

City of Los Angeles Equine Advisory Committee Minutes of meeting July 23, 2012.

ITEM NO. (1) Welcome and introductions. President Gibson introduced representatives from the San Fernando Valley Arts Council, the Valley Arts Alliance and the Museum of the San Fernando Valley who described their forthcoming Horses Across the Valley project. This mission of the project is to raise awareness of the importance of the horse in regard to the San Fernando Valley.

ITEM NO. (2) Call to Order and Committee Roll Call

	Present	Absent
Kevin Regan, Chair	X	
District 1		Vacant
District 2 Dale Gibson	X	
District 3 Jill Haber	X	
District 4 Lynn Brown	X	
District 5 Melanie Coto	X	
District 6 Mary Benson	X	
District 7 Natalie Blancardi		Resigned
District 8 Kevin Atkins	X	
District 9 Brady Westwater		X
District 10 Todd La Vergne	X	
District 11 Larry Watts	X	
District 12 Mary Kaufman	X	
District 13 Gene Gilbert		X
District 14		Vacant
District 15		Vacant
Mayor Scott Perez		X

ITEM NO. (3) Committee Reports

Document Committee- Member Benson reported on the effort to place all LAEAC agendas and meeting minutes on our city website.

Trails Committee- Member Brown described what occurred at a recent June 12 meeting at Hart Park in Santa Clarita relating to Canyon Trail near the Placerita Nature Center that was erroneously marked in 2009 as a multi-use trail, including for bicycles. The error was corrected in 2011 and the trail and others in the area were re-marked as being for hiking and equestrian use only. Local bikers then petitioned LA County for a Change in Use to permit bicycle access to not only Canyon Trail, but Heritage Trail and the other trails in the Vasquez Rocks area. Member Brown reported a large turn out by equestrians as well as bikers helped convince the County to reject the requested Change in Use. She suggested the Change in Use strategy could be used by equestrians to restrict bicycles from trails that are only suitable for hikers and equestrians.

Planning and Land Use Committee- Member Haber reported that planned meeting with L.A. Dept. of Building and Safety has been postponed to week of July 31-August 3, 2012.

Bill of Rights Ad Hoc- Upon motion duly made and seconded and after discussion, it was unanimously resolved that this committee be dissolved effective immediately as it has accomplished its goals.

ITEM NO. (4) There was discussion of whether the LAEAC should take a position on the pending horse licensing motion 12-0307 by Councilman Alarcon now pending before the Personnel & Animal Welfare Committee. There was extensive discussion concerning the importance of this to the equestrian committee and that it is the responsibility of the LAEAC to provide the City Council and Mayor with its views and recommendations on policy issues. There was also discussion concerning the uses of the revenues raised from the equine licensing fees, including trail maintenance. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee resolved to inform Committee Chairman Koretz that the LAEAC supports Councilman Alarcon's motion.

ITEM NO. (5) Committee President Gibson reported briefly on his recent meeting with Councilman Alarcon, the LAPD and the Foothill Mounted Patrol.

ITEM NO. (6) There was discussion concerning the City Council's declaration of October 6, 2012 as the Day of the Horse. Upon motion duly made and seconded and after discussion, it was resolved to write a letter to the City Council commending its action.

ITEM NO. (7) There was a discussion concerning the use of trail step-overs as barriers to prevent vehicle access to hiking and equestrian trails. Chairman Regan explained that these devices are generally considered the technique of choice for blocking vehicles access to trails while allowing access to hikers and horses. Before taking formal action on this topic Chairman Regan recommended inviting a representative from the Department of Recreation and Parks to our next meeting to explain why these devices are used and to answer questions committee members have regarding them.

ITEM NO. (8) The minutes of the January 23, 2012 and May 21, 2012 LAEAC meetings were approved following correction to reflect the attendance at the meeting of Members Haber, Atkins and La Vergne.

ITEM NO. (9) Member La Vergne noted the recent arson fire at a stable in the Athens neighborhood that destroyed several animals and caused large destruction. The stables, which have served that community and surrounding portions of the City of Los Angeles for decades are to be rebuilt consistent with the wishes of a deceased former owner who placed restrictions requiring it to be maintained for equestrian uses.

Member Coto described Councilman Wesson's summer camp program for inner city youth that this year includes horseback riding experience which took place at her facility with the councilman in attendance.

ITEM NO. (10) President Gibson announced that the next LAEAC meeting will be at Friendship Hall on September 24, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. There was a brief discussion that some LAEAC meetings be held at different locations as a way to broaden public participation.

ITEM NO. (11) During the public comment period representatives of the Melody Acres Neighborhood Association spoke to request support for their efforts to preserve the equestrian friendly character of their community in the face of developers and others who seek to construct new houses that are incompatible with the zoning requirements with respect to horsekeeping facilities. He requested a letter of support for their efforts from the LAEC to the Area Planning Commission in connection with respect to pending appeals in connection with permit Nos. 12010-200001-52 and 1210-200001-0055 at 5946 Melvin Avenue, Tarzana, CA seeking a deviation from site specific conditions applicable to that property. There was discussion that the issue presented is not unique to the Melody Acres neighborhood, but is an issue faced in many neighborhoods throughout the city where horses have historically been maintained. In view of the foregoing, it appears that this request by the Melody Acres Neighborhood Association is both appropriate and consistent with prior actions by the LAEAC recommending policies encouraging the preservation of equestrian activities within the City and that President Gibson should send a letter to the Area Planning Commission as requested.

ITEM NO. (12) Upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Watts, Secretary