



**North Hills Community Association  
Board meeting Minutes  
Claremont Club and Spa, Berkeley Room  
November 20, 2023**

**Board Member Attendance:** Carolyn Burgess, Dan Conolly, Donna Karch, David Kessler, Katie Kochounian, Nancy Mueller, Vicki Oliveira

**Guests Attendance:** Ken Cohen

Informal discussion with Ken, a potential new Board member, before the meeting was called to order and before Katie arrived.

Ken was on the NCHA Board for three years, a few years ago. When Carolyn posted on Open Forum that she was stepping down as Public Safety Chair in the early Spring of 2024, Ken answered her call. He has been disturbed by the downslide of Oakland, especially as it relates to crime. Currently retired, he gave a brief rundown of his 50-year long career as a Hospital Administrator. He has overseen numerous functional 911 call centers in CA and out of state. He is willing and interested in attending meetings with the City and trying to figure out how he can help improve the situation. He wants to do that before he decides he needs to move out of the area.

**1. Call to order:** Dan called the meeting to order at 3:22 P.M.

**2. Review and Adoption of Agenda** The agenda was approved by consensus.

**3. Review and Approval of October 16, 2023, Minutes.** Carolyn moved to approve the minutes. Dan seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

**4. Treasurer's Report:** Donna reported the Checking account has \$ 6,169.39 and the savings account has \$11,895.66. The total available funds are \$18,065.05.

BrightView has not cashed a check for \$1,122.53 that was sent to them in August 2023. Donna will place a stop payment on the check and issue a replacement.

Dora sent a bill of \$310 but she could not specify what she did during those hours as she does not keep track of her time. The board agreed she should specify her work. We pay her \$160/month for four hours work each month, whether we use her or not. There was speculation she spent the time cleaning up the Open Forum email lists against the Announcements list. David and Donna will contact Dora.

## **5. Committee Reports**

### **A. Garden and Events**

Vicki presented a thorough Final Report focusing on Year 2 of 2. She broke the report down in quarterly segments, outlining the events including Grazing with Goats and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ice Cream Social /Plant sale fundraiser (which raised \$1400). The fall Quarter saw six large groups perform weeding and mulching.

The two-year Community Garden Transformation Program was completed successfully. Several board and NHCA members (Carolyn, Nancy, Cornelia, Celine, David) performed Friday weeding parties and Dan picked up tons of trash. Over 2,000-man hours, Truckloads (15), In-kind donations (\$100K+), and total volunteer participants were 500+. Please see report for full details (Attachment 1). The board and community thanks Vicki for her hard work; Dan too!

**B. Communications:** Donna and David mentioned that there is still some confusion regarding Open Forum and Announcements. David emphasized that it's important that all Open Forum subscribers receive Announcements. It's not clear if Dora can figure out how to merge the lists. There was a brief discussion of using Constant Contact and Groups.io.

**C. Membership:** Katie asked, what is the membership, as we don't have dues. Katie wants to do the quarterly newsletter that Barry suggested. She wants input from the board. She noticed that we don't have budgets. What is the budget for the mailer, ice cream social, raffle?

**D. Advocacy:** In mid-November, just before the rains arrived, David wrote a good article about cleaning the drains in preparation for the rainy season. He posted it on Announcements, and included a link to Oakland's Adopt-A-Drain program. Potholes continue to be a problem, and will be the subject of a future Announcement. It was noted that Marlborough is supposed to be repaved in the 2025 cycle. The Board discussed soliciting for a newsletter editor, as well as a website designer.

**E. Public Safety:** Carolyn had a good meeting on November 16, 2023, although the recording did not work. About 18 people attended the meeting and another 36 participated on Zoom. Two women volunteers helped Carolyn with the set up as did Dan. Dan noted it was worthwhile to come "live" to the meeting. The Assistant City Administrator, LaTonda Simmons, and our Area 2 Captain, Lisa Ausmus, spoke at the meeting. Neighborhood crime stats are down a bit but the commercial corridors are getting hit repeatedly. Carolyn suggested that Jeston Johnson, the new City Manager speak at NHCA's annual meeting and that the new assistant City Auditor, Michael Houston, speak at the next public safety meeting. Mr. Houston replaces Courtney Ruby who took another job in Southern California. This is an elected position. Ruby did train Michael Houston. He did write an introductory piece about his duties. Board members noted we have good auditor reports but that they are not followed through by the city. (A potential Advocacy mission?). Please see report for full details (Attachment 2).

## **6. Old Business**

**A.** Open Forum/Announcements need to be refreshed. Constant Contact, Groups.io, or leave alone?

**B.** Vegetation Management Plan. The NHCA Board supports the proposed VM Plan. Letters were to be submitted by November 1, 2023. David wrote on the NHCA's behalf. Other board members wrote individually. Next step is budget review and cost analysis. The intention is to be on the ballot in the next election cycle.

## **7. New Business**

**A.** NHCA Year-end Calendar Events.  
**1.** Mailing, annual newsletter. The Board asked David to please write it up as he is a very good writer. Vicki will email everyone last year's newsletter that was written by Chris. Vicki has the layout

template and will send to David. The newsletter will include events and safety information. The Board hopes it will be written and ready for mailing within two weeks.

2. The NHCA Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday March 21, 7-9pm at the Montclair Presbyterian Church. Carolyn will confirm. Vicki noted the price is right: free.

3. Nominating committee was not discussed.

4. Annual meeting committee was not discussed.

B. Nov 15<sup>th</sup> Planning/Strategy meeting with Barry Pilger was discussed. Barry created an excellent presentation for web suggestions, new postcard, call to action. Barry's 2-page proposals, dated Nov 19, 2023, are hereby attached (Attachment 3).

Dan also created a flow chart, based on Barry's email, NHCA Strategy Recap, hereby attached (Attachment 4).

The task is now how to implement these changes suggested by Barry. The board is in favor of Barry's suggestions. Donna will talk to Dora about cleaning up our website. Donna will get requests to update the web. Upwork, an inexpensive website contractor out of India, only charges \$20/hr. Katie mentioned that she has worked with Upwork in the past. Carolyn will get the name of the person who did the last revision of the website. In any event, with mailing our year end accomplishments and the remittance envelope for donations, it is important that the website get updated ASAP, if at all possible.

C. Potential Board Candidates. Review/Discuss.

1. Ken Cohen came to our board meeting as outlined above. He had to leave at 3:15pm as he had a previous commitment. Since Ken had filled out the application, and the board interviewed him, Nancy moved we accept him as a board member. Donna seconded the motion. The vote was a unanimous YES. Dan will contact Ken to let him know and have Barry add him to the Board Groups.io email list.

2. Katie has a neighbor, Kakoli Mitran, who might be interested in joining the Board. There was a mix-up with her attending the board meeting. Carolyn and Katie will follow up.

3. Dan and Vicki have a friend from Chevron, who may be interested in joining the Board. They will follow up.

**8. Adjournment**

As there was no further business, Dan adjourned the meeting at 5:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Mueller and Donna Karch, NHCA Secretary co-chairs