

Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council
Ad Hoc Education Committee Meeting
March 16, 2006

Minutes

The Ad Hoc Education Committee was called to order at 7:18 pm by Chair, Naomi Nightingale. In attendance: Antoinette Reynolds, Rick Selan, Loren Grossman, Erma D. Darling

Rick Selan discussed that there were no minutes available from the previous meeting held on February 16. Naomi Nightingale responded that she agreed that minutes were important and necessary for the group and had expected Noel Weiss to bring them. However, she also wanted to share that according to Deanna Stevenson our DONE liaison, minutes of ad hoc committees are not required to be posted.

Loren disagreed and stated that posting minutes of the ad hoc Education Committee meeting was required by the Department of Corporations. She spoke of the need to produce the minutes of all Education Committee meetings prior to the next meeting(s), at the same time the meeting notice is posted so that we fulfill the letter and spirit of the Brown Act and open all meetings to as broad a constituency as possible. The group asked that Deanna/DONE produce the language and its source that supported the claim that ad hoc committee minutes do not have to be posted.

Nevertheless, Naomi asked that the committee agree on procedures for taking minutes and posting them. Noel Weiss who had agreed to take minutes of the meetings was not present. A suggestion was made that the responsibility for minutes be rotated among the participants but none in attendance wanted the responsibility. After some discussion it was agreed that since Noel had earlier volunteered, the Chair should ask that he produce minutes to the participants within 5 days after a meeting. It was reiterated that there should be response regarding the challenge of the ruling that ad hoc committees do not have to post minutes.

Proper Agenda Items

Rick stated that the agenda was incorrect. That at the February 16 meeting a decision was made to write a letter to the City Council at the March 16 meeting regarding the problems at Mark Twain Middle School. Naomi stated that it was her understanding that the meeting was to be used to develop a draft report regarding the issues and concerns of education and that the issues at Mark Twain were to be a part of that report. She further stated that the Ad Hoc Education Committee Agenda had been posted for about three weeks and there was plenty of time to bring up concerns regarding the agenda items but no particular concerns had been raised.

Discussion among the group followed and it was discussed and, generally, agreed that without the minutes the question of what was to be on the agenda could not be

resolved. Antoinette suggested that in the future, if there are no minutes, there should not be a meeting. There was general agreement.

Loren asked that the agenda include the following: Introductions, Approval of Minutes, Old Business, New Business.

Discussions

The Agenda was not followed. Noel Weiss will be asked to submit the minutes from the February 16 meeting attended by Antoinette Reynolds, Rick Selan, Noel Weiss and Naomi Nightingale (Naomi arrived at about 8:10pm).

Loren asked that some mechanism be put in place that will allow items to be added to the agenda subsequent to Education Committee meetings where the agenda for the next meeting is set. She feels that any items that are requested to be put on the agenda should be added to the agenda. Naomi explained how the Agenda Request procedure works for the Executive and other committees and explained where the form can be accessed. Agenda Request Form can be accessed via the GRVNC website. Loren expressed that the Education Committee is very small and does not need as formal a process.

Discussions took place regarding alleged discriminatory and racist practices at Mark Twain Middle School and adverse impacts on the students, specific issues and incidents, and what role the Education Committee should have in addressing the problems.

Erma mentioned that she thought the role of the Education Committee was to deal with the broader issues of education in the whole community and regarding all schools. Naomi pointed to the initial discussions of the Committee and the platforms that were decided at that meeting, i.e. to be an educational resource center for the community, to conduct forums to bring parents, educators and the community together, to address the issues that impact the quality of education for our youth such as the exit exam, and other matters.

Naomi reminded the group that our role is advisory to the City Council Member, the City Council and that our proposals are directed to the GRVNC Board for action before proceeding with matters in representation of the Neighborhood Council.

Loren suggested having a community forum and inviting the principals of the various schools serving the Venice community where they will be asked to share their vision for education and the goals and objectives for the coming year(s). It was suggested that the Forum be held sometime in November, 2006.

Naomi gave a report of her discussion with Laurie Sales, education representative in Councilman Rosendahl's office in which she discussed the problems at Mark Twain and asked how the Council Member's office might help. Naomi stated that Laurie had given

her the name of Marlene Canter's chief deputy and suggested that she make contact and set up a meeting.

Rick said he had a lengthy conversation with Beverly West from Marlene Canter's office and that he has received an email from Laurie Sales informing him that she was no longer involved in education issues but that Mark Antonio Grant now has education related responsibilities.

Naomi asked if the Education Committee would like to meet with Marlene Canter to state our concerns. Much discussion followed but the decision was to attempt to set up a meeting with Canter in May and to use the April meeting to establish a framework for the meeting with her.

She also stated that she had submitted the request to the By-laws Committee for the ad hoc Education Committee to be established in the GRVNC By-laws as a standing committee. The recommended by-laws changes will be presented to the Board at the March 21 meeting.

Next Meetings

The next Education Committee meetings are tentatively set for April 20, May 18, and June 29. Naomi will confirm the availability of the Venice Family Clinic for the meetings.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.