



**North Hills Community Association
Board meeting Minutes
Claremont Hotel
May 15, 2023**

Board Member Attendance: Fred Booker, Carolyn Burgess, Dan Conolly, Shivani Grover, Donna Karch, David Kessler, Nancy Mueller, Vicki Oliveira, Nina Rezi

Committee Chair Attendance: Katie Kochounian

Call to order: 7:09 pm

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Approval of Minutes: Fred Booker moved to approve the Minutes of April 24, 2023. David Kessler seconded. Motion carried 9-0.

Treasurer's Report: Fred Booker distributed financial information. He will meet with the former treasurer, Chris Johnson, as Fred and two other current Board members need to be added to the banking account. Fred also commented on Chris' use of percentage allocation in his reports. Fred said it could be a useful practice in budgeting for committees. Committees should have a budget but that has not been the case in the recent past, if ever.

Notes: Fred stated that Dropbox costs \$11.99 per month, but NHCA is not using Dropbox. Dropbox will be cancelled.

Committee Reports

Garden and Events: Vicki Oliveira reported that she has several service groups lined up for garden maintenance, although most of the volunteers will not start working until the fall. On April 7th Vicki and Dan Conolly met with Wyllie Clayson, Ruby Soto Cardona and Dave McGuinness to discuss bringing more native plants to the gardens. For

now, Vicki said, they will concentrate on weeding and capitalizing on the good-works of Brightview and volunteers in getting the Gateway Garden into better shape.

Fred Booker suggested that “Bringing Back the Natives” is good to focus on Native plants, cycle of Life. Wyllie said that 40% of the garden should be open space (to allow for the plants to grow and thrive properly, with the added bonus of slowing the spread of fast moving fires. The gardens were overgrown when we took them over last Spring, and now we have found many new plants and flowers popping up in just one year after concentrating on clearing out the dead, invasive and overgrown plants as part of the newly developed garden zone maintenance plan. We can discuss further on June 19th and/or we can review at the gardens during a Friday garden day). Chevron has contacted Vicki and they want to come in September. Donna noted that the Memorial Garden needs to be weeded, as thistles are very high. Fred pointed out that NHCA should maintain the Memorial Garden as it honors two public servants, OFD Battalion Chief James M. Riley, Jr. and Police Officer John William Grubensky, who gave their lives helping residents escape the Oakland-Berkeley Hills Firestorm on October 20, 1991. NHCA installed two benches at these gardens in their honor. The garden also honors the 25 people who died in the firestorm. Vicki noted that both gardens are to be maintained as part of the two-year plan per attached monthly report. Fred committed to meeting and weeding at the Firestorm Memorial this coming Friday, Vicki said she would note that in the Open Forum weekly garden announcement.

Event: Gardening with the Goats. CalTrans and the City of Oakland are starting the goat weed-clearing work. It is not known exactly when they will be across from the Gateway Pavilion Demonstration Garden, as they will start grazing to the south where weeds are already brown. Vicki would like to organize a Gardening with the Goats event. Stay tuned.

Communications: Donna Karch reported that Dora La Flora Czifra, NHCA’s computer consultant, held a Zoom meeting with Dan Conolly, Vicki Oliveira and Donna. The meeting was informative. The Board members learned that Dora bills NHCA for four hours per month, but previous Boards have only used her for 1-1/2 to two hours per month. Dora is looking forward to doing more work for NHCA. She can

assist in graphic set up, mail merge, creating flyers, and updating the website. Dora does not have the passcode for Open Forum. She can create hyper links to the NHCA website, which Donna can post on OpenForum.

Fred Booker suggested that a link to Kay Loughman's wildlife website be added prominently to the NHCA website on the banner.

Donna has received input from Board members re proposed changes and said that she will work with Dora on implementation.

Membership: Katie Kochounian reported that she is having difficulty getting on Open Forum. She volunteered to write handwritten thank you notes for donations. Katie mentioned gifting chocolates to those who recently moved to the neighborhood, and informing new residents about NHCA. Katie said she would expand her search for recently sold homes to include all of OPD Beat 13Y. She will deliver Welcome Wagon or informative notices to the new homeowners in 13Y.

Advocacy: The Advocacy committee read in the following Advocacy report to the board:

Advocacy committee held its inaugural meeting on Monday May 9th at the Highlands Country Club. Shivani Grover, the Advocacy Committee Chair, prepared a kickoff agenda and meeting packet.

The aim of the kickoff meeting was to:

- Learn why the members want to work on advocacy?
- Provide an overview of Recent NHCA Advocacy Work
- Define the 2023 - 2024 Advocacy Committee Mission Statement based the NHCA mission, past work and our own interests
- Assign roles and responsibilities within the committee
- Identity a set of current projects to work on

The team came up with a mission statement:

The mission of the NHCA Committee is to: improve safety and security; provide neighbors with tools to achieve those ends; provide information to neighbors about problems that come to the committee's attention; activate the neighborhood to take

action to help solve identified problems; and finally, work to improve city responsiveness on our identified issues.

The team identified the overall areas we will focus on this year:

- Advocating a City Infill Housing keeps our Urban Wildfire Interface area safe
- Advocating for a city-adopted vegetative management plan for our area
- Advocating for better wildfire education by the city for our residents

The team identified a set of projects and some work has begun:

- David Kessler and Shivani Grover created two follow up messages for Open Forum to welcome new users that signed up after receiving the NHCA postcard
- Carolyn Burgess said that she is trying to get to the bottom of the misappropriation of \$75 million dollars in sewer money that has been diverted.
- Fred is working on a fire season postcard mockup to present to the Fire Department so that the message for the Wildfire Urban Interface is specifically tailored to our needs.

Standing Meeting Established:

The committee will meet the week following the monthly board meeting; All NHCA board members are welcome to come and observe to see where they can lend their volunteer support.

During the meeting, the following items were elaborated upon by the committee members:

Long-term, Fred Booker mentioned creating a Fire Season postcard. The standard concept of 100' of lawn around a house does not apply to the hills. Fred said that the CalFire poster was very good, and provided specifics to help prevent fires. Fred added that there could/should be a link to NHCA's webpage.

Shivani continues to work on solutions for the Alvarado slide and that it should be part of the City records. If it is not, it will "disappear."

When we post on Open Forum, Board members should state their position as a Board member.

David attended the Oakland Breakfast Club meeting by Lake Merritt. He said that Michael Hunt, chief of staff for OFD, was impressive.

Public Safety: Carolyn Burgess is going to speak at the Redevelopment meeting of the City Council, at 4:00 p.m. on May 16, 2023, on behalf of NHCA. She will ask the City consider establishing designated evacuation routes in the hills for established neighborhoods. The proposed new housing regulations for Wildfire Urban building with 40 or more cars would require designated evacuation routes.

Old Business

Dropbox Transition: Shivani Grover is still trying to get the access code from Chris Johnson. Chris promised to share the information by June 1, 2023. Fred Booker is also trying to get info from Chris for the treasury. Fred offered to meet with Chris and get the info ASAP so Shivani, Dora and Fred can all move ahead of their various NHCA tasks. Fred took on the task of gathering all the documents from Chris in the form of a thumb drive and also migrating them on the new system Boardnet.

Safety Postcard Mailer: Carolyn Burgess said Vicki Oliveira was instrumental in producing the postcard, as she was familiar with print design and print expertise. Approximately 1800 postcards were mailed, the second tranche, about 1200 will be mailed when Carolyn receives her public safety funds from the City during the next fiscal cycle. The first tranche used up all her funds. Since the postcard was received, a number of residents have signed up for Open Forum. Fred Booker said additional donations have been received. The postcard seems to be having a positive impact thus far.

New Business

Via Committee Reports

New Board meeting Guideline Review

Nonprofits Insurance Alliance Renewal #44225. Fred Booker said that the insurance company has a number of great tools to

help NHCA keep their files organized at no cost to NHCA. He still needs to get the passcode from Chris to take advantage of system. Fred emphasized that he and Dan will meet with Chris and get the info needed for Dora, Shivani, Donna and perhaps others!

Adjournment

As there was no further business, Dan Conolly proposed adjourning the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Fred Booker moved, and David seconded, that we adjourn. Motion carried 9-0.

Next NHCA Board meeting: Monday June 19, 2023, at the Claremont Hotel, Berkeley Room at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, s/Nancy Mueller & Donna Karch, NHCA co-secretaries