



## ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2009

**Committee members:** Michael McCue (Chair), Jane Drucker (Secretary), Christine From, Chris Houchins, George Shea, Ben Neumann (Ex-officio), Ed Begley, Jr. (Special Energy Advisor)

### Agenda

1. Call to Order & Roll Call (1 min). *Present: **McCue, From, Houchins, Shea.** Absent: Drucker (excused) Quorum achieved. Six stakeholders in attendance.*
2. Pledge of Allegiance (1 min.)
3. Approval of SCNC Environmental & Cultural Affairs Committee meeting minutes (3 min). *Passed unanimously.*
4. Appointment of 2 new committee members for the 2009-2010 term. (5 mins.) ***Dana Marriott** and SCNC Board member, **Dr. Victor Helo**, were appointed by the chair to begin serving as voting members of the committee commencing with the May 2009 meeting.*
5. Comments by the Committee Chair (3 min). *Chair (McCue) spoke about the seemingly overwhelming task of educating the public about the global emergency we are facing environmentally, but stressed that every single positive action we take does indeed make a difference and that the committee should move forward with a positive attitude and renewed commitment for the new term.*
6. Public Comments on non-agenda items within the Committee's jurisdiction (10 min). *Stakeholder **Lisa Cahan Davis** spoke in favor of developing a liaison position for someone to specifically work with the community schools, develop a relationship with them and provide an educational program for the environmental issues. Stakeholder, **Bonnie Koehler**, questioned the city's policies regarding tree trimming and asked the committee for information regarding the licensing and permitting of tree trimming services. Stakeholder, **Shelley Boyle**, asked about creating a program to encourage businesses on Ventura blvd. to shut their doors while the air-conditioning is on citing the waste of energy. Boyle also recommended investigating the feasibility of obtaining a small parcel of land for the "Little Farmer's" project.*
7. Response(s) to comments by Committee Members (10 min). *The committee advised the stakeholders and the chair asked Davis, Koehler, and Boyle to research their issues and to report back to the committee next month.*
8. Discussion and possible motion with respect to "**The cost of commuting for LA City Council**" **Note:** Even as Angelinos are being urged to take public transit, some elected officials continue to rack up costly gas tabs by driving vehicles that are not fuel-efficient at the expense of taxpayers. A recent audit from City Controller, Laura Chick, highlighted "unbusinesslike" behavior of city

workers driving home city cars and fueling them at taxpayer expense with little oversight or accountability. Presentation by Chair. **Question: Should City Council amend city policy to deny or withhold transportation expenses reimbursement (at taxpayer expense) for city council members and other officers and/or city employees who are not operating vehicles that have achieved at least a minimum 30MPG rating?** Continued discussion and possible motion—**Question: Should private use of the public vehicle fleet be stopped?** Continued discussion and possible motion--**Question: Should unmonitored fuel credit cards for city workers be ended?** (20 min). *This item was tabled until the May 2009 meeting.*

9. Discussion and possible motion with respect to the historic **"Studio City Camera Exchange" Sign**. Presentation by committee member Christine From. **Question: Should this committee take action to repair, restore and re-install this landmark sign within Studio City boundaries?** (15 mins) Presentation by From included a brief history of the studios that have been active in Studio city, a history of the sign's use and current status. After a lengthy discussion, the committee decided that it did want to take action, but that it may be better to establish a separate committee to undertake this project. It was agreed to request funding for possible use in establishing a new home for the sign. Stakeholders suggested using the sign as a greeting sign near the border of the business district. Item tabled for further discussion.
10. Presentation, discussion and possible motion with respect to enacting a **ban of all Styrofoam products within the City of Los Angeles**. Styrofoam is not biodegradable and has become more pervasive in the land and marine environment. It breaks into smaller pieces which animals mistake for food. It seems unwise to use something for ten minutes and then have it float in the ocean, or lie in the sand or the streets, for hundreds of years. Presentation by committee member, George Shea. **Question: Should single-use Styrofoam be banned from use within the City of Los Angeles before it causes anymore harm to our oceans, beaches and environment?** *After a brief discussion, the committee voted unanimously to support the following--***Motion: The SCNC supports a complete ban of the use of Styrofoam, single-use containers within the City of Los Angeles and urges Council to support AB 1358 banning all Styrofoam single-use containers from the State of California.**
11. Presentation, discussion and possible motion with respect to supporting the previously passed committee expenditures for the leaf blower campaign at the next SCNC board meeting? (10 min). *After a lengthy discussion, the committee decided to vigorously support the previous motion re: expenditure for the creation of a PSA video to inform the public about the health hazards of gas-powered leaf-blowers.*
12. Discussion and possible motion with respect to the projected committee expenditures for the next term through March 2010. **Question: What amount should the committee chair seek from the SCNC budget committee for the next term?** *Open discussion with all participating resulted in the following budget request...\$15,700 total to be used to purchase, office supplies(\$250), refreshments(\$200), informational leaf-blower flyers in Spanish(\$500), restoring the Studio City Camera Exchange Sign(\$5,000), research materials and subscriptions((\$250), developing a training program for "Neighborhood Watchdogs"(\$1,000), a Drought education program(\$1,500), the planting of trees(\$1,000), promotional*

- canvas tote bags(\$1,000), planting trees and creating an award recognizing environmental or cultural service to the community by a local stakeholder(\$500). **Motion: The Environmental & Cultural Affairs committee requests \$15,700 for materials and operational expenses for the 2009-1010 term.*** (15 min).
13. Discussion and possible motion for the establishment of an annual award to be awarded by the Chair in recognition of a Studio City stakeholder who has distinguished themselves with service to our community and/or our Neighborhood Council in an environmental or cultural capacity. *After a brief discussion, committee voted unanimously to support the following—***Motion: The committee will establish an annual award--to be presented to a Studio City stakeholder who has proven their commitment to the environmental well-being and/or cultural life of the community—expressed by the planting of a tree with an award plaque commemorating the recipient’s achievements and service to their community.** (5 mins.)
  14. Comments from members on subject matter within the Committee’s jurisdiction (5 min). Shea and Houchins objected to the Pledge of Allegiance being placed on the committee agenda.
  15. Assignments for Committee Members and comments from Chair. (5 mins.) chair asked all members to follow through on their assignments and research.
  16. Adjournment (1 min).