

Venice Neighborhood Council Initiative Election Results:

Measure A, Rescinding VNC Board Approval of Overnight Parking Districts in Venice Fails

Measure B, Affirming that Venice Residents Have the Right to Establish OPDs Passes

By Marc Saltzberg

Over 1500 Venice stakeholders voted in an election held Saturday, February 21, 2009 to determine their support for two initiatives placed on the ballot by different stakeholder groups.

Initiative A, rescinding Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) Board approval of overnight parking districts (OPDs) in Venice failed. The vote was 634 in favor, 868 against with 9 abstentions.

Initiative B, affirming that Venice residents have the right to establish OPDs for their blocks passed in a vote of 891 in favor with 608 against and 13 abstentions.

The text of the two initiatives can be found at www.venicenc.org/node/1154.

The turnout was a record in a VNC election - surpassing the 2003 turnout of 1304 voters - with some people standing in line for over an hour to cast their vote. Mike Newhouse, President of the Venice Neighborhood Council said "The number of people voting in this election is a tribute to the grass roots groups that got out the vote for their respective initiatives and to the interest Venice residents had in the outcome."



The votes were counted on Sunday morning in the presence of witnesses. Despite some initial controversy over delaying the vote tally to the following day, all ballot counters and witnesses were satisfied with the accuracy of the count. Mr. Newhouse said, "Administering the initiative process was a first for our Neighborhood Council and I thank our Election Committee for their service and conduct. Our volunteers did a great job, putting in long hours and coping with the challenges of a huge turnout."

Efforts to establish OPDs in Venice began formally in 2006, with interested residents working with the VNC to recommend a system for establishing resident only permit parking between the hours of 2-6am. Similar to the city's speed bump program, the approved process allows individual streets to opt in to the program only if residents living in 2/3rds of the dwelling units on that street sign a city-approved petition. Councilman Bill Rosendahl accepted the VNC's recommendations, and passed them through the City Council in 2007.

Since that time, approxi-

mately 40 streets in Venice have secured enough signatures to opt in to the OPD system. Qualifying streets east of Lincoln have had OPDs in place for about a year. However, the area west of Lincoln - designated the "Coastal Zone" by the California Coastal Act - falls under the dual jurisdiction of the City and the California Coastal Commission (CCC). In the Coastal Zone, OPDs cannot go into effect until the CCC determines whether the proposed OPDs impede public access to the ocean.

The CCC is tentatively scheduled to consider this issue at its June 2009 meeting. If it is determined that there is no significant impact from OPDs, the City will be clear to institute the OPD program on all streets which have already qualified, and to accept petitions from any other streets that want to opt in to the program. Residents on "walk streets" will be able to purchase permits for any adjacent OPD streets for approximately \$15 per year.

In light of Saturday's vote, the VNC will continue its efforts in support of OPDs in Venice.

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Photo by Jack Prichett

Venice Neighborhood Council President Mike Newhouse

As we begin a new year, I wanted to take a moment to update everyone on the Venice Neighborhood Council's annual retreat, which took place last December.

When this Board began its term in November, 2007, we decided it was important to set aside a day once a year to sharpen our team-building skills, and reflect on the VNC's successes and failures. While some successes from 2008 are highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter, I want to highlight some of the issues we will focus on in 2009—in no particular order.

Identifying Additional Funding For Community

A Letter From the President...

Programs: We have no shortage of great ideas in Venice, but money is tight. In 2009, the VNC will work closely with active individuals and organizations in Venice to locate funds beyond the VNC budget to fund community projects.

Focusing On Affordable Housing And Homelessness:

We have worked hard to establish a broad dialogue on the causes of, and solutions to, traditional homelessness and people living in vehicles in Venice. We hope to focus that discussion on creating better services, shelters, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing regionally. These challenges cannot be solved in Venice alone.

Improve Mobility and Parking:

It is beyond time our community develop a plan to alleviate parking congestion and traffic. More creative parking is part of the solution, but we can make the biggest difference by using our cars less, and our bikes and feet more. Bike paths, trolleys, and tying bus lines together more effectively are imperative.

Forming An Emergency

Preparedness Plan: Our community made great strides on this issue in 2008, and now we need to develop a concrete emergency plan for Venice as a whole, and for residents and businesses individually.

Increase Parental Involvement In Our Schools:

The most successful schools are those with the most parental involvement. The VNC will continue to assist our schools in developing and growing their Booster Clubs.

Examine The Ongoing Viability Of The Current Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan:

Venice's land use and development patterns have changed drastically over the last decade. The community needs to re-examine our specific plan and determine whether changes are needed.

Continuing To Increase Safety:

Venice is safer than it has been in a generation, but it is still not safe enough. We will continue to work with law enforcement, and gang intervention groups such as Venice 2000, to maintain and improve our progress.

Ongoing Cooperation With Other Neighborhood/Community Councils:

Many of our biggest challenges, such as homelessness, traffic, emergency preparedness, public safety and schools, require regional alliances. The VNC will continue building alliances with other communities to solve our problems together.

As always, the VNC wants to know your thoughts. We encourage you to attend a VNC Board or Committee meeting and give us your input. Meetings are open to the public, and agendas are calendared and published at www.VeniceNC.org. Alternatively, always feel free to personally e-mail me at president@veniceNC.org, or write me a letter at P.O. Box 550, Venice, CA 90294. I promise, you will be heard.

Remember, it's your Venice, get involved!



**Mike Newhouse
President, Venice
Neighborhood Council**

Parking or Knot, Unraveling the Mess

By James Murez

Although no formal meetings have yet been held with me at the wheel as the new parking czar, I have been giving much thought and consideration to the complex matrix of issues that underlie the parking problems we have here in Venice.

It is clear, however, that we must establish a baseline so that credit can be taken where it is due. No, I'm not thinking about personal accomplishments but, rather the credit our community should receive for what it has already done. If we ever want to succeed at finding a balance between visitor access and local

resident and business rights, we need to establish what the conditions were when the State established the Coastal Act in 1973. This will create a starting point from where we can move forward. We should not be required to address more than our share of the State's and City's obligations. Our quality of life is a fundamental resource we must be ready to fight to protect. Stay tuned for discussions about utilization, worst case analysis, enforcement, re-striping, valet services, restricted zones (campers, sightseeing buses, meter, etc.), Beach Impact Zone stalls, parking structures, shuttle credits, diagonal stalls, commercial waivers, and illegal uses.



IT'S CONFIRMED: Venice is the Center of the Universe

By Linda Lucks

WE Venetians have always known that Venice is the center of the universe! This fact was confirmed, BY the universe, on January 23, 2009.

Did everybody get their "wake up call" recently? Improbable as it may seem, the January 23, 7:42 p.m., 3.4 magnitude quake was centered right here in our very own Venice: on South Venice Boulevard between Pacific and Speedway. What are the odds? Pretty good apparently!

The L.A. Times recently reported that, in the last year, there has been a significant increase in the number of temblors of magnitude 3.0 or greater in Southern California (267 in 2008, over 125 in 2007). They note evidence that rising seismic activity can be a precursor to larger temblors. At a minimum, such quakes are a good reminder that Southern Californians should be prepared for major seismic activity. The L.A. Times also reported that a new study has found that Southern California could be overdue for a strong temblor.

This is how some people handled the recent earthquake:

1. They sat there and hoped the shaking would stop soon. (Some asked "Was that an earthquake, or did a Mac Truck just ram the building?")

2. When it was over they just shrugged their shoulders and said,

"Now that that's happened I don't have to worry about it for another 30 years."

3. They said "what will be, will be and there's nothing I can do to impact the outcome so I will hope for the best..."

WRONG, NO, PLEASE!! These examples are definitely WHAT NOT TO DO!

So what CAN and SHOULD we do?

1. Read the VNC Emergency Preparedness flyer, which was distributed in the last VNC newsletter and can be found on the VNC website (English & Spanish).

2. Complete the EP Wallet Card, on page 7 of this newsletter and which can be found on the VNC website (English & Spanish).

3. Provide copies of your family's completed EP Wallet Card to your family and review it with them.

4. Ask your child's school what their emergency procedures are, including evacuation locations (include this on your EP Wallet Card).

5. Get CERT training for yourself and your family ASAP. Details at: www.cert-la.com

6. Each time there is a small earthquake, use it as a training opportunity as well as inspiration to continue to work on your EP Plan and assure your emergency supplies are in place.

7. For birthdays, or any day, buy your



family members a NOAA radio, a shakable flashlight, an emergency supplies kit, "survival kit" or first aid kit, generator or portable camping stove--this will demonstrate both the importance of being prepared...as well as how much you care.

There is much literature on this subject, and we encourage you to do more research, make your plan, and BE PREPARED! Please know that there is much you can do to influence the outcome, and what you do to prepare can even make the difference between life and death for you and your loved ones.

BE PREPARED!

New VNC Website

By Sean Kelly

A new VNC website is being built with the community in mind and that will enhance the Neighborhood Council's use of the internet to increase community involvement and interaction. Final testing and conversion are underway to ensure a smooth transition. Our goal is to preserve as much information as possible from the original site, and make the switch as seamless as we can. The tentative deadline is the March board meeting where public launch of the site will be discussed. Keep an eye out for additional details via email and updates posted at www.VeniceNC.org.

Thank You Whole Foods

The VNC wishes to express its appreciation for the steep discount Whole Foods provides us on refreshments for monthly board meetings. Anyone attending the meetings knows what a great offering of fresh fruit and vegetables, cheeses and cookies are available for the taking by attendees who sometimes rush to the meeting after work. If you visit Whole Foods, you might thank store manager Mike Bowen and marketing director Lene Pereira.



Who is Lou Peck?

By Challis MacPherson

Actually, it's not "who" but "what." LUPC, the Land Use and Planning Committee, is the first panel to hear any planning issue in Venice that involves a variance to our Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan (VCZSP). We advise applicants to meet with their immediate neighbors about their project before we hear it, then we take public comment, deliberate and send our recommendations to the VNC Board of Officers. LUPC meetings are held the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. Check www.VeniceNC.org for agendas.

BE PREPARED!

Enclosed on page 7 of this newsletter is the Emergency Preparedness Wallet Card, created by the VNC's Neighborhood Committee. This card is valuable to help prepare for a disaster and to have on hand to refer to during a disaster.

Immediately upon receiving this insert, please make copies for family, friends and coworkers, and complete and make copies for yourself and your family, to put it on your fridge door, purse/wallet, child's backpack, cars and desk drawers at work/school.

To access a pdf of this form (to use or forward to your emailing list) AND for more information on making your family's emergency plan (as summarized in the VNC Emergency Preparedness 2-page flyer, go to www.venicenc.org. The documents are available in English and Spanish. BE PREPARED!!

Cynthia Rogers and Karen Wolfe Join VNC Board

Cynthia Rogers and Karen Wolfe have filled two vacancies on the VNC board after stakeholders ratified their appointments by the board at the January 20 Neighborhood Council meeting. An unprecedented 25 Venice stakeholders applied for the two vacated seats.

A second generation Venetian, Cynthia Rogers is looking forward to working with the environmental committee to keep the beaches clean as well as to promote overall greening of Venice. She will also co-chair the new mobility committee, formed to encourage bike and pedestrian mobility.

Karen Wolfe previously served

on the neighborhood committee. At their recommendation, \$40,000 was provided to various stakeholder groups last year for community improvement projects. She has been active in Venice, particularly pertaining to land use issues, for over ten years. A public relations professional, she is the new editor of **Your Venice** newsletter.

Brooke Soles was nominated to fill a third subsequently vacated seat. Stakeholders will be asked to ratify her appointment at the March, 2009 Neighborhood Council meeting. The terms will expire in 2010 when general elections will occur for the entire board.

Pedestrian Crosswalk Aims to Make Abbot Kinney Safer



Venice resident Betsy Goldman, City Councilman Bill Rosendahl, VNC President Mike Newhouse dedicate new pedestrian crosswalk.

In November, a new state of the art crosswalk system was installed on Abbot Kinney, at Palms Boulevard. The new crosswalk, which includes an overhead signal light similar to vehicle stop lights at intersections, replaced a standard crosswalk deemed insufficient on the curved section of Abbot Kinney. Pedestrians can activate flashing overhead lights by pushing a button on either side of Abbot Kinney to alert vehicles that pedestrians are entering the crosswalk.

The installation is the result of months of cooperation between Venice resident Betsy Goldman, City Councilman Bill Rosendahl, and the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC). Ms. Goldman and other Venetians had expressed concern that the curved intersection remained extremely dangerous to pedestrians. Councilman Rosendahl and Ms. Goldman, with support from the VNC, worked to make the new system a reality.

The VNC is continuing to look into other areas of Venice which would benefit from such upgrades.

Venice's Great Ideas Get Funding From VNC

By Ivan Spiegel

In June of last year, the VNC awarded \$40,000 of Community Improvement funds to local groups and individuals with the purpose of improving the quality of life in the Venice community. We are now halfway through the funding cycle and many wonderful projects and events have occurred thanks to VNC sponsorship.

In November, we were pleased to sponsor Venice 2000's Senior Citizen's Prom in cooperation with the Oakwood Seniors group. Nearly 100 of our community's elders, including several octogenarians, converged on the Oakwood Recreation Center to dance, dine, discourse and boogie as only they can. It was quite a sight to watch as some of our 70 and 80 year-old matriarchs let their hair down and danced down the "soul-line". This event was a wonderful recognition of one of our community's too often neglected segments.

Later in the month, we witnessed the unveiling of the new community garden at Ocean Charter School. The Neighborhood Council was pleased to contribute funds that were used to turn a previously gray sterile space into the beginnings of a green landscape which will be enjoyed by the entire community for years to come.

The month of December was accom-



The Colburn Children's Choir performed on December 6 at the First Lutheran Church thanks to VNC funding for the concert series.

panied by the beginning of a new community partnership between the VNC and the Masters In The Chapel concert series. On December 6 we were pleased to provide funds for the first of a four concert series featuring the Colburn Children's Choir. Held at the First Lutheran Church the concert featured some of the best young voices of Los Angeles in a joyous selection of multicultural music. There are two remaining concerts in this series – a duet from the Los Angeles Philharmonic on March 26 and eight singers from the Los Angeles Master Chorale performing an a cappella concert of folk, classical and native music

from around the world on May 16. Both upcoming concerts will begin at 7:00 PM and are (as are all VNC events) absolutely free to the public. Please join us.

Some other Community Improvement funded projects still to come this spring are: landscaping of Dudley Triangle and Venice Blvd; garden projects at Mark Twain Middle School, Venice High School and Walgrove Elementary School; the Shoot for Life Basketball Tournament; new audio/visual equipment for the Venice library; and finally we are pleased to contribute toward this year's Venice Carnevale!

Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC) Passes Recommendations to City

As reported in the last issue of **Your Venice**, the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC) is an alliance of all eleven Westside neighborhood/community councils, cooperating to find solutions to our most pressing regional challenges. The idea is that all Westside councils united can accomplish more than we can individually.

In December and January, the WRAC as a group, and

nine of its member councils individually, approved five recommendations to the City of Los Angeles. Specifically, the WRAC recommends that:

- 1) all councils receive early notification of all applications to the Department of City Planning, the Bureau of Engineering and to the Department of Building and Safety;
- 2) the Los Angeles City Council supply each Neigh-

borhood or Community Council with an accounting of both LAMC parking funds, and Quimby Funds for its district;

- 3) the City temporarily prohibit the installation or alteration of all new offsite advertising signs and supergraphic signs, until a new offsite sign ordinance can be developed, adopted and implemented;
- 4) the City implement an enforcement mechanism and

fine system to alleviate the constant gridlock at intersections in the City Limits; and

- 5) the City amend the working documents for neighborhood and community councils, thereby allowing our councils the right to appeal city department decisions.

The WRAC will present these motions to the Mayor and the City Council this month.

Venice Neighborhood Council Wraps Up a Productive 2008

Last year was a busy one for the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC), and that work is paying off for the community. Whether it was establishing weekly office hours at the Venice Farmers Market, working with Abbot Kinney merchants and the Venice Chamber of Commerce to create First Fridays on Abbot Kinney, or starting the Your Venice newsletter, the VNC is more visible, accessible and accountable to the community than ever.

In addition to expanding outreach and accessibility in Venice, the VNC has worked hard to develop partnerships with our neighbors and the City of Los Angeles. For example, in 2008 the VNC awarded \$40,000 in Community Improvement Funds to nineteen individuals and organizational applicants in Venice. The VNC also teamed up with Councilman Rosendahl, Chrysalis Enterprises, the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Bureau of Sanitation to fund, install, and service twelve recycling stations on Venice Beach, and another sixty recycling/trash bins through pedestrian-heavy areas of Venice. The VNC has also joined forces with the LAPD, the Community Police Advisory Board and Venice 2000 to increase safety in Venice.

Much of the work of the VNC is initiated by our committees. Our Education Committee has worked with Mark Twain



**DeDe Audette - Emily Elliott - Brooke Soles - Karen Wolfe
Cynthia Rogers - Sean Kelly - Challis Macpherson - Joe Murphy
Stewart Oscars - Hugh Harrison - Linda Lucjs - Brennan Lindner
Carolyn Rios - Clarence Carter - Nick Karno - Mike Newhouse
Marc Saltzberg - Marc Castleman - Ivan Spiegel - Stan Muhammad
Ira Koslow - Dexter O'Connell - Deanna Stephenson (DONE)
Not Pictured - Nadine Parkos**

Middle School to re-establish its Booster Club. The Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) have begun involving neighborhood associations in its review of hundreds of land use applications per year. Notifying the associations of planned developments in their areas helps the VNC better address the specific needs of unique neighborhoods within Venice. Our Neigh-

borhoods Committee has also been instrumental in working with the city to develop an emergency response plan for Venice.

Finally, the VNC has worked to bring important issues to the community in the form of Town Hall meetings. Last year's four town halls addressed urban planning, homelessness, community safety, and the state of our oceans.

Exploring Alternative Transportation

By Brennan Lindner

The Environmental Committee has realized the need to focus on alternative transportation methods within the Venice area. We will be researching and promoting alternative methods of transportation to all stake holders in Venice. One of the top priorities will be to encourage riding bikes. Not only is this one of the quickest ways to get around Abbot Kinney and the Beach, it's also very scenic. We will research the creation of bike corridors, installation of new, usable bike racks and the introduction of bike valets at special events.

We will also be looking at how we can increase ridership on the Metro, Culver City and Big Blue Bus lines. Finally, we will be promoting walking, a great way to get around, meet your neighbors and stay fit. Stay tuned for more updates.

LUPC Improves Project Review System

By Challis MacPherson

The Land Use and Planning Committee, or LUPC, has embarked on a new case tracking system—crafted by LUPC member Jim Murez—to better support the committee in analyzing and preparing projects for hearing. It will automate the flow of information through the VNC in a consistent, easy to understand format enabling VNC/LUPC volunteers to focus on the project itself rather than be bogged down with the minutiae inherent in preparing a project for Board review.

Closer Look—Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance

By Challis MacPherson

The City Planning Director has proposed an interpretation of the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance as it pertains to our Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan. A Venice stakeholder

appealed this case to give time to respond based on the unique conditions in Venice. LUPC will facilitate a series of meetings to inform our community about this ordinance.

Emergency Preparedness Wallet Card

Prepared by your Venice Neighborhood Council - Neighborhood Committee

<http://www.venicenc.org/>

Emergency Contact Info: Family, Friends

Name:

Phone/Cell:

Name:

Phone/Cell:

Neighbor Name:

Phone/Cell:

Address:

Out of State Contact (a must)

Name:

Phone/Cell:

Emergency Numbers for Venice:

Call 911 for Fire, Police, Ambulance

Fire Station 63 Venice: 1-310-575-8563

Police Desk Pacific Division: 1-310-482-6334

Gas Company: 1-800-427-2200

Water/Power: 1-213-481-5411

Other:

Family Meeting Place: Local meeting Place:

Out of State Meeting Place:

Know your child's school's emergency procedures.

Local Shelters: Mark Twain Middle School, 2224 Walgrove Ave.; Venice High School, 13000 Venice Blvd.
Learn evacuation routes: If you are notified of a Tsunami, or if an earthquake with severe shaking lasts >20 seconds, immediately evacuate to high ground.

Medical Data (as applicable)

Primary Physician:

Phone: Address:

Hospital:

Phone: Address:

Insurance Carrier & No:

Blood Type:

Allergies:

Special Conditions:

Current Medications:

Resources:

American Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org/>
California Volunteers <http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org>
California Integrated Seismic Network <http://www.cisn.org/>
City of LA Emergency Management <http://www.lacity.org/emd/>
Community Emergency Response Training
<http://www.cert-la.com>
Earthquake Country <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots/>
Family Plan <http://www.csc.ca.gov/familyplan/index.html>
Ready.gov <http://www.ready.gov/>
USGS <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/sca/latestinfo.php>

Quick Notes:

Learn to protect yourself at home, in car and at work.
 Have food & water stored for min 5 days use (1 gal water pp, per day), + water purification tablets.
 Know how to turn off gas, water, electricity.
 Keep shoes, loud whistle & flashlight (shakeable or w/extra batteries) by each bed.
 Have disaster supplies at home, in car & at work.
 Have "enough" cash in small bills.
 Make copies of important documents: home/offsite.
 Have a working fire extinguisher (Class ABC) & radio—NOAA (best), crank, solar or battery (w/extra batteries).

Cut along Dotted Line – Fold on Solid Line

Tailor this document to your needs; make copies for family, friends, coworkers.

Go to www.venicenc.org to download English or Spanish pdf of both this EP Wallet Card AND the VNC Emergency Preparedness 2-page flyer on how to be prepared.



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2009 BOARD OF OFFICERS:

Mike Newhouse, *President*
Linda Lucks, *Vice President*
Hugh Harrison, *Treasurer*
Joe Murphy, *Secretary*
Marc Saltzberg, *Outreach Officer*
Sean Kelly, *Communications Officer*
Challis Macpherson, *LUPC Chair*
DeDe Audet, *Past President*

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Clarence Carter
Mark Castleman
Emily Elliott
Nick Karno
Ira Koslow
Brennan Lindner
Stan Muhammad
Dexter O'Connell
Stewart Oscars
Nadine Parkos
Carolyn Rios
Cynthia Rogers
Karen Wolfe

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.VeniceNC.org

The Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) is YOUR branch of LA City Government. Its mission is to preserve the quality of life in Venice. We listen to YOU, our stakeholders, about YOUR needs. We represent YOUR interests before the LA City Council and City Departments. We ensure YOUR voice, the voice of our community, is heard.

LUPC Chair Censured

At its January 20, 2009 meeting, the VNC Board affirmed the decisions of the Conflict Resolution Committee regarding complaints filed by Nathalie Guntz and Fabiola Wright against Challis McPherson, finding Challis McPherson in violation of VNC Standing Rule 13, and she is hereby censured and admonished that: "... except as otherwise allowed under VNC Standing Rule 13.I.a., when any

Board Officer or Committee Member is offering his or her opinion regarding a matter being considered in a non-VNC forum, he or she may identify him/herself as a Board Officer or Committee Member; however, the Board Officer or Committee Member has an affirmative duty to use unambiguous language to make it clear that he or she is representing him/herself personally, and not the VNC."

VNC COMMITTEES

Board of Officers (www.venicenc.org/Board)

Standing Committees:

Administrative Committee (www.venicenc.org/AdCom)
Arts Committee (www.venicenc.org/Arts)
Budget & Finance Committee (www.venicenc.org/Budget)
Education Committee (www.venicenc.org/Education)
Land Use & Planning Committee (www.venicenc.org/LUPC)
Neighborhood Committee (www.venicenc.org/Neighborhood)
Ocean Front Walk Committee (www.venicenc.org/OFW)
Outreach Committee (www.venicenc.org/Outreach)
Rules & Elections Committee (www.venicenc.org/Rules)

Ad Hoc Committees:

Community Safety Committee (www.venicenc.org/Safety)
Environmental Committee (<http://www.venicenc.org/node/1005>)
Graffiti Committee (www.venicenc.org/Graffiti)
Homelessness & Vehicular Living (<http://www.venicenc.org/node/1082>)
Overnight Parking Dist Committee (www.venicenc.org/OPD)
Parking Committee
Mobility Committee