

BLOCK CAPTAINS MEETING 22-02

May 19, 2022
MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Block Captain Lead Arlene Honbo spoke about Granicus, a technology the City Council uses to record the meetings. She asked speakers to speak into the microphone so that they can be heard.

In attendance were:

Arlene Honbo	Kay Lupo	Annie Occhipinti
Gene Honbo	Dorothy Vinter	Sandy Sherman
Deputy Ben Russell	Marian Visco	Chris Stanley
Deputy Darlene Lopez	Judith Haenel	Nicole Tangen
Christian Horvath	Susan Collida	Bill Ruth
Elaine Jeng	Clint Patterson	Rae Walker
Sergeant Tina McCoy	Kathleen Hughes	Leslie Steton
Carol Marrone	Leah Mirsch	Kathryn Bishop
Maureen Hill	Tuba Ghannadi	Nadine Bobit
Gian Starinieri		

There were 11 people who listened in using Granicus.

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2.A. CANYON MANAGEMENT VIDEOS

The website links to the Canyon Management videos were sent out prior to the meeting. The last of the six part video series, "Canyon Management Overview", was played during the meeting. The full video series will be available on Tuesday after receiving City Council approval. All Block Captains (BCs) should watch the video series and encourage the residents/neighbors in their zones to watch them as well. Arlene, Gene, Carol, Marian, and Elaine will visit Fire Station 56 to enlist their assistance promoting the video series while conducting their annual brush inspections.

BC Lead (BCL) Gene Honbo asked for ideas on how to effectively roll out the videos. The comments received from participants included the following:

- The videos were well done and very informative
- Use multi-track approach by using emails and also distributing handouts in the zones. Provide info in small chunks and repeat messaging

- Perhaps shift the current approach of kindness/democratic to more autocratic
- The videos give residents a path of understanding and introduce a serious matter
- Education is key. For example, the increase in chipping days and green bin days resulted in less foliage
- Ask residents for input to obtain buy-in; create an event; need to soft sell first and then hard sell.
- More education needs to be done. Many residents do not realize that the canyons belong to them; the canyons and trails do not belong to the City. Are there grants available?

There was a discussion on mandating vegetation clearance in the canyons on resident's property. BCL Arlene Honbo stated that over the past year, the Fire Fuel Committee had been evaluating whether an ordinance should be adopted and asked City Manager Jeng to elaborate. City Manager Jeng explained that the City, in partnership with the LA County Fire Department and other experts, had been discussing the adoption of such an ordinance. During their evaluation, it was discovered that should the City implement an ordinance mandating clearance beyond 200 feet of Defensible Space, it would trigger additional environmental analysis and permitting requirements as it would become a "project" under State law. Given the additional cost of clearing vegetation and additional environmental analysis and permitting required, it would be too cost prohibitive for the residents and City to bear at the moment.

2.B. HQE SYSTEMS - SIREN PROJECT UPDATE

BCL Arlene Honbo discussed the role and importance of the Block Captain Program, which is sponsored and funded by the City. She commented that the City Council is responsible for making informed decisions and represents the residents. She stated that absent resident input, the City Council often doesn't have adequate information which can lead to City Council making decisions based on their personal preferences or from anecdotal information.

She further stated that the BC Program's primary focus is on safety issues such as fires and earthquakes. Through input from the BCs, many projects that BC advocated for have been approved by the City Council. She also discussed the upcoming City Council meeting on Monday, May 23rd. One item on the agenda is City Budget, which lists the siren system project. BCL Arlene provided an update to the siren project. At present, the City Council requested its consultant to re-evaluate the pole locations to minimize the impact on residents' views. In addition, she stated that the City appears to be split in its support of the siren project and expressed concern that the project will be put aside due to budgetary reasons.

She requested that the BCs sign a letter to City Council supporting the siren project and requesting the City seek grant funding for the project should it be removed from the budget.

2.C. ANNUAL ZONE MEETINGS

There is an upcoming Annual Zone Meeting for residents in October. As a background, Zone Meetings were previously held at BC homes or City Hall. In 2020, due to the pandemic, the meetings were held exclusively online. In 2021, the meetings were held hybrid- online and in-person. Now that the restrictions have been lifted, the question was posed whether the Zone Meetings should be held in-person only or continue with the hybrid format.

Back in November 2021, there was a suggestion that the Zone meetings be consolidated. Perhaps the meetings could include focus groups for the “new residents” and the “advanced residents” for those who have been involved and/or are up-to-date on the BC topics.

BCL Arlene asked for ideas/suggestions on how to proceed with the Annual Zone meeting. The comments received included the following:

- In-person; exhausted using Zoom; benefits of in-person include social pressure, influence and enthusiasm
- Focus the meeting on fire issues that are immediate and in the news (Laguna Niguel),
- Discuss fire risks associated with canyons in each zone
- BCs could speak at the Women’s Club which conducts area meetings
- The Women’s Club of RH divides the city into 4 areas while the BCs have 24 zones. It was requested the BCs receive the WC’s list of 4 areas.

City Manager Jeng introduced new Sheriff Deputies Ben Russell and Darlene Lopez. She expressed gratitude to the Sheriff Department for being an advocate of the BC program. The Sherriff Department disseminates information about the City’s BC program to other jurisdictions and have inspired those jurisdictions to replicate the BC program in their areas.

BCL Arlene asked the BCs to work together to identify potential meeting dates so that the Fire Department and Sherriff can be in attendance. Many expressed the importance of having the First Responders to be in attendance as most of questions are directed to them.

There was also a discussion about the Annual Brush Clearance Notice 2022 from the LA County Fire Department that was received by one of the BCs. The letter was slightly different from previous notifications on the annual brush inspections. There was a question about the new requirement on 0-5’ clearance around the structures. Fire Department personnel indicated that the new requirement is currently being further defined by the Fire Department and will be implemented next year (2023). The existing Defensible Space criteria will remain the same; however, the biggest priority for the Fire

Department this year is the 100-200' discretionary area. According to Fire Department personnel if a resident doesn't have a canyon, then they are typically in compliance. The Fire Department will conduct additional educational outreach on the discretionary areas.

Fire Department personnel will follow-up with the Forestry Division as to why certain residents received the letter while others did not. Some residents received the card but not the letter. Copies of the letter were distributed at the meeting and will be sent via email to all BCs.

CM Jeng stated that the BC Program was featured in the June issue of the Western City magazine, a municipal publication covering the State which has won the Helen Putnam Award for Excellence.

Next meeting is August 18th.

2.D. EIS ROLLOUT UPDATE

Not discussed.

2.E. BLOCK CAPTAINS MEETING SCHEDULE

Not discussed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No additional public comments were received.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20A.M.