

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



## GOVERNING BOARD

CLINT BIRDSONG  
CHAIR  
ROMANA BARAJAS  
VICE-CHAIR  
ASH KRAMER  
TREASURER  
MACK HILL  
BRYAN KRAMER  
JAVIER LOPEZ  
LIZETTE MONTES  
TERESA ROMAN  
REBECCA TROTZKY-  
SIRR

## GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

1150 CYPRESS AVE  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90065  
E-mail: GCPNC@empowerla.org  
Website: cypressparknc.com

## GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, Feb 8, 2021 – 7:00 P.M

Online/Telephonic Meeting via Zoom # 868 4239 6909



## DRAFT MINUTES

Board Members	Roll Call
Romana Barajas	Present
Clint Birdsong	Present
Mack Hill	Present
Ash Kramer	Present
Bryan Kramer	Present
Javier Lopez	Present
Lizette Montes	Absent
Teresa Roman	Absent
Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr	Present at 7:07 p.m.

### 1. Call to Order

- 1.1. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Greater Cypress Park Neighborhood Council (GCPNC) Chair, Clint Birdsong. The minutes taker, Mr. Starr, called the roll. Six (6) board members were present at roll call: Romana Barajas (Vice-Chair), Mr. Birdsong, Mack Hill, Ash Kramer (Treasurer), Bryan Kramer, and Javier Lopez. Quorum (5) was met. Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr joined the meeting later. Teresa Roman and Lizette Montes were absent. Simultaneous Spanish-English interpretation was provided by Sthefanie Garcia and Erinn Calderon. Supporting documents were available at <https://cypressparknc.com/february-gcpnc-governing-board-meeting/>.
- 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.

*Rebecca Trotsky-Sirr arrived at 7:07 p.m. There were now Seven (7) board members present.*

### 2. Comments from Public Officials

- 2.1. **Wendy Castro** ([wendy.castro@lacity.org](mailto:wendy.castro@lacity.org)) announced she was the new representative of the Mayor's Office. She announced a new rental assistance program, with information at <https://housing.ca.gov/>. She announced a planned housing clinic in conjunction with CD1 to take place in Lincoln Heights later in February and another in MacArthur Park in late March. "LIFE" discounts were available on LA Metro/. More information was at <https://taptogo.net>. Free covid tests could be requested at [covidtests.gov](https://covidtests.gov) or by calling (800) 232-0233 with assistance in multiple languages. She alerted that

“fake” COVID testing sites were stealing individuals’ personal information. Licensed sites were listed at <https://covid19.ca.gov/get-tested/#how-to-get-tested>. Unlicensed sites could be reported to the district Council Office. The Homeless Count was postponed to February 22-24. The Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance was hosting presentations at the end of February for green initiatives in one’s own neighborhood to align with the Paris Climate Agreement.

Ms. Barajas said an illegal pop-up testing site was operating on Figueroa in front of McDonalds. She recommended the city place ads on the streets alerting residents to the risk.

- 2.2. **Ricardo Flores** ([ricardo.x.flores@lacity.org](mailto:ricardo.x.flores@lacity.org)), Senior Field Deputy for Councilmember Cedillo (CD1) reported on a meeting the previous week focused on Cypress Park. Produce giveaways were scheduled, and the Council Office would consider bringing a giveaway to local streets upon request. A cleanup would be scheduled at River St. and Figueroa.
- 2.3. **Guadalupe Camberos** was the new Supervisorial District 1 Representative out of the East LA office. The District Director was Antonio Chaparro.
- 2.4. **Thomas Soong** was Director of Engagement Awareness at the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, overseeing 33 of the 99 Neighborhood Councils (NCs).
- 2.5. **Octaviano Rios** ([octaviano.rios@lacity.org](mailto:octaviano.rios@lacity.org)), Empowerment Advocate, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), reported that new staff had been hired. Erica Gatica would be taking over GCPNC. Mr. Soong said the ratio of Neighborhood Empowerment Advocates to NCs was now 1:7 as compared with 1:10 prior to the new hires.
- 2.6. **Erica Gatica** ([erica.gatica@lacity.org](mailto:erica.gatica@lacity.org)) said she had grown up in “this community” and she looked forward to using resources to uplift constituents and the neighborhood as a whole. She discussed conflicts of interest and reaching out to the City Attorney, new Council District maps, and various trainings being offered in February and March. All the Department’s email addresses had been out of service from 1/20/22 to 1/28/22 and any messages sent during that time likely were not received. Bylaws amendments were due on 4/1/22. Data on the 2021 NC election cycles was available. Los Angeles Public Library had “tech to go” computer bundles with hotspots and Chromebooks that could be borrowed from certain libraries by qualifying individuals.
- 2.7. **Miguel Paredes** ([mparedes@leeandrewsgroup.com](mailto:mparedes@leeandrewsgroup.com)), Senior Outreach Specialist, Lee Andrews Group, reported. The Paseo del Rio engagement team was recruiting for a community organizer \$20/hour and a paid community advisory committee position. Information was at [100acpartnership.org](http://100acpartnership.org). He was recruiting specifically from Cypress Park, Glassell Park, Atwater, and Elysian Valley. He described past outreach: he had attended 24 NC meeting, 11 stakeholder meetings and 14 public events, and advertised the vacancies in public spaces, libraries, and parks. The City was finalizing negotiations with the design team. For the G2 parcel, design negotiations were ongoing with the “selected proposer” with design and permitting slated for early March. Soil samples had been taken in 2019 and would be taken again on March 9-10 at the site. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was to ensure the work was done “best as possible.” NCs would be notified about the nature of work, safety measures, and general outreach. Working with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), he was hopeful the site would be cleaned up in 2023. Additionally, Prop O water quality negotiations were ongoing and TNC was working with DTSC along the river. A meeting on the Bowtie parcel hosted by State Parks was scheduled for March 5. The volunteer agreement with the DTSC would be finalized. A remediation plan was being negotiated for the 16.5-acre Bowtie parcel, and DTSC was in negotiations regarding the other two acres. The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) was preparing to present to the City Council on the Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR). Paredes said the 100 Acre Partnership remained a partnership of the community, the City, State Parks, and the MRCA, for all aspects of the project. Cleanup was of paramount importance to the community and to the NC, he added.

**Sarai Jimenez** represented TNC. She responded to Romana’s question about a work notice distributed the day before. She explained that yellow circles indicated where sampling was scheduled to take place in March, while orange locations showed where 2019 sampling was conducted. Barajas noted there had been a recent change in the acceptable levels of lead for kids.

**Hugo Garcia** (hgarcia4432@gmail.com) was Director of Community Engagement, Bowtie Parcel Project, G-1, at Clockshop. He announced that on March 5 from 10 to 12 at Sotomayor School Learning Academies, a conceptual design presentation would be given by the design group for the Bowtie Project. They would take additional comments and input, especially from those who had not already weighed in. 1700 surveys had already been collected, primarily from Cypress Park, Glassell Park, and Elysian Valley, and also from Lincoln Heights and Mt. Washington. A flyer was at <https://clockshop.org/project/bowtie-events/>. He agreed to raise Ms. Barajas' question about decontamination with the design group.

Mr. Birdsong said Cypress Park was asking for a community event on decontamination. He said Ms. Barajas regularly made the request and was repeatedly told, "We have to ask internally." Mr. Paredes agreed to share the feedback with "the group" and to stress how important the matter was to the GCPNC. Ms. Barajas said all the affected schools were on the Cypress Park side of the project.

Mr. Birdsong asked him to send updates in advance of the meeting to allow the board and community to officially weigh in on specific items. Mr. Paredes proposed quarterly, more in-depth meetings. Mr. Hill said the design team was "moot until we know it's safe to go there." He requested direct contact with those overseeing "the poisonous ground." Ms. Barajas said with so many in the community affected by COVID-19, a hybrid meeting was the best format.

### **3. Public Comments**

**3.1. Tabatha Yelos** said she was the field director on Eunisses Hernandez campaign for CD1.

**3.2. David Kim** said he was a candidate for office.

### **4. Chair and Vice Chair Report**

*This section was taken up at 8:01 p.m. after Section 2.*

**4.1. Update on member eligibility to vote.**

Mr. Birdsong said all members were eligible to vote on all matters.

**4.2. Updates from Public Safety Chairpersons' Alliance meeting**

Mr. Hill described the meeting as "enthraling." The small group of attendees shared concerns around an uptick in violence in neighborhoods and nationwide/worldwide. Mr. Birdsong noted GCPNC did not have a public safety committee, so Mr. Hill's participation was helpful.

**4.3. Discussion and Possible Action: Resignation and/or removal of At-large Board member Lizette Montes** (she has missed more than 3 regularly scheduled meetings in the last 12-month period)

Mr. Birdsong suggested and it was agreed to postpone the item to the next meeting.

### **5. Land Use and Housing/Homelessness Committee Action Items**

It was announced that the committee had not met.

**5.1. Discussion and Possible Action: Letter to CD1 regarding Cypress Ave safety**  
Draft letter here: <https://bit.ly/3HIK3HN>

**Ms. Kramer** moved to submit the letter [linked above] to CD1 as written. **Mr. Birdsong** seconded.

In public comment, Bradford Holt described efforts to get speed bumps on Ave 28 and Cypress and stop signs on Gay and Jeffries, explaining the requests were denied because of street classifications. Ricardo [Flores] was trying to possibly reclassify the streets. Holt was working with Elsa Flores and others in the community on alternatives, such as reducing two-lane stretches to single lanes and adding planted medians. He said there were hit-and-run incidents, and access to the library, Aragon School, Divine Savior church, Nightingale School, and the rec center were all affected by dangerous traffic conditions. Pedestrian and bike safety needed improving. Dedicated turn lanes, safe cutouts for buses, and diagonal parking were possible mitigations. One-way sections of streets could help without slowing emergency response time like speed bumps might.

Anthea Raymond was in favor of addressing the issue “holistically.” Freeway onramps were not appropriate in Cypress Park. She speculated that collisions in Cypress Park largely involved people from outside the neighborhood.

Ms. Barajas said morning school traffic could be negatively affected by lane reductions. She said a recent meeting hosted by CD1 and focused on crime had been improperly advertised and resulted in a discussion of traffic instead of focusing on shootings and gang activity, which were on the rise. A separate crime meeting should be held.

Elsa Flores spoke of wrong-way drivers and a car taking down a light post on Ave 28 the previous Friday.

Mr. Hill said he had learned that Ricardo Flores was the district traffic liaison for CD1.

Mr. Birdsong suggested involving the Mayor’s Office and CD1 in a meeting to “get things done and save lives.” If there’s speed bumps on Riverside, he added, there can be speed bumps on two little one-way streets in Cypress Park.

“Wendy” said Mr. Flores was “magical” and had good connections in the city.

Ms. Barajas said to include LADOT in such a meeting.

Ms. Kramer added text to the draft letter, including, “We need a big, holistic solution. We need you to consider lane reductions, road reclassifications, stop signs and other traffic remediation throughout the neighborhood.” She added Avenue 26 to reflect Mr. Holt’s ideas.

Hugo Garcia described past successes working with the Council Office.

**Ms. Kramer withdrew her original motion without objection and moved to submit the same letter “as edited.” Mr. Birdsong seconded.**

**The motion carried with all 7 present in favor. Two were absent (Montes, Roman).**

**5.2. Discussion and Possible Action: Ave. 27 (near the Cypress Park Rec Center) is now identified as a 41.18 site by the CD1 office**

Mr. Kramer described the LAMC 41.18 as making it illegal to sit or sleep in designated areas. Kramer had been talking about Ave 27 since October/November, he said, and Mr. Flores had said “nothing was happening,” but the site had since been designated as a 41.18 site. There was a lack of transparency at City Council offices, and there were moves to “criminalize homelessness.” LAMC 41.18 served only to move people across streets and into other Council Districts and did not serve to get people off the streets and into beds. He spoke of the effects of the Omicron variant and the stresses it put on shelters and in tiny home villages, with a Cypress Park resident being kicked out of a facility for not returning by curfew amidst a “quarantine lockdown”. It was important for children to see homelessness as it was and to not allow people to shuffle it away.

**Mr. Kramer moved that the GCPNC write a letter requesting information on which areas CD1 was designating as 41.18, what they were doing to get anyone they removed under 41.18 into housing, why they thought 41.18 was necessary, and why any area would be designated 4118. Ms. Barajas seconded.**

Ms. Raymond suggested the Land Use Committee write the letter.

Mr. Holt said 41.18 was imperfect but “desperately needed.” Neighbors such as Frances from Lupita’s were experiencing theft, harassment, people banging on doors at 3 a.m., drug intoxicated individuals frightening children, and gangs using [encampments] as cover [for illegal activities]. With 41.18, “they” do a month of outreach and offer housing and services through a sustained approach. He said he would like to see GCPNC advocate for local preference for housing and any affordable or subsidized housing that comes online. He said on Idell St., dozens of units had been opened for formerly unhoused in the previous few years. Meanwhile, the homelessness situation had gotten worse and worse. With local preference, he said, people who live in a neighborhood and who qualify could jump to the front of the line.

Kramer said the SELAH Homeless Coalition did weekly outreach and people living in affected areas had reported receiving little to no outreach. He had doubts about a month of outreach prior to enforcing 41.18.

The motion carried with all 7 present in favor. Two were absent (Montes, Roman).

## 6. Treasurer's Report

- Approval of the January 2022 Monthly Expenditure Reports

Ms. Kramer described the expenses. \$3,000 remained in the Community Improvement Project fund; \$7,883 was in NPGs; around \$2,000 was in General Office, \$5,380 was in Outreach. She would suggest moving money from Outreach to NPGs at a future meeting.

**Mr. Kramer** moved to approve the January 2022 MER. **Ms. Kramer** seconded.

*Ms. Trotsky-Sirr left the meeting at 9:32 p.m.*

The motion carried with six voting in favor. Three were absent (Montes, Roman, Trotsky-Sirr).

- Approval of Annual Inventory Report

Ms. Kramer described the report as including a public address system, some Chromebooks, and some pop-ups.

**Ms. Kramer** moved to approve the inventory report. **Mr. Kramer** seconded. The motion carried with six voting in favor. Three were absent (Montes, Roman, Trotsky-Sirr).

*At this time (9:36 p.m.), Item 8.5 was taken up.*

## 7. Consent Calendar

- Approve January Regular Minutes

This item was not taken up.

## 8. Action Items

- 8.1. Discussion and Possible Action: Add a new Standing Committee to the Standing Rules: Neighborhood Purpose Grant and Community Improvement Project Committee

Mr. Birdsong read the above and described the need to take the burden off Ms. Kramer and Ms. Barajas and add another "layer of work" to address outreach and encouraging applications..." a committee of folks who want to engage on those issues."

**Mr. Birdsong** moved to add a new Standing Committee to the Standing Rules: Neighborhood Purpose Grant and Community Improvement Project Committee. **Mr. Hill** seconded.

There was minimal board discussion. The motion carried with all seven present voting in favor. Two were absent (Montes, Roman).

- 8.2. Discussion and Possible Action: Appoint a Chair of the Neighborhood Purpose Grant and Community Improvement Project Committee

**Mr. Birdsong** moved to appoint Mack Hill as Chair of the new Neighborhood Purpose Grant and Community Improvement Project Committee. **Ms. Kramer** seconded.

There was minimal board discussion. The motion carried with all seven present voting in favor. Two were absent (Montes, Roman).

It was noted that a board member needed to tell Mr. Hill of their interest to join the committee due to quorum requirements.

- 8.3. Discussion and Possible Action: Consider drafting and approving Neighborhood Purpose Grant procedures documents and/or additions to Standing Rules

**Mr. Birdsong** moved to empower the Standing Committee for NPGs to create a document to be reviewed by the board before implementation; with written procedures for the NPG process that bring the committee into the NPG workflow and that increase transparency; where the committee acts in a timely manner and according to an agreed schedule; and including the rule that NPGs must be reviewed by the board. [REDACTED] seconded.



There was a discussion of the importance of NPGs and their value to the community. There was no public comment. **The motion carried with all seven present voting in favor. Two were absent (Montes, Roman).**

*At this time (9:25), Section 6 was taken up.*

**8.4. Discussion and Possible Action: Cypress Park area Repaving and Restriping Review Process, pedestrian safety, and sidewalk concerns**

This item was not formally taken up, although it was touched upon in Item 5.1.

**8.5. Discussion and Possible Action: Community Impact Statement for Council File 20-0963: Neighborhood Council Elections / Fiscal Year 2020-21 / COVID-19 Pandemic.**  
[https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2020/20-0963\\_CIS\\_01252022083042\\_01-25-2022.pdf](https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2020/20-0963_CIS_01252022083042_01-25-2022.pdf)

Mr. Birdsong referred to the CIS, explained that contractors had performed social media outreach for NC elections following the actual election date. Mr. Soong addressed the issue, saying the Reseda NC had originated the CIS. DONE had provided an accounting of the community-based organizations they had worked with, what services they had performed and what reports they had provided. Referring to concerns were that the CBOs didn't do a good job using social media, Soong CBOs were hired to "get everybody involved" including unhoused immigrants and formerly incarcerated individuals. The Arroyo Seco NC's CIS discussed only social and digital media but did not address door-to-door outreach, food giveaways, and ways that [CBOs] bridge the digital divide. Two of the CBOs made sure the unhoused had access to the election, he said.

He spoke against "someone from another part of the city" criticizing a nonprofit that is "close to your hearts." "We have nothing to hide," he added, encouraging the board to read materials he would send them later.

Mr. Birdsong asked if it was the official position of the Department that they were not happy with the social media outreach that was paid for. He said, "We have to be good at spending money and getting our money's worth if we are paying people to do social media."

Ms. Barajas said she was worried by big contracts such as one for \$53,000.

Mr. Soong said the CBOs were who would suffer. A \$150,000 contract for Eviterus to do text messaging was rejected by the City, so the Department pivoted to survey 1.2 million voters about how much they knew about NCs, which DONE would present at the March 1<sup>st</sup> BONC meeting.

Mr. Birdsong said a lot of people thought it was "hard to get straight answers from DONE...There's a layer of bureaucracy that keeps you from having 'straight up' conversations with people." There wasn't a lot of two-way communication about concerns people have, Birdsong added.

**Ms. Barajas moved and Mr. Hill seconded to postpone the item, which passed by unanimous consent.**

**9. New Business and ideas for future meetings**

Ms. Barajas said she would like someone from Rio de Los Angeles Park to explain where money was being spent, and she said vendors there had safety concerns, while the park director never left the office. Women and girls felt unsafe to use the bathroom. She heard people had suffered from broken legs due to potholes in the fields. The State had provided money to fix the existing sports facilities.

At this time (9:53 p.m.), Mr. Birdsong left the meeting. Taking over as Chair, Ms. Barajas declared the meeting adjourned.

**10. Upcoming Meetings and Events**

- Governing Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 8, 7:00PM
- Monday, August 2, 6:00PM

**11. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m. without objection.**

*Respectfully submitted by Conrad Starr.*