

Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council
SPECIAL General Board Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2024

This meeting is being held by the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council using teleconferencing pursuant to Government Code Section 54953.8(a)(2)(B).

1. Call to Order, Welcome – Ross Herman, Vice President, 7:23pm
2. Roll Call, Karen Moran

| Board Member | Roll Call | Funding Voting Eligibility | Board Appointment |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lydia Grant | Present | Yes | President |
| Lallah Rowe | Absent | Yes | 1st VP |
| Ross Herman | Present | Yes | 2nd VP |
| Carol Hutchinson | Present | Yes | Treasurer |
| Cindy Cleghorn | Present | Yes | Correspondence Sec |
| Karen Moran | Present | Yes | Recording Sec |
| Leny Freeman | Present | Yes | Region 1 Rep |
| KT Travers | Present | Yes | Region 1 Rep |
| Sherry McCoy | Present | Yes | Region 2 Rep |
| Vacant | Vacant | Vacant | Region 2 Rep (see Note below) |
| Mike Goglia | Absent | Yes | Region 3 Rep |

| Board Member | Roll Call | Funding Voting Eligibility | Board Appointment |
|--|-----------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Peter Darakjian | Absent | Yes | Region 3 Rep |
| Jon von Gunten | Present | Yes | Region 3 Rep |
| Belinda Woodruff | Absent | No | Region 4 Rep |
| Trevor Schmidt | Absent | Yes | Region 4 Rep |
| Mark Seigel | Present | Yes | Region 4 Rep |
| Chris Rowe | Absent | Yes | Education Rep |
| Cheryl Schmidt | Absent | Yes | Public Safety Rep |
| Nina Royal | Absent | Yes | Senior Rep |
| Vartan Keshish | Present | Yes | Community Interest Rep |
| <p>Quorum: 11 present at roll call, 8 absent (<i>Note: Mapi Moran, Region 2 Rep, has withdrawn herself from STNC at this time</i>). 19 total</p> | | | |

3. **Discussion / Action:** that STNC approves Draft Letter of support for the Arizona crossing. Support is for the City of Los Angeles, California’s grant application for the Oro Vista Culvert Replacement at Big Tujunga Wash Southern Steelhead Passage Planning Project, which is being submitted to the Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration’s FY 2023 National Culvert Removal, Replacement and Restoration (Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage) Grant Program. Draft Letter attached.

- *Note:* Per an email that Lydia sent out: “The city council's office has asked us to weigh in on a grant proposal and provide our approval on an endorsement letter.” Hence a special meeting was called to issue the letter in the time-frame requested.
- Ross read the draft letter and a discussion with suggestions ensued. Cindy took notes during the discussion to incorporate appropriate the concerns and suggestions given.
- Ross said that issues with how the culvert in Big Tujunga Wash is set up is impacting the welfare of the Big Steel Head Trout, an endangered species and ST is requesting money be budgeted in the grant specifically for the protection of this endangered species.
- There was a discussion about who to address the letter to and Lydia said it would be addressed and routed to the people specially requested by the City’; we have been advised by Jose through Empowerment that the Dept of Empowerment will forward the letter which we do not send directly.

- It was suggested by Jon that we also address other infrastructure issues attached to this project. Leny felt additional information should be included; Ross said this is an initial investigation with more details coming later.
- Lydia reminded that this is for the Arizona crossing on the road to Riverhead Ranch, allowing the road to be built higher so the wash can go under the road. Currently the road gets washed out during some rains and improvements for the trout would also benefit the community flooding concerns. Lydia said that the focus for purposes of the grant needs to be on the endangered species and the improvement for infrastructure is incidental and should not be included. KT, who has done research on the topic, noted that there is a place in the letter where we could include the benefit to the community. KT also noted that even if the road was built elevated, it would not help unless the current “damming” of the water be addressed. People dam the water to make watering holes for swimming purposes and park illegally, creating other concerns. Kt felt that enforcement of no damming and parking restrictions needed to be enforced to make the project successful for the trout (and to address community concerns where the stagnant water was a mosquito breeding problem as well as illegal parking).
- Jon wanted to know what guarantees we have that they will do the things our community needs and suggested it be included in the letter. Jon wanted a sentence that we said that nearby public roads will be improved to discourage transient encampments and prevent casual parking. Ross said we should make our endorsement contingent on enforcement of camping/parking. Ross felt it should be part of the contingency in the letter (e.g. signage, traffic enforcement). Lydia said we will weigh in as time goes forward but there are no guarantees that this can be done and it shouldn't be a condition included in the letter or the letter could well be rejected. Lydia said they can't apply for the grant unless we have community support and we can work with them to define what is needed to be done.
- Cindy said that this intersection (Big Tujunga and Riverwood Ranch) gets flooded during big storms and there was a large homeless encampment there for years. A Wild-life sanctuary status could help get enforcement for parking restrictions, camping, etc. per Ross. KT said that part of land is “MRCA” (Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority) and it already is designated a wild-life sanctuary but MRCA doesn't have the money to enforce damming, etc., but depends on city of LA to enforce, noting that MRCA is an agency of the Santa Monica Conservancy in the City of L.A. and L.A. should be taking care of it.
- Per KT, damming has to stop, signage needs to be put up, recreating (e.g. swimming holes) needs to stop and enforcement has to happen by the City of L.A. Carol asked about poaching.
- KT said these letters goes to anyone other than Monica it negates the grant.
- KT provided verbiage in CHAT that could be considered for the letter. KT's suggested wording in CHAT: “While we at the STNC Forward fully support the NOAA's Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan, we apply a caveat to our support of the City's application: that we would also like to inform the NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service of the existence of numerous dams along the Tujunga River that have been constructed by recreators in response to heavy winter rains to create de facto swimming holes. The existence of these many dams will prevent the success of the

Southern California Steelhead Recovery Plan. Additionally, we have become aware of illegal fishing of the endangered steelhead in these swimming holes that hopefully the Fisheries will be able to remedy.” Cindy incorporated this wording, and other suggestions, with the agreement of the Board.

- Lydia (again) reminded to take out the word “contingency/contingent”; their office can’t guarantee our requests can be accommodated.
- A motion was made, and passed, to approve the draft letter of support for the Arizona crossing as amended.

| Item 3. Motion to approve draft Letter of support for the Arizona crossing as amended | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| Motion: Grant, Second: Freeman | | | | | |
| Yes | No | Abstain | Ineligible | Recuse | Absent |
| Grant, Herman, Hutchinson, Cleghorn, K Moran, Freeman, Travers, McCoy, von Gunten, Siegel, Keshish 11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 ineligible, 8 absent | | | | | L Rowe, Goglio, Darakjian, Woodruff, T Schmidt, C. Rowe, C Schmidt, Royal, |

4. Adjourn. 7:58pm