

Venice Neighborhood Council Town Hall Meeting Notes

Submitted by Edith Darling (independent note taker)

Westminster Avenue Elementary School

Dec. 2, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Topic: Is Venice prepared to be the #1 Visitor Destination on Southern California?

Ivan Spiegel, welcomes everyone: the VNC Town Hall is held in order to hear the opinions of the stakeholders. Please fill out a speaker card and everyone will get a turn. Would like you to talk about problems and solutions for those problems. The people's input is essential to finding solutions..

Mr. Spiegel introduces Linda Lucks, President, VNC. who welcomes and thanks everyone for coming to our quarterly Town Hall- an opportunity for community discussion where you speak and board members listen. We live in a unique and wonderful community where everyone has a voice and an opinion and where we endeavor to be civil and respectful of our differences. Tonight is your turn to do the talking. , We want to hear your questions, problems, your ideas **and** possible solutions and we will develop future board agendas to reflect what we hear.

Ms. Lucks introduces board members present – Hugh Harrison, Carolyn Rios, Cynthia Rogers, Amanda Seward, Clark McCutchen, Ira Koslow, Jake Kaufman, Stasia Patwell, Mark Saltzberg, and Jed Pauker, Ivonne Guzman, Cindy Chambers, Kelly Willis,

Mr. Spiegel introduces moderator, Mr. Jay Handal of West L.A. Neighborhood Council. and Chair of WLANC. Also the Chair of the Mayor's Budget Committee and the Peer Mentoring and Volunteer Program, a new city organization. Owner of San Gennaro Café.

Mr. Handal lays out the ground rules. He will call up 6 people to come up to microphone #1 and 6 to come up to microphone #2. Everyone will get 2 minutes to speak. No interrupting or shouting out. Please don't come up and repeat an issue if it's already been written on the board. We need people to come up with solutions.

Three boards are set up in the front of the room. Three VNC board members summarize the statements of public speakers on the boards.

1. Is Venice prepared to be the #1 tourist destination in Southern California?
2. Possible Solutions
3. Other Concerns

Is Venice prepared to be the #1 tourist destination in Southern California?

1. Police intimidation of tourists
2. Toxic waste, possible health risks from the toxic waste
3. Trash and waste going on Speedway

4. Public urination
5. Lack of concrete evidence that Venice boardwalk is the most popular destination in Southern California
6. Loss of creativity and authenticity on boardwalk, it has become a swap market, increased commercialism
7. “clean-up” = clearing out homeless
8. Public perception of safety – “Are my actions helping Venice to be/appear safe?”
9. Lack of representation for homeless
10. Homeless artists are part of the attraction of Venice
11. CBS Outdoors Co. sells street furniture with automated pay toilets and movie advertisements along the front. This commercialism violates the creative/eclectic traditions of Venice boardwalk - “moral bankruptcy.”
12. Closure of restrooms and beaches when visitors are present
13. Lack of enforcement of laws and ordinances - a cause for traffic/parking problems
14. Weekend dumpster urination
15. Non-payment of city (short term)hotel tax
16. Dirty restrooms, other beach communities have clean and adequate facilities as well as parking
17. City fees going into general fund instead of to the local community in Venice
18. Lack of accountability by the city of monies raised in Venice; funds are not being used properly.

Solutions

1. Clean-ups of waste blown by wind onto Speedway
2. Boardwalk needs a better system to provide best mix **of elements**
3. Re: homelessness, need to balance needs with being inclusive
4. Re: safety, need to promote Venice and the boardwalk as a safe place, perception is key to encourage tourism.
5. Affordable housing for the middle class and housing for the homeless
6. Protect Venice’s reputation as a welcoming community by addressing hate campaign happening against the homeless in Venice.

7. www.peacesocial.net – affiliate money raising program, social networking charity site where users can direct donations to chosen charity organization
8. Money for keeping bathrooms open or building new bathrooms
9. Money to help homeless on a federal, state, and local level. Put pressure on federal organizations to help.
10. Better enforcement of parking requirements, zoning regulations
11. Adopt-a-motor-home program to help people take care of their RVs when they cannot afford it
12. Widening of boardwalk and repair of bike path – federal stimulus funds should go to Venice for repairs
13. Construction of temporary sanitation facilities during the peak visitor periods
14. Parking structures away from the boardwalk; visitors could then take public transport to the boardwalk. Possible location for parking structure is Venice Postal Carrier Annex.
15. Pass an ordinance requiring all short-term vacation rentals under 30 days to pay city hotel tax in Venice coastal zone of 15 percent per day. Fees would go to fund for improvements in the Venice coastal zone public transport such as:
 - a. free electric shuttle bus
 - b. bicycle check for Ocean Front Walk and Abbot Kinney
 - c. shared nighttime valet parking districts for Abbot Kinney, Windward, and Washington
 - d. beautification project
 - e. Venice Credit Union
 - f. funding post approval enforcement of conditions of approval
 - g. Opening up 3 beach parking lots at night for paid monthly parking
 - h. installation of metered electric car charging station and some public parking spaces
 - i. free high-speed wireless internet
 - j. Venice power company to generate and distribute electricity
16. Creative solutions to humanitarian concerns (homelessness, sickness)
17. Fixing lights, steam-clean boardwalk, electric shuttle
18. Pay toilets are okay if more facilities created

19. Possible money sources

- a. Venice parking fund
 - b. Quimby funds (money for parks)
 - c. Lost fees for parking variances
 - d. film permit fees
 - e. beach event permits
 - f. Venice surplus fund (sell surplus property, get improvements).
20. Parking enforcement officers can inform people when no parking is available and redirect them before they get to the beach. They can use radios and be mobile instead of waiting by the parking lots
21. 700 residences available, according to man from last town hall meeting who works for SHARE
(Submits solutions proposed by Diana Butler)
22. Employment of homeless, particularly homeless youth by local businesses
23. Building multi-level parking lots
24. Grants and money finders employed to help Venice

Other Concerns

1. AB2587 – declaring blight areas in Boyle Heights, Venice, and South Central
2. Affordable housing
3. Vandalism of buses, RV harassment – RV owners comply with laws and are still criminalized
4. What do we do with people without homes?
5. Better attendance by city officials at public meetings
6. High fences – illegal to build over 42”
7. Development of Marina Del Rey

Ms. Lucks thanks everyone for their civility and for giving of their time. We heard from the community that we love Venice and have offered some good solutions. We will come up with concrete solutions and hold the city accountable for providing Venice’s fair share. She will be asking the board to appoint an ad hoc committee that will synthesize the ideas, problems and suggestions and task it to bring forward actionable initiatives to demand from the city.