

Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 23, 2012 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Introductions

The meeting was attended by 40 people, including Neighborhood Association leaders, City Council members, City of Sunnyvale staff, residents wanting to start a new neighborhood association, and other interested parties.

Featured Presenter – Gary Luebbers, Sunnyvale City Manager

Gary spoke about a variety of issues and fielded many questions from those who were present. He did not have a formal presentation but instead wanted to address the issues and concerns of the Neighborhood Associations and those in attendance. He believes that the Neighborhood Associations ARE the city and they also provide a great way to let City management know what is going on and what we need and want.

Below are the subjects and items Gary covered during his hour-long talk:

- The Downtown Project situation is really a victim of the economy. Things were going well until the economy took a tumble. Wells Fargo Bank has put \$100 million into the project in the past two years and it is thanks to them that it looks as good as it does. They are a strong believer that it will be a success and are providing loans to fund infrastructure developments. Currently the City is tied up in a court action with a previous developer and there is a cloud on the title of the property. This makes it difficult to hand it over to a new developer. The City is working this through and there is some good news. Sunnyvale is days away from signing a lease with a (really good) tenant for the second office building and this will be announced shortly. It will bring 400 jobs and more people downtown eating, shopping, etc. Also, the theater that is coming is Cinemark, and it will be built on the vacant lot next to Target. The living space was originally planned for condos-- then turned into rentals- and now they are back to condos. The City is interested in proceeding with a new developer, but the previous developer is still trying to work out a deal and so development will be held up until this is resolved
- Construction for Morse Park will start soon on the north side of the city. Although sometimes it is easy to take them for granted, but Sunnyvale has a large number of parks, and they are really good ones.
- Sunnyvale (along with other cities) is having problems with thefts of copper wire. Chief Grgurina urged residents to report any suspicious activities to the police. Since theft of copper wire happens very quickly, the key to catching the thieves is immediately reporting any unusual activity. That being said, do not take any action besides notifying the police---these guys are dangerous. For the news briefing on the situation go here:
http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/Portals/0/Sunnyvale/news_releases/2012/NR%2001%2003%2012%20Copper%20Thefts.pdf.

- Study Questions: There are 38 study questions being considered this year. The City Council will discuss and rank the questions at their meeting on February 3rd in the council chambers. This will be an all-day meeting for staff and council. The city link to the study questions is <http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/CityGovernment/StudyIssues/2012StudyIssues.aspx>. They will then be parsed out based on ranking and workload. Jim Griffith has asked for comments as well and those can be provided at <http://www.dweeb.org/>.
- Our previous Public Safety Chief, Don Johnson moved away to Oregon. After an extensive interview process, the city hired Chief Frank Grgurina. He is from Fremont and came very highly recommended. He has a wonderful reputation and is an approachable person who isn't afraid to get down into the trenches. Gary was extremely pleased to get Frank on board and he has been in his new position since November. He has reached out to the individual Neighborhood Associations and is happy to come speak at meetings. He will likely be the speaker at our next quarterly meeting in April.
- A question was asked about whether the Health Fair, the Wednesday Night Summer Series, Hands on the Art, and State of the City would still happen with the current budget cuts. The response was that they are all going to go forward. The Health Fair will now be called the Fit & Fun Fair. Saturday night jazz and the Night Summer series are already scheduled on the Downtown Association website.
- The City will also have its Centennial Celebration this summer on August 25th and 26th. It will include the State of the City. There is a website for the event and it is <http://www.sunnyvale100.com/>
- It was brought up that Public Safety could do a better job alerting citizens of current happenings when there is an emergency. Chief Grgurina brought up the fact that when people are in jeopardy, information will be shared immediately (e.g. the San Miguel school lockdown). However, often the amount of information that can be shared during a situation is very limited. However there can be more effort made to "push" the information to the Neighborhood Associations in the future.
- Regarding city employee salaries and pensions - according to Gary there have been efforts made to do more negotiating and they have been doing "concession bargaining" with the different unions. Concessions are being made and the City is moving in the right direction. We are not where we need to be. This is a difficult situation as we gave people a benefit, and now we are asking that they give it up for the greater good. We have made a 25% cut in Public Safety and we are asking much more of our employees. They do it, without complaining. As an example, the Library Director has been asked to take on another job (in addition to hers) which allowed for the elimination of one position. Sunnyvale employees get paid well, but if you compare salaries to the private sector, they are lower.
- In 17 years, the City's "rainy day fund" will be down to zero. But the future is very hard to predict and both good things and bad things can happen. They are looking

closely at the next five or so years, and then not as closely after that (too many variables).

- Regarding the budget, in light of redevelopment funds moving to the state, Sunnyvale is reviewing the budget to ensure that the rainy day fund stays healthy. This is a long term effort with adjustments being made now ensuring the fund is available 17 years from now. Gary said that in regards to city employee pensions, we are where we are now; nothing can be done about the past. We're looking out through the windshield, not through the rear-view mirror. We're going forward from here.
- Jim Griffith added in a comment about his perspective on Gary's salary. He said that he occasionally hears comments that our City Manager is overpaid. Although he wasn't on the City Council when Gary was selected, he was on the residents' panel that interviewed the candidates. Jim said the he saw the candidates that we could have gotten for less money, and we really didn't want them. Regardless, Gary has returned his value to Sunnyvale several times over already, with the presence of Nokia, HP, Rambus, Microsoft, Apple, and Google in Sunnyvale, and that was all mostly his doing.

Sunnyvale Neighborhoods Organization

At the last meeting in November attendance was really poor, and afterwards Wayne, Reid, and Michelle decided to do some things to see if communication could be improved and meeting attendance could be increased. Below are the results of that effort.

- Communication – We now have three primary methods for communication:
 - There is a Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association website in place for our group. This is not the one maintained by the City of Sunnyvale. The webmaster is Wayne Amacher and he is very interested in getting your feedback and suggestions for what to include.
 - The Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association Yahoo Group is in place and up to date. It is moderated by Reid Myers.
 - There is a monthly newsletter being published. It is a work in progress and will be evolving as it is determined what is best to include in it. Michelle Philips is putting it together.
- Membership - There is now a definition of membership in Sunnyvale Neighborhoods in place. It consists of four groups:
 - Chairpersons and their key officers of Sunnyvale Neighborhood Associations
 - Any Sunnyvale resident actively interested in forming a neighborhood association where there is none (note: if someone does not want to form a group then they will be directed to Sunnyvale Café).
 - Sunnyvale City Council Members

- Third parties having a close association with Sunnyvale Neighborhoods and approved by the Sunnyvale Neighborhoods leadership.
- Increasing Attendance at the Quarterly Meetings – Changes have been made to the current process for organizing these meetings:
 - There will be a dedicated person to organize the quarterly meetings (Michelle Philips).
 - Evite will be used to ensure that there is enough interest to hold the meeting.
 - Speakers will be sought out that are of the most interest to the largest number of people. The meetings will focus on starting and ending on time.
 - Each meeting will provide an opportunity for those present to share what is on their minds.
- Timing of Quarterly Meetings - In order to increase attendance, the timing of the quarterly meetings will be adjusted. They will now occur in January, April, August, and October. The following things have and will be considered:
 - Busy months such as November and December will be avoided.
 - Timing of Spring Breaks will be considered for the two school districts in Sunnyvale so that those weeks can be avoided for meetings.
 - Holidays and Events – The timing of holidays such as Chinese New Year's and events such as Monday Night Football will be considered so as not to cause a conflict.
 - June and July will be avoided since they are popular months for vacations.

Email Addresses and Links

- Wayne Amacher – Cherry Hill Neighborhood – wamacher@amacher.com
- Reid Myers – Cumberland South Neighborhood – reidsmail@yahoo.com
- Michelle Philips - Birdland Neighborhood – michelle_philips@yahoo.com
- Gary Luebbers – Sunnyvale City Manager – citymgr@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us
- Nathan Truit – City of Sunnyvale Contact for Neighborhood Associations – ntruit@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us
- Gary Luebbers' Blog – <http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/Newsroom/Blogs/catid/1/City-Managers-Blog.aspx>
- Jim Griffith's Blog - <http://www.dweeb.org/>
- Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association Website – www.sunnyvaleneighborhoods.org
- City of Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association Webpage - <http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/IntheCommunity/NeighborhoodAssociations.aspx>