

# ROYAL CANYON PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

## REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2018

### I. Call to Order and Roll Call

~19:00 — President Cheryl Frees-Yvega called to order the regular meeting of the RCPOA Board of Directors at the home of Director Byron Hibdon, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

Directors present:

Richard Blasco, Cheryl Frees-Yvega, Byron Hibdon, Richard Lee, Wendy Myers, Tina Parsegian, Leanne Reynolds, John Wolff, Todd Yvega.

Directors absent:

Armine Hacopian, Brad Nelson, Armine Perian, Beth Volpe.

Others present:

Raffi Saroyan

### II. Approval of Minutes From the Previous Regular Board Meeting

~19:00 — Secretary Todd Yvega presented.

Draft minutes of the July 9, 2018 Regular Board Meeting

- Initially distributed to the Board on Sunday, July 22, by email (PDF attachment and URL to the document on the RCPOA wiki).
- On Thursday, October 4 the President redistributed the aforementioned PDF (unrevised), along with the agenda for this meeting.
- As of last Saturday evening there had been no further edits made to the document on the wiki.
- The Secretary asked the Board for any corrections or alterations prior to approval. None were offered.

Motion by Todd Yvega: *"I move that Board approve the minutes of the July 9 Board Meeting as distributed."*

Seconded. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

### III. Open Issues

#### 1. Membership Committee Report

~19:01 — Vice President and Membership Committee Chair Wendy Myers presented.

- Wendy visited 260 homes last year
- Of those, 201 became members.
- Some tell Wendy during her visit that they'll join online or mail in the application. In most cases if she doesn't collect in person, they don't subsequently join.
- Wendy gets a substantial number of payments in cash. That has become more common that it used to be, maybe because residents have gotten to know Wendy.
- Currently RCPOA has 309 members, which is about 50% of the households in the neighborhood.

Discussion:

- Tina Parsegian asked Wendy, of the homes that you visit which join, how many do you think would renew on their own the next year if you didn't visit again? Wendy responded that she thinks we would lose a tremendous number of members if she didn't visit.
- The January newsletter didn't include an renewal envelope this year, so many who might otherwise have mailed in a check, didn't.
- These days many people won't open the door if it is a man who knocks.

## **2. Neighborhood Security Committee Yard Signs**

~19:06 — Neighborhood Security Committee Member Raffi Saroyan presented.

- Much of the NSC's focus has come down to education — what to do, whom to call.
- One of the ideas was to provide lawn signs to make visible the message, "Suspicious Activity? Call the Police" followed by the phone number.
- One suggestion was for RCPOA to consider ordering signs, and NSC will deploy them to strategic locations, such as where cars stop.
- Raffi showed a sample sign he had made to put in his front yard. The font is the same as used on highway signs. The coloring is more like European road signs (to draw one's attention).
- One of the NCS members called the appropriate city department for sign posting regulations:
  - Signs can be place on grass with wire stakes.
  - Signs mounted on wood or metal posts (such as a light post or power line pole) have to be 7 feet off the ground, but can't be on traffic sign posts.
- Prices
  - Corrugated plastic, single sided, for placing on grass (like the sample Raffi showed): \$10.49 + \$3.00 for wire stakes; with tax ~\$14 to \$15 per sign.

- Metal signs of the same size, for attaching to posts can cost from \$27 to \$40.

Discussion:

- Cheryl Fress-Yvega asked Raffi how they would distribute the signs
- NSC volunteers spread the word, perhaps by Nextdoor.com. Interested parties could contact NSC to arrange pick-up or drop-off.
- Alternatively NCS might identify strategically located homes and reach out to those residents.
- John Wolff expressed concern about how long the thin hollow corrugated plastic and paint would hold up to sprinklers and sunlight. John said he has metal security signs that have already become bleached by sunlight.
- Cheryl asked Raffi how many signs the NSC was thinking of having made. Raffi wasn't certain but guessed between 75 and 100. The idea is to have wide enough coverage that people become aware and eventually memorize the phone number.
- John Wolff suggested starting with a pilot project with a small number of signs to learn how long they will last.
- Cheryl Frees-Yvega suggested to Raffi that the NSC designate their strategic locations and categorize them by importance to determine how many signs they'll need at a minimum and at a maximum. e.g., At a minimum we'd like just these covered, but in a best case scenario we'd like these others.
- Tina Parsegian asked if the considered putting a recognizable graphic, such as the neighborhood watch logo, that might convey a message at a glance even without reading the text. Raffi said they thought about that but didn't want to sacrifice the limited space on the sign. Also they want the message to be, "here's what to do if you see something suspicious", and not to compete with that message by presenting a logo that means something else, like "this neighborhood has a neighborhood watch".
- Wendy Myers said the simpler the sign, the better. The message is more direct without distraction.
- John Wolff suggested branding the signs with the palm trees from the RCPOA logo.
- Todd Yvega suggested that to not take space away from the message, the palm trees could be a low-contrast backdrop behind the text.
- Richard Blasco suggested placing a decal on the back of the sign. Also stepping up to thicker plastic to last 10 years. Whenever the decals fade we can peel them off and put new ones on.
- Leanne Reynolds suggested making the signs reflective for night time visibility.
- Richard Blasco: State "protected by such-and-such security".
- Raffi reminded us that the original intent is to convey the message suspicious activity is a call to action and here is the number to call. To include "protected by" strays from that message.

- Todd Yvega concurred. A “protected by” message could actually dissuade someone from calling. “I don’t need to get involved and call the police because the security company protecting this house will take care of it.”

Action Items:

- Cheryl Frees-Yvega asked Raffi to price out the different grades of signs we might consider (more sturdy, reflective, etc.) for presentation at the December meeting along with the number of signs/locations the NSC considers must-haves vs. nice-to-haves.
- Tina Parsegian told Raffi she has a couple clients in the printing industry who might offer her a discount. She asked Raffi to email her specifications and she’ll get quotes.

The chair thanked Raffi for presenting at this meeting and commended the activities of the NSC.

Raffi Saroyan departed.

### **3. National Night Out Recap and Glendale Police National Night Out Debriefing**

~19:25 — President Cheryl Frees-Yvega read the reports of National Night Out Committee Chair Beth Volpe (*not present*).

Beth’s reports as read at this meeting are attached below:

- [RCPOA National Night Out Event Recap](#).
- [Glendale Police Department National Night Out Debriefing](#).

At the conclusion of Beth’s report, Cheryl pointed out that it’s rather impressive that the RCPOA’s National Night Out is one of the top three in the city, while one of the other two shows a movie and the other offers free food.

Discussion

- Leanne Reynolds, commenting about the item in Beth’s report about other neighborhoods’ NNO events going longer than ours, said we could go longer. It’s hardly more work to go for three hours instead of two.
- The hot dog vendor allowed people to get food quickly. We finally did not have the usual complaint that it took too long to stand in line waiting to order food.
- Many thought the ice cream was too expensive.

Action Items:

- If Mrs. Books is to perform at next year’s event, we should ask her not to announce upon concluding her show as if the party is over and it’s time for everyone to go home.

#### **4. Summer Social Recap**

~19:43 — Social Committee Chair Leanne Reynolds presented.

We had an enthusiastic host (Jay Butler) whose terraced backyard can accommodate 90 to 100 people.

- Jay underwrote the caterer, so we were able to have a higher quality of food.
- The event planner did much of the work which in past years the committee got exhausted doing.
- It seemed that people stayed longer after the meal than usual, perhaps because of the band.

Action items:

- Todd Yvega to get Summer Social Photographs to Richard Blasco for possible use in the next newsletter.

#### **5. Recess**

~19:52 — The Chair called a brief recess.

~20:02 — The Chair called the meeting back to order.

#### **6. Annual Member Meeting Planning**

~20:02 — President Cheryl Frees-Yvega presented.

- The Social Committee will meet on Wednesday at 18:00 to plan the Annual Member Meeting.
- The Annual Member Meeting will be the first event of RCPOA's 50th anniversary year. There will be no city election and thus no candidates forum, so the committee has to come up with a program, venue, and price to attract attendees.
- Any ideas regarding program, venue, etc., should be relayed to the committee by Wednesday.
- Donna Wittlin will produce the flyer. Any ideas for the flyer should be submitted before Thanksgiving.
- Possible featured speakers:
  - Wendy Myers suggested the new Police Chief.
  - Tina Parsegian offered to speak about investments and financial planning.
  - Tina suggested the new President of Adventist Health Glendale (formerly Glendale Adventist Medical Center).

- Byron Hibdon recounted how the promotional materials for past Annual Meetings failed to convey to him what the event was about and why he would want to attend. He thinks more people might want to attend if we made that more clear.
- That prompted Cheryl Fress-Yvega to describe her idea for the flyer to call out the various agenda items as attractions (perhaps with a subliminal nod to carnival barker tradition). Cheryl said she realized the need to improve the promotional message having heard Byron tell of his experience at the March Board meeting, and having been told by a member that she never attended the Annual Business Meeting because "I don't have a business."
- Wendy Myers thinks most people will avoid anything other than the program, thinking the business parts of the meeting to be boring. Some disagreed.
- Byron Hibdon suggested that some who have been on the Board for many years may think the business to be dull because we are so accustomed to it, whereas the average member may find it a curiosity.
- John Wolff added that is essential to the operation of the association to have a quorum of membership present for the business portion of the meeting. It's not meant to be just entertainment.
- Cheryl suggested that the Neighborhood Security Committee could offer the signs to members at the Annual Meeting.

## **7. 50th Anniversary Logo**

~20:12 — Cheryl Fress-Yvega presented.

- Where we last left off, there was a question: Do we keep the acronym "RCPOA" on the logo or take it off?
- Cheryl put it to a vote of the Board via email and phone. For those who didn't have a preference Cheryl gave a half vote to both options.
- Cheryl then assigned the task of finalizing the logo to the two directors who use it the most: The Newsletter Editor (Richard Blasco) and the Webmaster (Todd Yvega).
- One of the remaining tasks was to make "Royal Canyon Property Owners Association" more readable. Richard and Todd each came up with separate sets of change request for TLC (The Logo Company), and Cheryl submitted a third asking the designer to let us know if you have a better idea.
- Three revisions came back. Richard and Todd discussed them and arrived at one final change request.
- The revision that came back met with Richard's and Todd's approval.
- We will see it in the December/January newsletter.

## **8. Directors and Officers Insurance**

~20:17 — Cheryl Fress-Yvega presented.

- Rick Dinger, a local insurance agent, spoke at the RCPOA's 2018 Annual Member Meeting about disaster recovery. Since then Cheryl has been receiving his

newsletters. An article in one issue made the case that if you volunteer for a non-profit you probably should have Directors and Officers Insurance.

- Mr. Dinger offered to waive his fee, if RCPOA decides to acquire a D&O policy, because of the amount of business resulting from his presentation at our annual member meeting.
- The Board has discussed getting D&O insurance before, but Cheryl didn't recall the reason we ultimately chose not to pursue it.
- John Wolff responded, "Because it's unaffordable."
- The types of liabilities that typically befall an HOA, as described in the materials provided by Mr. Dinger, don't seem to apply to RCPOA. RCPOA is not like a typical HOA. We do not have mandatory membership — It's all voluntary. We do not maintain any common areas. We have no employees, no regulations to enforce. An annual budget is adopted and posted online, and all of our tax reporting remains current.
- Since we have an attorney on the Board (Richard Blasco), Cheryl asked Richard if he would be willing to take a look at the materials provided by Mr. Dinger and give a recommendation at the December Board meeting.
- Wendy Myers said she asked her husband Mike (a retired attorney) about this subject once, and he came to a similar conclusion.
- 3 points from Byron Hibdon:
  1. The risk is minimal since RCPOA Directors aren't responsible to homeowners.
  2. Insurance is personal. One person's tolerance for a risk may be much higher or lower than another's.
  3. The more coverage an organization has, the more they can get sued for. The first thing a litigation attorney does when considering filing a lawsuit is to look at the organization's insurance coverage to determine the amount of damages to ask for. If there's not insurance, there's not going to be a lot of incentive to pursue a lawsuit.
- Richard Blasco thinks liability insurance may be more in line with our needs than D&O insurance, considering that our widest exposure to potential lawsuits would probably be accidents at the events we host.
- Todd Yvega pointed out that the federal Volunteer Protection Act already affords liability protection to Directors of non-profit organizations (barring gross misconduct).

Action items:

- Cheryl will ask Rick Dinger about liability insurance.

## **9. RCPOA Dues**

~20:33 — The chair introduced the topic:

- Prior to the July Board meeting the President distributed to all Directors the Treasurer's analysis of past dues increases, and the position paper of Vice president and Membership Chair Wendy Myers.
- Byron Hibdon studied the analysis in detail. Yesterday he and Treasurer Richard Lee met for an hour and a half to dig into it.

Director Byron Hibdon presented.

- The conversation he and Richard had was not just about the books.
- Byron's initial thoughts about a possible dues increase was, I love this neighborhood, I love my neighbors, I love this association, it provides me great value... I would have no problem paying higher dues. And I can't imagine anyone I've met (in the cooking group, on the Board, etc.) not being willing to pay higher dues. It seemed to me that raising dues was a no-brainer.
- After speaking to a number of other people, including the Treasurer, he realized that was perhaps a naive thing to think because he has only ever met a fraction of the members. And the people we meet at RCPOA events are often just the neighbors who are already "sold".
- RCPOA currently has ~300 members at \$20 per, yielding \$6,000. To make the math simple suppose we raise the dues to \$30. The Treasurer and Membership Chair both expect we would lose ~100 members. ~200 members at \$30 per yields \$6,000 (the same total). So the question is if we're going to have \$6,000 either way, would we rather have 300 members or 200 members?
- Byron believes it's better for the association to represent more households.
- What is the need to raise the dues? The treasury is healthy and has been increasing since 2013 (thanks to Wendy Myers's recruiting efforts).
- Summing up, Byron said, even though he would gladly pay more, and presumably everyone in this room would, he's not sure it's in the best interests of the association to raise the dues. If we had a need for additional funding then he'd say let's look into it more, but he just doesn't see the need.

Discussion

- Wendy Myers said that in her experience visiting households, convenience ("the ease of getting rid of me") is more of a motivator than expense. Interestingly, if the dues were \$15 instead of \$20, she thinks we'd have less members, because it is so easy for someone to hand her a \$20 bill.
- Wendy believes that if she didn't visit homes the way she does, we would have to spend money mailing renewal requests.
- Byron added that if Wendy stops visiting homes we'll probably see a significant decrease in membership.
- Leanne Reynolds says she thinks we have a problem with our Business Model: The reliance on maintaining a membership of 300+ by one person alone knocking on doors is unsustainable.

- Leanne added that adjacent neighborhood associations don't have someone knocking on doors.
- Cheryl Frees-Yvega responded, and their membership percentage is in the teens. Ours is 50%. No-one else comes close to that.
- Regarding the reliance on Wendy, Cheryl said it's clear that Wendy need to add some people to her committee and groom her successors.
- Todd Yvega asked what would be a better business model?
- Richard Blasco: The business model fits in with the aim of the association to foster a close-knit community. It's a personal touch. After all, we're not a business. Maybe our business model isn't wrong. Considering that nearby associations have ~10% membership whereas we have 50%, one might argue that we have more of a close-knit community than them because of this business model, and that we need this model to be successful.
- Cheryl Frees-Yvega added that if/when we reach a time when we don't have someone doing the job Wendy Myers is doing and membership numbers decline, we might then consider raising dues to compensate.
- Tina Parsegian: The banners are very effective. We could put up a banner just to attract membership.
- John Wolff: Because of the signage, people see that the association is doing something of value to the neighborhood. The Picnic/National Night Out event gives visibility.

No Action taken.

## **10. Treasurer's Report**

~21:03 — Treasurer Richard Lee presented.

Richard distributed the following documents to the Board, and reviewed them for the directors in attendance.

- Treasurer's Report of Financial Results for the period July 9 through October 8, 2018 ([attached](#)).
- Financial Results for the 2018 National Night Out event ([attached](#)).
- Financial Results for the 2018 Summer Social ([attached](#)).

Motion put forward that the Board approve the Treasurer's financial statements as presented.

Seconded. No Discussion. Motion Carried unanimously.

## **IV. New Business**

### **0. Spotty Newsletter Delivery**

- John Wolff asked if we know why so many residents didn't receive the newsletter.
- Richard Blasco said that he did investigate and the failure evidently happens in the US Postal service.
- Leanne Reynolds suggested using USPS Every Door Direct Mail EDDM.

Action item:

- Richard Blasco will look into the feasibility of using EDDM.

## **V. Adjournment**

~21:06 — Meeting adjourned.

Todd Yvega, Secretary