



# VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL 2025 ELECTION CANDIDATE GUIDE

## REMINDER

THE 2025 LA NEIGHBORHOOD  
COUNCIL ELECTIONS ARE  
VOTE-BY-MAIL ONLY



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**VOTE-BY-MAIL ONLY**

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**UNTIL MARCH 10**

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## CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT

### BRIAN AVERILL



I've lived in Venice for 23 years. I'm a professional photographer/director and the current VNC president. I'm a founding board member of the Venice Surfing Association, the Last Thursday Concert Series, and the Venice Boardwalk Action Committee, which wrote and helped implement the proposal used by the city to house the boardwalk encampments in 2021. I'd like to build on our great relationship with CD11 and continue moving Venice forward in a positive direction that honors and respects the incredible culture and history of this community. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions and head over to <https://www.1venice.com/> for more info.



# CANDIDATES FOR VICE PRESIDENT

## GARY PEARL



As a proud Angeleno with family roots in Los Angeles spanning over 100 years, I have lived in Venice for more than 30 years, dedicating myself to preserving its unique culture and fostering community connections. As a parent of a young child, I worked tirelessly to replace the Venice Beach playground so all our children can enjoy it. I believe Venice belongs to the entire city and sets the creative and energetic tone for Los Angeles as it embodies what this city was meant to be - a place to pursue original endeavors. We fight to keep that authenticity. I'm proud to be part of Venice's tech and creative communities, where I've dedicated my career to fostering collaboration and innovation. I know and understand the importance of parliamentary procedure and focusing on these is key to running productive meetings and committees to achieve our common goals. My goal as Vice President is to preserve the authenticity of Venice while ensuring it remains inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

# CANDIDATES FOR SECRETARY

## TIMA BELL



As an incumbent to the Secretary of the VNC, I am excited to commit my time and resources to the position again. I was honored to be elected for the first time two years ago and have enjoyed being able to give back to my lifelong community. As a 50+ year Venice native, I would love to continue this commitment.

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# CANDIDATES FOR TREASURER



## HELEN FALLON

I am running for a 2nd term as VNC Treasurer. My accounting background has ensured that VNC financial records are now always up to date, transparent and in compliance with the City rules that govern VNC finances. Together with Outreach Chair Erica Moore, I worked to eliminate wasteful spending. The result: thousands of dollars were reallocated to community projects. More can be done. I bring this same attention to detail by researching the facts for all motions that come before the Board. VNC elections are a referendum on who will speak for Venice. I support and will continue to work to ensure voters can vote for more than one (of 13) community officer(s). The current structure does not provide meaningful representation for ALL Venice neighborhoods. Will it be special interests or will it be those of us who seek a BALANCED family friendly community who are elected. I do NOT support waiving parking requirements or up-zoning our residential neighborhoods. Please support me with your vote.



## CRYSTAL LOPEZ

I am running for Treasurer to ensure our community's finances are managed with transparency, accountability, and efficiency. With over 20 years of experience in accounting and financial management, I bring the expertise needed to safeguard our resources and maximize their impact. I am committed to clear communication, responsible budgeting, and identifying opportunities for growth that benefit everyone. I would be honored to serve as your Treasurer and work toward a secure and prosperous future for our community.



## DEBORAH KEATON

While on the VNC board as Chair of the OFW Committee I have brought a positive, solution-focused approach to our committee. Now, I'm running for Treasurer. With over 30 years of running my own successful business in Venice, I have developed a strong understanding of managing finances. I'll apply this to ensure fiscal responsibility, transparency, and community-focused funding for Venice with a let's get it done together attitude! I believe in collaboration, kindness, and compromise to achieve the best outcomes for our community. There's no room for negativity, ego or unproductive behavior. For 15+ years, my family has hosted the "Think Positive Party," a music event that brings together 150+ locals for a night of fellowship and great music—one example of how we build community in Venice. Our daughter attends Venice High, & I'm a proud supporter of LAUSD, having served in PTA and Girl Scouts. I'm committed to making Venice a better place for all. Thank you for your support!

# CANDIDATES FOR LUPC CHAIR



## MARK MACK

As a long time resident, 35 years, and as a trained and practicing architect with a former teaching positions at the Department of Architecture and urban Planning at UCLA and the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, + 40years, I would like to lend my expertise and passion to the wellbeing of the unique neighborhood of Venice on the Beach. I have seen the many shades of developments over the last decades and witnesses the changes both in population and the urban fabric of our neighborhoods, as now retired yet sporadically active architect I would like to give back time and expertise to my chosen community. In my professional life I have planned and executed award winning housing projects, planning proposals, commercial, institutional and residential architecture in four continents. I have served now a full year on the Venice LUPC board and serve on the Ad hoc committee on the Venice Community plan, which evaluated the City Community Plan with over a dozen meetings so far.



## TED HENDERSON

The modern housing our town needs to grow, streets clear of RVs and other safety hazards, the boardwalk reborn for a 2028 Olympics celebration, a pristine beach rid of dumps and tarballs, a public art park at the Venice Dell, and... the return of canals between Venice and Abbot Kinney to protect us from becoming the next LA community destroyed by a climate change-fueled superstorm. Is it impossible to imagine this promising future? Not if we establish Venice as an independent city again. We can represent our interests better and build a bright future, together. —Before moving to Venice, I served as a legislative aide in the U.S. House of Representatives and later developed the Capitol Bells app, which provided real-time Congressional vote alerts and invited the public to vote too. I hold a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and an advanced degree in climate science and policy.



# CANDIDATES FOR COMMUNICATIONS

## STEVE BRADBURY



We can do better. There are 38,347 Venetians. Only 970 members of our community (2.5%) voted in the 2023 VNC election, down 54.3% from 2021. A mere 30-40 people regularly show up at VNC board meetings and many less attend committee meetings. How can more people become engaged with the VNC and responsibly contribute to solving the critical issues facing our community? The answer starts with effective communication. This includes (1) a re-designed and more frequently updated VNC website; (2) regular distribution of an informative e-mail newsletter; (3) an updated/refined VNC database and (4) clearer explanations for how to get involved (hint: you can join a VNC committee, it's not just for board members). These deliverables and thoughtful pragmatism will be my continuing commitment as a VNC board member and your new Communications Officer. Collectively, we will do better. Thank you for your support.

# CANDIDATES FOR OUTREACH

## ERICA MOORE



Greetings! I am the VNC Outreach Chair and you may have seen me at my Outreach/Info table at the Holiday Sign Lighting, CicLAvia, Fireman's Breakfast, Pride Block Party, Oakwood's Juneteenth, StreetsLA-CD11 Rose Pathway Update or other events . I produced the Resiliency Committee Emergency Preparedness Town Hall & hosted City Planning's Presentation of the Community Plan. Please vote for me, I'd be honored to continue serving YOU for 2 more years. I'm eager to boost our community engagement & strengthen structures I've put in place. I show up and do the work with enthusiasm, energy, creativity and a sharp eye for detail to help all Venice/MDR stakeholders. My focus is motivating connection, encouraging participation & delivering meaningful results, always under budget! I'm a thoughtful single mom, longtime renter and 39-year East Venice business owner cooking for the houseless & seniors while employing locals. My life is built on community & being of service. Vote MOORE and get MORE!

## ALEX NEIMAN



As a lifelong Venetian and 31-year resident, I've witnessed our community grow and evolve in remarkable ways. Venice is a vibrant tapestry of people from all walks of life—a reflection of the best of Los Angeles. Its unique character comes from the passion, creativity, and resilience of those who call it home. I believe in our collective ability to honor Venice's rich history while fostering an optimistic vision for how it continues to evolve. Together, we can address challenges, embrace opportunities, and create a neighborhood that thrives while remaining inclusive and true to its roots. As your Community Officer, I will focus on connection, collaboration, and action. I will work to ensure all voices are heard, and that we move forward with purpose, strengthening the sense of community that makes Venice so special. Together, we can shape the future of Venice with hope and determination.

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE

## YOLANDA GONZALEZ



I have long been an advocate of community commitment via Neighborhood Councils. In light of recent disasters for our stakeholders (fire, flood, and slide) the VNC must focus on the future. My focus will be 1) Continue to lobby for renewal or replacement of Venice Fire Station #63. 2) I was able through Flood Relief Specialists to identify properties that were erroneously flagged as being in a high risk flood zone, resulting in FEMA mandated Flood Insurance with elevated premiums and have FEMA correct that error by obtaining a Letter of Map Adjustment (LOMA). Where I can guide others through the process. 3) Venice businesses have closed because their owners' homes burned in the recent fires. We need to encourage back investors to create jobs, and affordable housing to retain our diverse population. 4) Hold LA City accountable for its short falls and revenue deficits. I hope I can count on your vote and TRUST to lead with the best of my ability in decision making. Yolanda Gonzalez

## MEHRNOOSH



Since 1984 I have lived and worked as an Architect in Venice and raised my Son and Daughter. I visited Venice in 70's and decided to come back home after I received my Masters Degree from Harvard. I have provided pro bono for local non profit organization and also was a great pleasure to be member of LUPC from 2012 to 2023. I have passion and interest to see that public spaces are enhanced to serve the culture and maintain qualities that always made Venice an interesting City for residence as well as for visitors.

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## MICHAEL S. LEVY



Over 30 years ago when I came to Los Angeles, I moved straight to Venice. I wanted to live near the beach and it was the only beach I could afford. I fell in love with this place and never left. Since then, I've seen Venice evolve—sometimes for the better, sometimes at the cost of what makes it special. As an at large member of the Venice Neighborhood Council, I would help steer the inevitable changes, while helping keep the vital "Spirit of Venice". Three issues I will focus on are homelessness, the effects of climate change on our beach community and gentrification especially with regards to the Dell median project, With my years of experience as a Producer and Production Manager, I understand how to manage complex projects, bring people together, and make real progress. I know how to get results. Venice is more than a neighborhood—it's a community, a spirit, a way of life. I'm running because I want to make sure we protect that. I'd be honored to have your support.

## FRAN SOLOMON



I am a 47 year North Beach resident, appointed 6 months ago to fill a VNC Board vacancy. I'd love to continue to serve a full 2-year term. Recognizing the importance of Venice's history of uniqueness, diversity & inclusion requires us to set aside what we don't agree on & find areas of collaboration and consensus. I work at being a consensus builder & believe we all bring value to the table. I participated in the original Venice Town Council & volunteer at a local senior center. I am currently a member of the Ocean Front Walk Committee, focusing on the issues of unregulated electric vehicles on OFW. From 1993-2015 I served as West Hollywood Council Deputy, proudly receiving 2000 Employee of the Year. I've spent decades fostering collaborations between residents, elected officials, non-profits, businesses and government agencies. It would be my honor to be part of moving Venice into its next successful chapter.



# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## SUSAN HEWITT



As a homeowner, and small business owner, I feel extremely lucky to live in Venice. I am passionate about the Venice community. It's truly unique: I am particularly drawn to the creativity, the diversity, and of course the natural beauty of Venice and its environs. These things all need protection and nurturing and I would love to serve on the VNC to support those goals.

## KENYA LEE



I am running for a seat on the board to represent Marina Del Rey, an under-represented area within the council. As a homeowner, mother, and community advocate, I am deeply invested in the well-being and future of our neighborhood. With over 20 years of experience as a Registered Nurse in public health, I have dedicated my career to serving underserved communities in Los Angeles. I have been a strong advocate for equitable healthcare, housing, and community resources, working directly with individuals to improve their quality of life. I am also the Executive Director of Faith In Girls, an organization I founded to empower women by providing access to economic and personal development opportunities. I am a published author of *The Path to Emotional Greatness*, a self-awareness guide designed to help individuals navigate personal growth & transformation. I am committed to addressing the concerns of the residents of our community. I pledge unwavering support! <https://www.kenyalee4vnc.com>

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## GINA HARDIN



I fulfilled my lifelong dream of moving to California three years ago. Now that I've become accustomed to what a wonderful life I have I certainly appreciate an opportunity to give back to my community. I look forward to meeting more people in the Venice community and serving to the best of my ability. I previously lived in Washington DC and grew up in Miami. I live on the peninsula with my husband and my wonderful dog Chance

## GABRIELLA BARACCHINI ROSS



I have rented in and around Venice since 2018, and just this year took the leap to become a homeowner in our lovely community. I am passionate about investing in our neighborhood to ensure we all live in a prosperous, safe and healthy environment. As an At-Large Community Officer I could offer a unique perspective: mixing my finance and economic background with my love and appreciation for Venice culture.

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## BRENNAN LAWSON



I am humbly seeking election to our neighborhood council as a small business owner, homeowner, Veteran, volunteer, and mentor who has lived and worked in Venice for over 10 years. Like many of you, I fell in love with Venice for its cultural vibrance, diverse perspectives, and lack of pretense. My vision for our community is one that celebrates our deep-rooted heritage while making room for a future that creates opportunity for all Venetians. I believe that public service at any level requires integrity and compassion and I'm honored to submit my candidacy to serve this great community.

## CHRISTOPHER LEE



Hello Venice - my name is Christopher Lee and I am running for At Large Community Officer. As a renter in Venice, I am the founder of Venice Community Cleanups, a 501c3 that lists and hosts trash cleanups in Venice on a regular basis. This service leads me to seek out new information and involved communities in Venice constantly - through my efforts there I have established connections with organizations such as Yo Venice!, the Venice Paparazzi, the Westside Current, the Venice Chamber of Commerce, the Abbot Kinney Merchant Association, the Venice Surfing Association, and many more. This connectedness is something that I seek for all Venetians - while we all may have different visions for what Venice is and may be, it is necessary to come together in conversations that shape our community. Ultimately I seek to bring specific measurable results to my time in the VNC that allow us as a community to celebrate tangible, positive change for all.

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## CLARK BROWN



I am running for my third term as a VNC Community Officer. Since 1969 I have lived and owned property in Venice. I am a retired land use and municipal lawyer. I was on the first Venice Town Council. I am presently on: The VNC's Board of Officers, its Administrative Committee, and its Ocean Front Walk Committee where I am the Secretary. Since joining the VNC I have focused on the unhoused. To that end: (1) I proposed and the VNC Board passed 2 resolutions to simplify and better enforce anticamping and RV/OV parking ordinances in Venice. (2) I proposed a resolution to develop vacant land at LAX for RVs, OVs and a tiny home village. (3) I worked with neighbors and businesses to remove and relocate unhoused persons and RVs and OVs from Flower Avenue, Washington Blvd, Marr Street, 4 TH Street and Abbot Kinney Blvd. (4) YO! Venice and the Argonaut have published 13 of my articles about the above. Please visit my website, <https://www.clarkbrown4venice.org/>

## JIM FITZGERALD



I've been your neighbor and homeowner in Venice for 25 years. As a councilmember, my focus will be on Safety, Security, and Beautifying our Neighborhood. Government is hard. The answer isn't to stop trying, but instead look for solutions that are reasonable and effective. Thanks for your consideration.



# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## JOE FRIEND



Joe Friend is passionate about Venice; whether in the line-up at Breakwater, biking the path, walking the neighborhood questing for Gjusta bread, La Fiesta Brava tacos, Groundwork coffee or attempting to prove he's still a good rollerskater (he's not) at the outdoor rink; prior to VB, Joe lived in Santa Monica for 10 years, transplanted to California via Brooklyn, NYC, after growing up in Philly. Joe has deep experience, having built and managed teams at Disney, Fox Networks Group, Discovery, and The Philadelphia Inquirer. With a background in media, entertainment, publishing, and technology, his experiences as a leader and creative collaborator have taught him valuable skills that are universally applicable. Joe loves hobbies and attempts to "do something creative every day"; garnering awards for his film compositions, screenplays, graphic novel, and podcast. Joe intends to be a welcome addition to the VNC, using his experience and work ethic to keep Venice both fresh and funky.

## JOSEPH GARCIA



Living in tents has become an idea of the past. Unless someone chooses this more 'adventurous' lifestyle, or has a disability without the proper community support ~ I'll be there to effectively get them off the street (or at the least into a better shelter). We have the adequate resources to do so, and sometimes it's an ear to lean on, sometimes it's an ear to yell at metaphorically van gogh. I've been at it full force the past four years and it has brought me incredible purpose. Whilst on this board I'm going to Up the Stakes in the Arts. Color. Vibrance. Strangeness. ...unfortunately, Venice is beginning to aesthetically feel a lot like santa monica

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## JASON SUGARS



I am a born and raised, proud, and dedicated Venice, CA native, with children and grandchildren living in the area. My ideal Venice neighborhood is one that meets old and new, commerce and community, and a strong sense of humanity. If elected, this would be my third consecutive term in service to the neighborhood as a member of the Venice Neighborhood Council, where I look to use Art, Culture, Humor, and rock solid common sense to serve our neighbors, stakeholders, and the constituency that I and our council are meant to protect and serve. In my eyes, I believe that our government agents and public servants are not meant to be the community's leaders, bosses, or directors. Instead, I want to show and prove that people in political positions are elected and empowered to be responsive, reflective, and responsible REPRESENTATIVES of the people that elect and entrust us to be our community's conduit to the governmental offices that we engage with on our beloved neighborhood's behalf.

## NICO RUDERMAN



No candidate statement provided.

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## ALLEY MILLS BEAN



First of all if you are reading these Candidate statements, thank you, it means you CARE about Venice! That's why I've decided to run for a third term... I just care deeply about this ole town. I am a 35 year resident of Venice, and together with my belated husband Orson Bean (a 50 year resident) received the Spirit of Venice Award for our "passion for and service to the Venice Community, reflecting the spirit, creativity and uniqueness of Venice". It is that very Spirit of Venice - its creativity and uniqueness, its vibrant history of inclusiveness, its socio-economic diversity and just plain old fashioned vibe of loving your neighbor - that makes me want to serve again and to fight for our community. Especially in these very tough times for Venice, when we need to make complex and humane decisions about homelessness, and make wise and transparent decisions about our up-coming Land Use Plan and LCP, I would love to be a voice for you and serve Venice again.

## LISA REDMOND



I am eager to run for a 2nd term Community Officer! As a 30+ year renter in Venice—where 2/3 of residents are also renters—I know firsthand that our voices are often underrepresented in decision-making, where homeowners hold the majority. I'm committed to ensuring all stakeholders, regardless of housing status, have a voice in shaping the future of our community. During my term, I advocated for responsible, progressive building that prioritizes affordability and community needs over unchecked gentrification. I believe in fostering an inclusive Venice that respects its history, values diversity and ensures long-time residents are not displaced. Most importantly, I advocated for stakeholder needs, and not the needs of the VNC Board. I am not here to push a personal agenda—I am here to represent you. My goal is to build bridges, not walls, to foster communication, collaboration and understanding. I'd be honored to continue serving you and fighting for a Venice that works for everyone.

# CANDIDATES FOR AT-LARGE (CONT.)

## RICHARD STANGER



I am a member of the VNC's Community Planning/Local Coastal Program Ad Hoc Committee. Its purpose has been to review City Planning's proposed future land use plans for Venice, to seek public input, and to recommend responses by the VNC. During the Committee's over two dozen public meetings in 2024 it heard citizens from all of Venice's many neighborhoods describe what they want their neighborhoods to look like. That experience has been invaluable and will serve me well as one of the At-Large members of the VNC. I am a long-term resident of Venice.





# CANDIDATES FOR COMMUNITY INTEREST

## SARAH MAHIR

No candidate statement provided.



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