

KENTWOOD HOME GUARDIANS
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
WESTCHESTER FIRE STATION

FEBRUARY 19, 2014

PRESENT: Loren Davis, President; Maria Warner, 1st VP; Bruce Nahid, 2nd VP; Mary Putnam, Secretary; Suzann Rogers. Operations Manager

ABSENT: Clay Turner, Treasurer

CALL TO ORDER

Loren Davis called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The objective of KHG this term has been to work with other organizations in our community. Tonight KHG's Community Forum would focus on LMU's interaction within our neighborhood and the new KHG Safety and Security Committee which will address break ins as seen on the recent You Tube video "Kentwood burglary."

KHG participated in a recent community fair "Community Connections" at Covenant Presbyterian Church on January 26th. At least 40 local Westchester/Playa del Rey/Playa Vista organizations were represented including Westchester Playhouse, Save Ballona Wetlands and the Mental Health Guild.

Mr. Davis stated that the February KHG Newsletter is very important for our community because it discusses key issues which Kentwood is facing right now: crime, the report on LAPD recommendations from the KHG Safety and Security Meeting, new proposed developments on 85th Pl. and at the site of the old Grinder restaurant, as well as information about the governance of KHG, including the upcoming Board elections and KHG financial reports.

Mr. Davis introduced Grace Yao, the newly-appointed Director of Community Relations for LMU and pointed out that she should address the LMU-related issues of most importance to Kentwood residents: student parking and off campus behavior of LMU student renters. He wanted to know specifically what she could do to make positive changes in LMU protocols to address neighbors' concerns and to make sure that neighbors' concerns are presented to the proper departments within LMU.

Mr. Davis asked that the members write their questions on cards.

GRACE YAO, DIRECTOR OF LMU COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Grace Yao introduced herself as the new LMU Director of Community Relations. Ms. Yao stated that LMU has done a poor job of communicating with neighbors regarding community issues, particularly with regard to parties and parking. Ms. Yao sees this communication process as an ongoing dialogue. She believes that it is important that she is accessible to neighborhood groups such as KHG and to the neighbors personally and is happy to address concerns and questions. She drives the streets every day to see what's happening and she is learning about what LMU does to address these issues.

Question from audience: What is the status of the parking and party situation?

Ms. Yao: LMU continues to get many calls about parties. Students who live off campus are required to register with the university at the Department of Off-Campus Student Life. LMU knows where every student lives. **LMU strongly encourages residents when there is an incident to call the LMU Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the LAPD.** When you call DPS they will usually dispatch a public safety officer who later submits a report, but it is also important to call LAPD because they have enforcement power: they can cite and arrest.

The LMU DPS cannot cite and arrest students, they submit reports. Neighbors may not know that LMU DPS is there because they don't engage with property owners (neighbors); however, they will engage sometimes with the students. If they are called to a party location, they will park their car and count cars and students and observe their behavior. They may approach the students and ask questions. They turn in their report the next day. LAPD will also submit a report to LMU. LMU has a very cooperative relationship with LAPD. LMU then determines what action to take against the student(s). Information directly from neighbors keeps LMU better informed and allows them to follow up with the neighbors later.

Comment from the audience: I am familiar with certain universities that I have been associated with and there were certain hours where **there was a cutoff for parties of 1 am on weekends and an earlier hour on weeknights. It was very simple to enforce** because the rule was very clear.

Students had to register prior to having a party (a party was defined as more than 20 people) and were required to let campus security know who was giving the party and the address, date, and hours. **The students were required to hire a security guard** if the group was larger than a specific number. **Campus security would not wait for a call from neighbors or a police report, they would proactively drive by the party** locations sporadically during the evening, and the students knew they would be observing. The students and campus security knew that when it's 1 o'clock, it's over. It seems that LMU could take the same approach that is taken in this example by Tulane University, where students also live in expensive residential neighborhoods.

Ms. Yao: Ms. Yao stated that she thought this suggestion was a good idea and she would look into it. She stated that LMU has asked the LAPD for an “MOU” which is an additional LAPD patrol for the area, but the status of this request is unknown.

Mr. Davis called for a show of hands from the audience (approximately 80 – 100 members) regarding the suggestion that LMU require student registration with the LMU Director of Off-Campus Student Life before hosting a party. The audience unanimously approved of this idea.

Question from the audience: Are there written rules regarding student off-campus behavior? What are the consequences for breaking these rules? May KHG post these rules on their website so that all the residents will also be aware of the LMU standards of student behavior?

Ms. Yao: Ms. Yao stated that there are consequences, however, LMU has done a poor job of following up with residents who have called to register a concern.

Each year LMU issues a student handbook and there are a number of provisions for off-campus student life. The university’s position is that although some students do not live on campus, if they break local, state, or federal law, they are representing the university, and there are severe consequences. All of these matters are referred to campus Judicial Affairs. Ms. Yao said she would be happy to share with KHG a copy of the LMU Student Handbook.

Off-Campus Student Life and Judicial Affairs are cracking down a lot harder on student misbehavior. One of the things they are doing is **deferred suspensions**. If a student is cited, the first time fines are imposed and possibly LAPD seminars. The second time, the student(s) may be placed on deferred suspension which means that even a small infraction could result in suspension.

Question from the audience: What are the contact numbers for LMU?

Ms. Yao handed out magnets with LMU contact information (see below). Ms. Yao encouraged members to contact both DPS and LAPD in the case of serious misbehavior, or in the case of parking issues, LADOT parking enforcement. She asked that members contact herself or her colleague, Andy O’Reilly with regard to litter in yards and streets near LMU rentals or property damage by students.

Question from the audience: A member asked Ms. Yao if she was aware of a 5-squad-car party that was held on Stewart Ave by a fraternity over MLK weekend, which was followed by a 2-squad-car party one month later on Presidents’ Day weekend. While DPS was there several hundred students came over 15 minutes

Ms. Yao said she was aware of these parties. She gets the reports and reads all of them. Repeat offenders receive very severe penalties.

Question from the audience: What were the consequences?

Ms. Yao answered that she does not know what actions were taken against individual students because of privacy considerations. The policy is that the punishment should fit the crime.

Question from the audience: If you don't know what the specific consequences are, how do you know that anything is actually being done?

Mr. Davis stated that Kentwood residents should not be victims of the LMU process. Neighbors should get IMMEDIATE responses to complaints and accelerated resolution of issues.

Comment from the audience: Tulane University takes a proactive approach to head off problems before they develop. They require students to register before the party and the campus security drives by to monitor specific locations.

Mr. Davis: What is LMU doing to alleviate the parking problem which has resulted from LMU charging high fees for parking on campus?

Ms. Yao: Students must "opt out," must actively select to not pay for parking, or it is automatically added to their tuition bill. As a result of this recent change, 500 additional cars registered to LMU. The streets right next to LMU still have problem, but opt-out is moving some on campus.

Also, ATIP incentivizes students to minimize trips to campus. LMU has a bus that goes back and forth to the Green Line. If students show proof that they are biking, walking, or going by van pool or car pool, then they get 5 free parking passes. This encourages students to not bring cars on campus.

Ms. Yao discussed the Neighborhood Advisory Committee Meeting (NAC) which had been held the week before. She said that she will look at suggestions and have answers at the LMU website to the questions and proposals from that meeting. She said that the next NAC Meeting will be held in May.

Mr. Davis said that KHG will distribute this information to KHG members.

Question from the audience: Are the owners of rental properties held accountable for the misbehavior of their student renters?

Ms. Yao said that LMU does not know who the owners of the properties are. When there are problems, LMU is unable to inform the owners, though if LAPD are involved the owners will be required sometimes to go to court with the student renters.

Suzann Rogers stated that in the past, if the neighbors inform the KHG Office about a problem with LMU rental property, KHG will send a letter to the property owners so there is no confusion about when or if the property owners were notified.

Mr. Davis pointed out that a letter from KHG can be used as a record to enforce civil nuisance laws in a complaint against the property owner. He recommended that neighbors notify the KHG Office regarding problems with LMU rental properties.

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Question from the audience: Is LMU planning to build more parking garages? Does LMU currently meet the municipal code requirements for parking spaces?

Ms. Yao: LMU is currently building a new life sciences building with 208 spaces. LMU currently meets code municipal code requirements for parking. The documents verifying this are posted on the LMU website.

Ms. Yao asked that residents keep her informed of neighborhood concerns. She may be emailed at g.yao@lmu.edu.

LMU Community Contact Guide is attached to these minutes.

SAFETY AND SECURITY AD HOC COMMITTEE

Mr. Davis introduced Dennis Wolfe who has volunteered to be the Chairman of the KHG Safety and Security Committee. Mr. Davis noted that one of the most effective ways of discouraging break-ins may be home alarm systems. Recently, burglars have been cutting the phone and power lines. To thwart this, homeowners can use wireless security systems with back up batteries which last for about 5 hours.

Dennis Wolfe said that he has lived in Kentwood for about 10 years. His home was burglarized in October, 2013. After this experience, he has learned much more about home security. Mr. Wolfe said that the Safety and Security Committee has a few simple goals. The first is to try to integrate and coordinate with the existing organizations with in our community like Neighborhood Watch, Westchester/Playa del Rey Moms, NCWP, LMU and the LAPD. it will take all the stakeholders working together to improve community safety and security.

A second goal is to help people to understand what Neighborhood Watch is and how it works. A third goal is to use the KHG website and email list to notify members about local crime and crime data. Mr. Wolfe is interested in pursuing a private armed patrol solution- having an armed guard in a security car driving through Kentwood 24/7 as a visible deterrent and a first responder. Mr. Wolfe said that a critical mass of people must sign up in order for Kentwood to

have a dedicated patrol car. If a resident signs up, the resident is provided with the phone number to that car. If you don't pay then you don't have the number.

A resident suggested having an escort service when people are coming home: the car would meet them at their home if they are arriving late. Mr. Davis pointed out that the car is provided in conjunction with the home security system for which he pays about \$47 per month. The Safety and Security Committee will vet the different security organizations that are available and provide information and recommendations to Kentwood residents.

Mr. Wolfe recommended that residents go to crimemapping.com to track crime in our neighborhood. He asked for volunteers to help the S & S Committee achieve its goals. He can be contacted at denniswolfe101@gmail.com.

A member of the audience commented that there is a phone app called "WAYZ" which notifies criminals if the police have been called by any phone in the vicinity. This enables them to get away before the police arrive. The police are very familiar with this app. Mr. Wolfe pointed out that if **the security car** was called this app would not notify the criminals possibly increasing the likelihood of apprehension.

NEXT DOOR—NEXTDOOR.COM

Marquise Olison from Next Door made a presentation about the value of nextdoor.com: it is private, secure, and useful.

Private: Next Door is a website which groups users together by neighborhood. You must live within certain verified boundaries in order to participate in the neighborhood group.

Secure: It is not search-engine-indexed, so nothing that neighborhood groups discuss is ever available to the outside public. The database is run through the national sex crimes database to screen out suspect users.

Useful: The Cheviot Hills neighborhood last year had an upsurge in burglaries. The neighbors became organized and started communicating with each other through NextDoor. There has been a significant decrease in crime which the neighbors attribute to their increased communication and organization. Next Door can also be used for recommendations for plumbers, lawn care etc.

Next Door is funded by well-known venture capitalists in Silicon Valley. It is free. There are now over 200 people signed up in Kentwood (Central Westchester). Cyndi Hench has recommended Next Door as a means to reduce crime In Westchester.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mary Putnam made the motion that the January minutes be approved. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report is not available at this time. The financial reports will be posted on the website within the next two weeks.

ELECTION RULES

Maria Warner and Craig Callahan presented information about the Election Rules. Mr. Callahan said that the election rules committee had three objectives: add procedures and dates to facilitate timely elections, add procedures to facilitate internal administration of the election, and to address some of the inapplicable or inappropriate terms which were used in the boiler plate last year. Issues about proxies were also addressed.

The Election Rules have been reviewed by the Board members and the Board's attorney. The rules must be circulated to all the KHG members with 30 days lead time. Public comment would be at April meeting. Mr. Callahan stated that the motion to be made is to approve the rules for circulation to the membership for the purpose of gathering public comment.

Maria Warner was the co-chairman of the Election Committee. She said that she is in favor of approval of the Election Rules as they are presented.

Bruce Nahid made the motion that the Board approve the Election Rules as presented for circulation to the membership to gather public comment before the final Board vote in April. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The Election Rules will be sent out by March 5. Members will be asked to submit comments and suggestions by email.

Mr. Davis noted that Mr. Callahan had done a timeline of the KHG election process. Mr. Davis moved that the election day be May 31, 2014. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

Suzann Rogers reported that she had sent out 629 delinquency notices. As of the Board Meeting, there are now just 365 outstanding accounts. Ms. Rogers pointed out that the deadline of 120 days for KHG to file a lien is March 30. Mr. Davis said that the next notice is a certified letter.

Ms. Rogers suggests that in the future the assessment letters say that KHG does not accept cash. Mr. Davis said that if someone wants to pay cash they should come into the office and get a receipt.

Ms. Rogers asked the Board if KHG should send out a certified letter for amounts less than \$10. Mr. Davis said the cutoff should be at the full assessment value for one year.

Mr. Callahan requested that the attorney clarify the following: if KHG does not lien people for amounts less than \$10 this year, has KHG waived the right to lien for that amount if it is not paid the following year, since it is supposed to be filed within 120 days? Mr. Callahan said he would write up his two questions.

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE

Maria Warner said that the AC has met and had 9 or 10 building plans come in. There is a lot of building going on. Responses were sent back.

Ms. Warner presented a “Comments and Observations” summary (attached) by Mark Kellogg and Vince Bertolini with regard to the project proposed for the corner of Emerson and Manchester. The NCWP had requested some feedback from KHG regarding this project since this lot is part of Kentwood.

Mr. Kellogg summarized the opinion of the AC by saying that the project does not meet the design requirements of the neighborhood, in particular it does not have a pitched roof as required by the DPRs. In addition, regarding the fit of this building with the neighborhood, it seemed to be too dense, to cause parking issues because it has no guest parking, to not have sufficient access for the Sanitation Dept. truck, and to cause traffic congestion near to the corner of a secondary highway. In conclusion, KHG could not support the building of this project.

Mr. Bertolini brought up specific examples of code violations with regard to the guest parking , trash pickup, and the driveway on Emerson. Mr. Davis said that it is important to have the specific citations.

Mr. Davis believes that we can give guidance to the organizations that give recommendations to the City Council and Planning Commission, however, KHG does not have enforcement ability. Mr. Callahan said that what we are trying to do is put on the record as much as possible what the code violations are. Davis-Stirling overlays limits what an HOA can do so that if things are in compliance with code perhaps KHG can't object. KHG's opinion that is that is outside of the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Davis said the document must be supported by reference to building codes and our DPRs.

Mr. Davis said the letter had to be ready to submit to the NCWP for the March 4 meeting. He made the motion that a draft will be submitted to the Board by email and the Board will

approve it by email in time for the NCWP Meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Mary Putnam reported that she and Tracy Thrower Conyers have been working on the KHG website architecture and will have a report at next month's meeting. It is particularly important to have the website available for Mr. Wolfe's Safety and Security Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Benjamin, a Kentwood resident, lived in Redondo Beach for ten years. Although he and his neighbors had petitioned the City Council, a project on his street was approved which caused enormous parking and quality of life problems: Redondo Beach approved a project on his block with two dwellings on one lot, one with 7 bedrooms, and the other, 8 bedrooms, and a small number of parking spaces. The result was that there was never any parking on his residential street and he had to cross Aviation Blvd. to park his car each night. Though legally required to rent to related people, this was never enforced.

Mr. Benjamin said that HOAs such as KHG are accomplishing an important purpose in serving as watchdogs of the community's interests and should be respected and supported.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35.

Submitted by Mary Putnam, Secretary

ATTACHMENTS:

LMU Community Contact Guide

KHG 17-Feb-2014 Comments and Observations re Emerson/Manchester Project