

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



GOVERNING BOARD

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BRYAN KRAMER
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GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, October 12, 2021 – 7:00 P.M

Online/Telephonic Meeting via Zoom # 868 4239 6909



DRAFT MINUTES

Board Members	Roll Call
Romana Barajas	Present at 7:14 p.m.
Clint Birdsong	Present
Mack Hill	Absent
Ash Kramer	Present
Bryan Kramer	Present
Javier Lopez	Present
Lizette Montes	Absent
Teresa Roman	Present
Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr	Present at 8:04 p.m.

1. Call to Order

- 1.1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Greater Cypress Park Neighborhood Council (GCPNC) Chair, Clint Birdsong. The minute-taker, Mr. Starr, called the roll. Five (5) board members were present at roll call: Mr. Birdsong, Ash Kramer (Treasurer), Bryan Kramer, Javier Lopez, and Teresa Roman. Quorum (5) was met. Romana Barajas (Vice-Chair) and Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr joined the meeting later. Mack Hill and Lizette Montes were absent. Simultaneous Spanish-English interpretation was provided by Sthefanie García and Erinn Calderon. Supporting documents were available at <https://cypressparknc.com/october21/>.
- 1.2. Mr. Birdsong provided instructions on making public comment and accessing interpretation features. He acknowledged that Cypress Park sits on land formerly inhabited by the Tongva people.

2. Comments from Public Officials

Item 2.1 was not taken up. Mr. Birdsong later stated that Ms. Polanco had not responded to his emails.

- 2.1. Update from Mayor Garcetti's East Area Representative, Veronica Polanco. Ms. Polanco was not present, and there was no report.
- 2.2. **LAPD Senior Lead Officer (SLO) Luis Reyes** (33184@lapd.online | (323) 793-0758), Northeast Division, Basic Car Area 11A89, reported.

They were still “working on” the case of a shooting on Pepper Ave. There was a drive-by shooting on Kite Hill, possibly gang-related, where a female occupant of the vehicle was struck in the elbow. He reported “a lot of activity on the Glassell Park side.” A suspect with a gun was arrested two days prior on Chapman St. at Avenue 32. Reyes reported that Motor Officer Henderson was “writing a lot of tickets” on Cypress Ave. and on Figueroa St. Speed feedback signs had been deployed. The day before, Reyes had walked the area of Avenue 26 and Figueroa St. next to Harbor Freight with Cmdr. Labrada to introduce Labrada to area businesses and to address the businesses’ questions and concerns.

At this time (7:14 p.m.) Romana Barajas arrived, making 6 board members present.

They were working with Ricardo Flores and the CD1 team to clean up Avenue 27. He reported a lot of abandoned cars in area.

Ms. Barajas asked if schools’ being back in session had led to more gang activity, such as the recent shootings. Reyes said shootings were commonly a case of “someone new in the neighborhood” trying to “earn their stripes” [with a gang] or someone recently released from incarceration. He said the laws were frustrating, but arrests were being made.

Reyes advised residents to always be alert, look around, watch for cars circling the block, and to avoid looking at one’s phone while walking around. Phone thefts around Metro trains were common. He encouraged recognizing the difference between cover and concealment. Doors would not stop bullets, he said, but the car engine would.

Regarding the application by the El Recreo Bar, Reyes said the owner had done all they requested, including closing the fence where drug sales were taking place and installing a security camera and lights. He said he would keep his eye on the bar once it opened.

In public comment, **Gypsy Sanchez** said she was the agent for El Recreo and that they had complied with everything and wanted to work with the community following the approval.

- 2.3. Ricardo Flores** (ricardo.x.flores@lacity.org), Senior Field Deputy for Councilmember Cedillo (CD1), reported. He was responsible for the Cypress Park area and all areas south of Avenue 37 to 3rd St. He announced an October 22nd cleanup at the corner of Avenue 26 and Idell St. More than twenty participants had joined a cleanup the previous month at Jeffries Ave. and Huron St.

There had been a good turnout for the Atlantic Jazz Festival the weekend before.

They were soliciting complaints or questions about Avenue 27. They were providing resources to the unhoused individuals there and making sure it was as clean and safe as possible, including at the park next to the intersection. There was a beautification project at Poplar St. and Avenue 27, adjacent to the park. They were meeting with community members to explore ideas such as a garden or community mural. They were providing trash bags to help keep the area clean. He invited the community to attend an October 28th 6pm Zoom meeting to provide input.

Mr. Kramer asked if they would provide housing, if their intention was to move unhoused people out of the area. Flores said they were trying to ensure there was shelter available via Project Roomkey or A Bridge Home, and they would not “have them leave without having resources offered to them.” Flores said he had personally spoken with “every individual out there” to know them by name.

He would try to join a SELAH Neighborhood Homeless Coalition outreach effort on a weekend.

- 2.4. Brian Baldauf** (info@100acrepartnership.org), of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), explained that Miguel Paredes would provide updates. Baldauf was available for questions.

- 2.5. Miguel Paredes** (mparedes@leeandrewsgroup.com), Senior Outreach Specialist, Lee Andrews Group, reported.

The Paseo del Rio engagement team was conducting a focus group with community leaders. A social media kit was available, and handles included @100acrepartnership and a Facebook site: @PDR100AP. He asked the community to invite the engagement team to its events by emailing info@100acrepartnership.org.

The water quality project deadline for the design team had been October 8th.

California State Parks would host an open house to solicit public input on the conceptual design for the Bowtie parcel on October 16th, outdoors near the soccer field at Rio de Los Angeles State Park. A taco lunch would be provided.

The Bureau of Engineering was finalizing its IFR and comment log regarding the equity strategy for the G2 Site; the panel had follow-up interviews for the 100 Acre Partnership.

They were waiting on the State to distribute funds they had been awarded to perform work on the fields at Rio de Los Angeles State Park.

Ms. Barajas asked if there were funding for the restrooms at Rio de Los Angeles State Park. She requested a virtual meeting option for those not wishing to attend the open house due to concerns about COVID-19. The open house had not been well advertised. She encouraged them to hold an additional event and to engage in better outreach. As a community leader, Barajas had not been approached or surveyed. She was concerned that conversations were focused on design while not addressing how the cleanup of Bowtie and the water projects would be executed.

Paredes acknowledged that the October 16th open house was a unique opportunity to “meet folks” in person during COVID; nevertheless, they would continue to hold virtual community meetings. They were reaching out to “key stakeholders,” including the chairs of Cypress Park, Glassell Park, and Elysian Valley Riverside Neighborhood Councils. He offered to arrange for a briefing for GCPNC board members. Barajas said she had reached out to them but did not receive a response.

Mr. Birdsong said he had not received any emails from Mr. Paredes. Paredes said Birdsong should look for emails from Joseph Legaspi (jlegaspi@leeandrewsgroup.com), the project manager. Birdsong said he had replied to an email from Mr. Legaspi a month prior but did not hear back.

Mr. Baldauf explained that they were trying to identify groups that had not yet engaged with the project and were conducting “small group engagement” through the end of the year. The footprint and design of the project needed to be chosen before the remediation process could be determined. The Toxic Substances Control Department (DTSC) would need to “understand” the contaminants and come up with a plan for remediation based on the chosen design. They had already come up with a concept for the Bowtie Demonstration Project which would enable the cleanup strategy to happen. The same process would be followed for the larger Bowtie Project and the Paseo del Rio Project.

Ms. Barajas said as part of their planning for the town hall, they had surveyed the community; equity issues had come up, including fees for parking, decontamination, accessibility, displacement, and gentrification. Because of COVID, community participation was low, outreach to parents of children who use area parks and attend area schools needed improvement. She asked if any outreach had been done to soccer players at the park.

Paredes said he grew up in Elysian Valley. He would be responsible for overseeing the *promotoras* program alongside his colleagues, “Joey” and “Fernando.”

Ms. Roman expressed concern that the outreach teams were being selective in whose input they were collecting. She asked who from the community had been hired to explain the project to the community, which was largely unaware of the plans. Residents had not received letters explaining the project; many did not know how to access virtual meetings. She requested meetings in Spanish, and she asked that area residents be hired to perform the community outreach.

Mr. Paredes described the plan to share the project’s goals with the community. They would meet with area churches. He invited Ms. Roman to suggest ways to educate “Hispanic people” about the project. It was important to notify community members of their rights so they could remain in the community and enjoy the project.

Ms. Barajas was concerned about the planned food court and its impact on vendors currently operating in the area. Would existing vendors get “first pick”? How would they be informed about opportunities? Paredes said they would “do [their] best to make sure businesses and residents [were] informed.”

Mr. Baldauf said they had committed to meetings in English with Spanish translation as well as Spanish-led meetings with possible translation.

Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Tagalog were mentioned as other languages spoken in the area.

Ms. Barajas reiterated that her concerns included fields, bathrooms, and security.

2.6. Octaviano Rios (octaviano.rios@lacity.org), Empowerment Advocate, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), reported.

Mr. Rios said the Core Institute Module II on October 28th at 6:30 p.m. would include training on bylaws, hosting virtual meetings, receiving public comments, and managing meeting disruptions. RSVP instructions were in the Monthly Profile. Module III would be on November 30th at 6:30 p.m., with topics yet to be announced.

He agreed to confirm the availability of translated trainings in Cornerstone.

Feedback sessions for the draft Code of Conduct were scheduled for October 19th at 6:30 p.m. and November 6th at 1 p.m.

A new State law allowed Neighborhood Councils to meet virtually through December.

Rios mentioned the Indigenous People's Day holiday.

Mr. Birdsong asked why the GCPNC October General Board Meeting agenda had not been posted to the Early Notification System (ENS). Rios referred to a "challenge" with the system and confirmed GCPNC had complied with the agenda posting requirement.

At this time (8:04 p.m.), board member Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr was present. There were now seven board members in attendance.

Rios said a DONE staff member had resigned, which may have led to the weekend ENS issue.

Birdsong said the 100 Acre Partnership project should be a standing monthly agenda item.

3. Public Comments

At the initial call for public comments on non-agenda items, there were no members of the public wishing to speak. The item was reopened at 8:45 p.m. after Item 6.

3.1. Maricela Lopez shared her concerns over poor or missing street lighting. Ella St. had just one dim light. Car parts were being stolen late at night. She felt it was unsafe for her daughter coming home at night and for people walking dogs, and for elderly people.

Ms. Kramer invited Ms. Lopez to the next Land Use Committee meeting, noting there was periodic funding streetlight installations. They could put together a list of streets for future consideration.

Lopez was interested in a community garden to grow herbs and fruit. She said the old court building and old library were not being used. Ms. Kramer said both topics had been discussed at recent meetings.

Mr. Birdsong asked Ms. Lopez to list the streets where poor lighting was a concern. Ms. Barajas suggested listing the alleys as well.

At this time (8:52 p.m.), Item 8.3 was taken up.

4. Chairperson's Report

4.1. Update on member eligibility to vote.

Mr. Lopez attested to having completed his trainings. He would send Mr. Birdsong proof of his Ethics completion. Birdsong asked Ms. Trotzky-Sirr to take a screen shot of her certificate once her training was complete and send it to both Mr. Birdsong and to NC Support.

4.2. Discussion and Possible Action: Updates on the Taylor Yard (100 Acre Partnership) Townhall

Ms. Barajas said she did not have any updates on the town hall.

5. Land Use and Housing/Homelessness Committee Action Items

5.1. Discussion and Possible Action: Consider a request from Ana Maritza Johnson of “El Recreo Room” for an “Impact Statement of Support” or a “Letter of Non-opposition” in regards to beer/wine sales at 506 28 Ave, LA, CA 90065

Ms. Kramer stated that the applicants had attended the September Land Use Committee meeting, where Ofc. Reyes had spoken in support. Land Use had not voted on a recommendation, wishing instead for the full board to take up the matter.

She invited Gypsy Sanchez to address the board. Sanchez said they had submitted for a “public convenience or necessity” permit. Since the City did not address the application within the timeframe allowed, the authority reverted to the State Alcoholic Beverage Control Division (ABC), who had the “full authority” to grant the [approval]. ABC required the applicants to provide a plan to safeguard the community ensure no greater burden was put on the Police Department. Sanchez confirmed all modifications requested by the LAPD had been made. Though GCPNC’s support was not needed for the applicants to receive the permit, they wished to remain in contact and to receive any feedback from the NC. She asked for “non-opposition” in the absence of the NC’s support.

Sanchez contrasted the previous owner’s “not very savory” business with the new owner’s willingness to safeguard the community with lighting, CCTV, and interior renovations. She said “Karaoke Night” was being seriously considered “for you guys.”

Ms. Barajas noted a shooting death two years prior, and asked if exterior security personnel would be in place as it was at “Footsies.”

Sanchez said the owner was seeking a recommendation of a security company from Ofc. Reyes as well as advice on ID scanners to prevent underage drinking. They planned to keep their trash bins locked.

Ms. Roman asked how they would handle drunk patrons leaving the bar, noting she had seen individuals passed out in the parking area. She added that the location was close to schools and churches. She asked what the community benefits would be and whether the owners knew the community. Sanchez said Roman’s concerns were important. She referred to a letter. Intoxicated patrons would not be served. Taxes would support the community. The bar’s, “Anna,” was well known to neighbors of her nearby antique shop.

Ms. Barajas said more alcohol was “being added to our community,” and she asked Sanchez to make sure “no one drives.” Sanchez said that was their “uphill battle,” noting the old owner did “less than the bare minimum.”

No motion was made on this item.

5.2. Vacant Seat on Land Use Committee to be filled at October Governing Board Meeting

Ms. Kramer noted the above. Said last the most recent committee meeting was 25 minutes long.

5.3. Discussion and Possible Action: Updates to outreach to unhoused community members and additional locations for homeless services in Cypress Park

Mr. Kramer said the committee continued to meet. It participated in a mobile vaccination unit the previous weekend. The next meeting would include a discussion of increasing the pressure to convert the vacant courthouse [to emergency housing].

5.4. Discussion and Possible Action: Metrolink Response Letter - Discuss response from Metrolink for the GCPNC letter of August 11, 2021 regarding a request for more sound barriers on the Cypress Park side of the Central Maintenance Facility, installation of permanent sound monitors, and increased public access to the river across the CMF property.

Metrolink’s letter: https://cypressparknc.com/wpcontent/uploads/2021/10/Metrolink-Response-Letter-to-Cypress-Park-Neighborhood-Council_09.15.21-signed.pdf

Ms. Kramer reported that Metrolink had responded to the GCPNC letter, where they indicated they would add to the sound buffers but not until there was funding to do so. Mr. Birdsong noted the response was from the Metrolink CEO, showing they took the matter seriously.

6. Treasurer’s Report

- Approval of the August and September 2021 Monthly Expenditure Reports

Ms. Barajas moved to approve the August and September 2021 Monthly Expenditure Reports (MER).
Ms. Kramer seconded.

In public comment, Maricela Lopez said she wished to speak on street lighting. Mr. Birdsong asked her to hold her comments, and he would reopen public comments.

Mr. Birdsong advised Ms. Trotzky-Sirr to not to vote on the item as her Ethics training was still outstanding.

The motion passed with the six (6) eligible members voting in favor (Barajas, Birdsong, A. Kramer, B. Kramer, Lopez, Roman). Ms. Trotzky-Sirr was ineligible, and Mr. Hill and Ms. Montes were absent.

- Update on current state of funding

Ms. Kramer explained.

At this time (8:45 p.m.), Item 3, General Public Comment, was reopened.

7. Consent Calendar

- Approve September Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kramer moved to approve the Consent Calendar. **Ms. Barajas** seconded. The motion carried with all seven members present voting in favor. Mr. Hill and Ms. Montes were absent.

8. Action Items

8.1. Discussion and Possible Action: COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

This item was not taken up.

8.2. Discussion and Possible Action: Presentation and discussion about the City's response to recent shootings in Cypress Park. Review steps the GCPNC can take to address the violence.

This item was taken up at 9:04 p.m. after 8.3.

Mr. Birdsong observed that from his conversation with Mr. Reyes, there appeared to be no action the GCPNC could take. LAPD was not disclosing information about how they were addressing the issue. Birdsong had sent emails to the Neighborhood Prosecutor and to the Mayor's office. He intended to invite another guest so as to keep the matter "on the front burner."

Ms. Barajas said that following the recent shooting on Pepper St., there had been two shootings in Mt. Washington followed by one close to Nightingale School. Nobody was hit.

Ms. Kramer had heard the Rec. and Parks budget had been "slashed" during the pandemic. It was important to advocate for the Cypress Park Recreation Center and youth programming. She suggested inviting the new "Rec. and Parks person" to present to the board about what they are doing in the area.

Ms. Barajas said the return to in-person schooling was leading to "a lot of clashes," for example: across the river. What looked like gang violence was coming from York Ave. and Highland Park.

Mr. Rios would invite a representative from the Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) to present to the GCPNC.

Ms. Roman said that at a past meeting, community members and the LAPD Captain had walked the neighborhoods together one night so the Captain could understand the safety issue of walking in the dark. At that time, LAPD had said that some outdoor lighting had been paid for by residents, not by the City. Ms. Roman suggested that with recent lighting technology improvements, they should ask the City again for additional lighting, possibly using solar panels. She said trees blocked some lights.

Mr. Birdsong said a future meeting could include a discussion of a Community Improvement Project (CIP) for lighting.

It was agreed to postpone any further discussion until the next meeting.

At this time (9:18 p.m.), Item 7 was taken up.

8.3. Discussion and Possible Action: Presentation and discussion about City Council Redistricting process and the impact on Cypress Park

This item was taken up at 8:52 p.m. following the reopening of Item 3.

Ms. Barajas reported that the redistricting process was putting the LA River construction area together with the Elysian Valley side, which would limit Cypress Park's ability to bring issues having to do with the park to their Council Member. "Our concerns could fall on deaf ears," she said. There was an opportunity to provide testimony at upcoming redistricting hearings on October 9th, 13th, and 16th. Ms. Kramer posted the link to the Community of Interest form.

Ms. Barajas proposed to write a letter asking that "our boundaries"... "stay as they were before."

Mr. Birdsong said, "Our neighborhood should stay with the River," regardless of which Council District it was in. It made sense for Cypress Park and Glassell Park to be in the same District.

Birdsong moved that the GCPNC allow Mr. Birdsong and Ms. Barajas to write a letter supporting the continued connection of GCPNC with the Council Office that will represent the River and its banks; and [stating] that GCPNC is in opposition to splitting its Council District on San Fernando Road; and that the GCPNC wishes the District to include all of Cypress Park and the River. **Ms. Barajas** seconded. There was no further board discussion or public comment. The motion carried with all seven (7) members present voting in favor. Mr. Hill and Ms. Montes were absent.

At this time (9:04 p.m.), Item 8.2 was taken up.

8.4. Discussion and Possible Action: Nominations and Selection of Committee Chairs and one additional Governing Board to serve on each committee. The Committee Chair shall be a member of the Governing Board.

This item was postponed without objection.

- Outreach and Beautification
- Education and Youth

8.5. Discussion and Possible Action: Appointment of GCPNC Liaisons and Alliance representatives

This item was postponed without objection.

9. New Business and ideas for future meetings

Mr. Birdsong proposed including Neighborhood Purposes Grants (NPG) applications and outreaching to nonprofits and schools. Ms. Kramer agreed to put NPG information on the website.

10. Upcoming Meetings and Events

- Governing Board Meeting: Tuesday, November 9, 7:00PM
- Land Use and Housing/Homelessness Committee:
Monday, November 1, 6:00PM

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully submitted by Conrad Starr.