does not reflect success. A better measure of success is what a neighborhood accomplishes towards improving the quality of life for the residents.

Q2: How much involvement can we expect when a large portion of our neighborhood population is transient?

A2: Being a renter does not mean that you can't be engaged in your neighborhood. The NA can be a tool to empower renters to improve their environment. The NA can also invite owners to get involved and promote positive change.

Q3: How can businesses be involved in a positive way?

A3: Businesses have many things to offer the NA, both tangible and intangible. It is all about building a relationship. Maybe a business can pay your mailing costs or sign costs or host meetings. If you have five car dealerships and one is causing problems, the other four can bring pressure on them to clean up their act. Pete said he could approach businesses that have specific problems, like the 7-11 and customers with drug involvement or other businesses that are violating their Conditional Use Permits and causing dangerous or annoying situations in the neighborhood.

4. Patty Brooks and Ed Brooks from the Strawberry Park NA spoke.

Pete Constant introduced President Patty Brooks and Treasurer Ed Brooks from SPNA. Patty discussed the need for committed people to get active in the community and talk to neighbors in order to make positive change. Ed discussed the positive benefits that they had achieved in their neighborhood through their association and confirmed that improvement doesn't happen quickly, but if you are patient and consistent, the NA can accomplish big change. They offered to help us get started and Amy mentioned that they had already been a huge help by providing templates for our website and valuable advice on many subjects.

5. Attendees introduced themselves, where they lived, and discussed their issues and concerns.

A variety of concerns were addressed, and overall the issues were:

- Garbage and blight on Albany & Richfield and the surrounding area was identified and neighbors agreed that it should be cleaned up.
- Young people in groups are acting like thugs, drug dealing, stumbling around drunk in public, fighting, menacing people, and have nothing constructive to do in the neighborhood.
- Parking problems: Due to high-density living, there are more cars than parking spaces and some people park poorly. Painted marks on the street might help people park better. Adding to the parking congestion is the fact that the car dealerships do not allow their employees to park on-site and all the parking spaces are filled so there is no place to park. The red striping on the curbs has faded and there is a lot of corner parking and people parking too close to the alley exits. Big trucks for Lions supermarket and moving companies park in the "No Parking" zones and it is dangerous to pass them.
- Speeding problems: the tow trucks from Courtesy Tow Service at 125 Richfield Dr come speeding down Albany, driving in the middle of the road. On Norwalk there is no center line and people sometimes think it is a one way street and drive too fast on the wrong side of the road.
- A problem halfway house was identified at 401 Greendale Way where the director, Michael Carbone, threatens neighbors and lets his pit bulls run loose. He has not applied for the Conditional Use Permit in violation of ordinance 28284 which requires CUP for a Residential Service Facility for seven or more persons. The clients have caused problems with fighting and coming and going all night and there is increased prostitution near that house.
- Test-driving cars: The Mercedes mechanics race cars with service tags in the passenger sun-visor on Auburn, Greendale, Norwalk, and other surrounding streets, and also drive up and down the bumpy back alley. Sometimes Stevens Creek Toyota, Mazda, and Mercedes allow their customers to test drive on residential streets and their sales professionals take cars from one lot to another (Mainly Toyota and Mazda).
- Loud cars: Some people drive around the neighborhood with their stereos way too loud. Car dealerships (Mercedes, Mazda, VW, Audi, and various other dealers) unload cars on Albany at 4 am, 6 am, and other hours that are unfriendly to sleep.

- There are not enough street lights and they are very dim and frequently out.
- Cross walks are not defined and there are not enough of them, so children cannot safely cross the road.
- There is no place for children to play safely.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45. The next general meeting will be at 6:30 on November 24, 2008 in the West Valley Branch Library, Community Room.