



NORTH HILLS WEST NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
Regular Board Meeting Draft Minutes, Thursday, June 20, 2024

New Horizons, 15725 Parthenia St., North Hills, CA 91343

DRAFT Minutes [to be replaced by "Approved _[Month]_ _[date]_, 202_[year]_"]

Document copies were available at: <https://www.nhwnc.net/agendas/june-20-regular-board-meeting/> NHWNC (and all other) Meeting Minutes are a summary; Minutes were not, are not and are never meant to be an exact, verbatim, word-for-word transcript or comprehensive record of what was said at a Meeting. Exceptions: Motion(s) (included as stated at the Meeting, or, if not stated, as written on the Agenda); quotes (words that have quotation marks ("")) at the beginning and ending of a word or words); and Agenda wording copied into the Minutes. The following Minutes items follow the agenda order and nomenclature. Draft minutes numbering follows the respective agenda item numbering.

1. Call to order and Welcome.

President Minasian called the Meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, Voting Eligibility Report and call for agenda item(s) recusals.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Roll Call was taken. All 8 of the 8 current Board Members were present when the Roll Call was initiated: Dave Brown (Secretary), Pat Crone, Maggie Elliott (Vice-President/Treasurer), Linda Erdman Note: Ms. Erdman announced herself as absent, got up, tore her name tent card, threw it at one of the Board tables, and walked out from the meeting while shouting Incoherently at 6:13 p.m., Roll Call continued: Garry Fordyce, Punam Gohel, Madlena Minasian (President), and Kreshell Ramey, resulting in seven (7) Board Members remaining, and a quorum was maintained. The NHWNC Board quorum (the minimum number of Board Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) is seven (see the Bylaws link at www.empowerla.org/nhwnc), so the Board could take such votes. Quorum was announced. Mr. Brown confirmed that all Board Members' training were compliant and they were eligible to vote. Note: In addition to the traditional basic required training, additional Board member training will be required to be completed by the July 16th General Board meeting. The President called for agenda item recusals by Board members, and there were none.

3. President's Comments, Announcements, and Meeting Logistics –

- President Minasian read an overview of the NC meeting rules aloud for the public and the Board Member participants. She welcomed attendees to the meeting and also apologized on the Board's behalf for the unexpected,

incoherent earlier outburst and inappropriate conduct of a Board member, which was witnessed by all.

- June meeting is our end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year wrap-up meeting
- A binder is on the information table at every meeting that contains all documents relating to this meeting. All information is also available at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting on the NC website: <https://www.nhwnc.net>
- Call for new Board Members: We currently have five open seats and seeking Applicants. Applications can be found on our website.
- Please visit the NHWNC website main calendar for all upcoming events and several upcoming events were mentioned.

4. Elected Officials, Public Agency Speakers, Field Representatives and Public Service Announcements.

- a. State Assembly District 40 – Pilar Schiavo / Field Representative - Gaby Gurrola, Field Representative for State 40th District Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo 661-286-1565; gaby.gurrola@asm.ca.gov, <https://a40.asmdc.org/>], She reported that a lot of the Bills are off to the Senate 17 out of the 22 focusing on Housing, Home Business, Healthcare, Seniors, and Veterans Bills are in motion that could benefit the Community. Also, over one million dollars was brought back to the district. Constituents can reach out to their office, and they can see how they can assist or redirect them. Upcoming events: June 29th, at the Sierra Cannon High School in Chatsworth; next is the Veteran Expo on July 27th, at the College of the Canyons, and the Backpack and Tools supply giveaway on August 4th. Ms. Gurrola noted that all upcoming event information could be found at the back table; questions and concerns were raised about sex trafficking, especially minors being trafficked, and lawmakers to pass laws/bills to protect minors and create laws to prosecute those committing those heinous crimes.
- b. City Council District 12 John Lee - CD12 / Field Representative – Lorena Espinal. Lorena Espinal, a Field Deputy for L.A. City District 12 Councilmember John Lee [818-882-1212; Lorena.Espinal@lacity.org; <https://councildistrict12.lacity.gov>], She commented that driving to the meeting, she saw several St Pole Banners, which looked great. Announcements: Regarding the Balboa and Devonshire area, they have received many calls about construction causing a traffic jam. They communicate with the respective departments to ensure they stay on track. Construction started about three weeks ago, and they should complete it in late 2024. Specific to the North Hills West area where Motel 6 is, it is now officially designated as a 41:18, so it will be enforceable. Next, the Department of Transportation signs will be fabricated and installed, taking care of the encampments that were discussed about Haskell and Roscoe. She noted that Ben Pak is the new CD12 Public Safety Deputy.
- d. L.A. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment / NEA - John Darnell (DONE) [213-978-1551; john.darnell@lacity.org; <https://empowerla.org>], could not attend the meeting, and representative NEA/Vincent Autiero was substituting. He noted that he was only filling in for John Darnell for this meeting, and Mr. Darnell will be back in the office on Monday. A few announcements: Congress of

Neighborhoods will be on September 28th, NC financial officers training on June 25th, and the additional mandatory training date was extended to July 1st. Ethics and funding trainings expire every two years; the rest don't have an expiration date.

Brian Allen commented that he had looked at the NHWNC training roster, and contrary to what was said earlier, everyone was up to date on their training except for the extended training; either DONE had miserably failed to update that website, or this council has miserably failed, or it was a lie that was told to us earlier during the meeting. Mr. Allen recommends that DONE take a hard look at the NHWNCs training roster. Mr. Brown presented copies of the completion certificates to NEA/Autiero, and Ms. Minasian stated that there is a lag in updating the DONE roster, and everyone knows that. NEA/Autiero noted that the NC roster will get updated at some point, and in the meantime, we can forward copies of the completion certificates to NEA/Darnell if we choose. Mr. Allen continued to speak without being recognized, and President Minasian called out that he had not been recognized and was disrupting the meeting. President Minasian asked Mr. Allen to stop disrupting the meeting.

- d. To find your elected representatives, City agencies, departments, etc.: Neighborhood Info at: <https://neighborhoodinfo.lacity.gov>

5. General Public Comments on Non-Agenda items within the subject matter jurisdiction.

- **Angeline C.** commented about her concerns that the sewer charges could be increased. John Lee's newsletter states that there is a 45-day public input period regarding a proposed 22% increase in our sewer charges. She noted it feels like another hidden tax and that proper outreach should have been done to bring this issue to the forefront of the stakeholders. She mentioned that we cannot cut back more than we already have.
- **Mario M.** commented on behalf of the Therapeutic Living Search for the Blind; they are located in Reseda and Valey for all Kids, accept applications from students from 2 to 12, and work with low-income families.
- **Glenn B.** commented on a general public comment that a stakeholder had made during one of the prior board meetings regarding board meeting recordings and how ignorant the commenter was of the California State Government code, which states that, under the Brown Act, any public meeting is allowed to be recorded.
- **Steve T.** commented by expressing his disappointment and frustration, stating that he would not attend any future meetings due to the negative actions and conduct of Board members Garry Fordyce and Linda Erdman. He noted that Linda Erdman had been posting negative and disparaging comments about the hardworking NHWNC Board members on the Nextdoor app using a fake name. Steve mentioned that serving food at board meetings is a waste of taxpayers' money, and he was glad the Board had stopped serving food. He specifically addressed Board member Garry's frequent request for food at the

meetings, pointing out that the focus should be on community issues rather than free food.

- **Steve - North Hills East** commented about his neighbor's weeds; his neighbor is the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Several attempts were made, but there was no response from Caltrans. He noted how it's a major fire hazard. Location: on Orion between Plummer and Superior. Ms. Gurrola from State Assembly District 40 – Pilar Schiavo's office stated Caltrans is a state agency and suggested that Steve go to their website and file a customer service request. She suggested he email her directly, and they'll follow up with Caltrans.

6. Guest Speakers - Deputy Mayor of Community Engagement - Jared Rivera

The Deputy Mayor thanked President Minasian for the invitation. He mentioned that he has been in his current position for about a year, and before that, he worked as a community and labor organizer. In his current role, he oversees the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. He introduced David Bright David.Bright@lacity.org as the West Valley representative. The mayor has a team of 11 representatives covering the city. He noted that if people don't know who to contact or when departments are not getting back to them, they contact their office, and he described their department as the switchboard for the city. He noted that they are in the process of selecting the next chief of police, and safety matters are the most important for the mayor. They made tough decisions in this year's budget; however, the mayor was clear about continuing to work on the retention and hiring of police officers throughout the city. Therefore, the budget increased by \$138 million for that purpose for the police department. If anyone wants to receive text updates from the mayor's office, see Mr. Bright. Noting hiring the new GM for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment: Carmen Chang. He shared his excitement about what she brings to the city. Also, the mayor's top priority is housing and homelessness. On her first day at the office, she declared a state of emergency and sped up housing creation. The mayor has worked to remove costly barriers. During the first year, the mayor accommodated about twenty-two (22) thousand Individuals with housing in various ways. There was a robust Q&A: several individuals raised concerns about housing and the increasing homeless population migrating from other states and across the border, which taxpayers are unhappy about funding. Suggestions were put forward for consideration. One suggestion was to find out which state they are from and bill those states for the housing costs. Otherwise, there is a concern that the homelessness issue will never be resolved. It's important to note that taxpayers have spent billions over the years, and the issue has only gotten worse. The construction of housing for the homeless population is excessively expensive, with costs averaging over seven hundred thousand per unit. There are also concerns about mental health, drug issues, and crime. Additionally, some participants suggested that rent control, particularly for mom-and-pop landlords, should be eliminated because, in most cases, that is their source of income, just like people earning their salaries, and that the government should not interfere with private business and should focus on managing itself. Inflation has increased prices, and small businesses and mom-and-pop landlords are impacted more than big chain stores or real estate builders. Small and middle-class businesses lost their

livelihoods while Big Box stores and Big Investors benefited. City councils should not manage private individuals' affairs since they already pay their fair share of taxes. They should encourage people to deal with one another rather than pitting one against another to make themselves look favorable for re-election. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) GM, concerns were raised about how neighborhood councils were not given the opportunity to meet with the candidate before her appointment. President thanked Deputy Mayor Rivera for attending, listening to concerns, and answering questions. She expressed that he is welcome to participate anytime.

7. Discussion and possible action to approve the May 16, 2024 Draft GBM

Minutes:

<https://www.nhwnc.net/minutes/may-16-gbm/>

No corrections or amendments were made.

MOTION (by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Elliott): The North Hills West Neighborhood Council approves the Minutes of its May 16, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote of the seven eligible voters present with six in favor ("Yes" or "Aye") (Brown, Crone, Elliott, Gohel, and Minasian; one opposed ("No" or "Nay") (Fordyce). (The NHWNC does not count absences as votes.) (6-1-0-1)

8. Discussion and possible action to approve the May 2024 Monthly Expenditure

Report: <https://www.nhwnc.net/reports/may-2024/>

NHWNC's Net Available balance at the end of the 2023-2024 FY is \$17,629.77, and NHWNC spent less than \$5K on NPGs. We have been very mindful of our spending overall. The city council approved rolling over the entire NC available balance, not just up to \$10K, for the 2024-2025 FY.

FUNDING MOTION (by Ms. Ramey, seconded by Mr. Gohel: The North Hills West Neighborhood Council approves the Monthly Expenditure Report for March 2024.

FUNDING MOTION PASSED by a voice vote of the seven eligible voters present with six in favor ("Yes" or "Aye") (Brown, Crone, Elliott, Gohel, and Minasian); one opposed ("No" or "Nay") (Fordyce) and one abstain (Ramey). (5-1-1-1)

9. Discussion regarding NC Storage Bin

The NC storage bin, a 40' shipping container (SEU) outfitted with shelving, has been at its current location for approximately ten years at no charge. Planned construction at the site may require removal/relocation of the bin. The Neighborhood Council should look for possible site locations in the event NC is asked to relocate the storage Bin.

10. NHWNC Inventory List.

MOTION (by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Ramey: The North Hills West Neighborhood Council approves the NHENC Inventory List

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote of the six eligible voters present with six in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Brown, Crone, Elliott, Gohel, Minasian, and Ramey); one opposed (“No” or “Nay”) (Fordyce). (6-1-0-1)

11. Discussion and possible action to reimburse Board member Dave Brown \$349.78 for the NHWNC website Domain account payments.

Mr. Brown paid the monthly NC website registration fees since January 2022. This is a result of not having password access to the account to switch to the NC debit card(s). The last payment under identical circumstances to Mr. Brown was in December 2021. The most recent payment enabled a change from monthly to annual prepayment at a discount, so the next payment will not be due for 11 months. Receipts available following this month's agenda by scrolling past the agenda: <https://www.nhwnc.net/agendas/june-20-regular-board-meeting/>
The person who initially set up the account is deceased, and password resets go to an unknown email address. There is a convoluted procedure to gain access.

FUNDING MOTION (by Ms. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Gohel): The North Hills West Neighborhood Council approves an expenditure of \$349.78 to reimburse Mr. Brown for covering the NC Domain website monthly registration fees and thanks him for his stepping forward to do so on behalf of the Community.

FUNDING MOTION PASSED by a voice vote of the seven eligible voters present with four in favor (“Yes” or “Aye”) (Crone, Elliott, Gohel, and Minasian); one opposed (Fordyce); two abstained (Brown and Ramey). (4-1-2-1)

12. 2025 Neighborhood Council Election Handbook and schedule.

Ms. Minasian shared the information about the next elections. Region 2 Election is scheduled for May 20, 2025, and it will be by mail-in ballots. There will be no in-person voting.

13. PENDING: Censure/Grievance #385. NHWNC submitted responses to DONE on 4/1/2023 and resubmitted them on 5/11/2023. The grievance scheduled for 10/25/23 was canceled on 10/24/23, and the rescheduled grievance for 4/23/24 was canceled on 4/22/24. As of now, the grievance is still pending. [Neighborhood Council Grievance Page](#) [Grievance Website Report](#)

President Minasian asked NEA/Autiero if there were any updates on the pending Grievance #385. NEA/Autiero noted that the department's update is very small, and they are working on ADA accommodations for Board Member Garry Fordyce. President Minasian pointed out that that was the same update they had received in April and May 2024. Two months have passed since the last scheduled hearing, which was canceled at the last minute, and no Grievance hearing has been scheduled. Also, the fact that the Grievance has not been handled in a timely manner has impacted the Board and the Community negatively. NEA/Autiero suggested that President Minasian send him the Board's concerns in writing, and he'll forward them to NEA/Darnell. President Minasian noted that NEA/Darnell, along with others within the NC system, are well aware of the concerns and the issues; however, no one has done anything to help the NC and the Community to move past this issue that has been lingering for a very long time, and has

had a very negative impact since it's been left unresolved; therefore, there is no point in spending any more time drafting communication. DONE oversees the Grievance process, and they have failed to do their job.

Glenn B commented that the Department did not send out an early notification for the previous Grievance hearing, which was scheduled and then canceled. That session is under the Brown Act, so it should have been sent through the Early Notification System. He noted that he had asked the Department to do that, and there was no response from the DONE.

14. PENDING: VCC _ \$1500 NPG: [VCC Budget - Items to be given to the NC Liaison for NC cleanups](#)

- **Per Jan GBM → Zoom recording was sent to CD 12 Rep Ms. Espinal and Board members along with documentation per January GBM Re: Volunteers Cleaning Communities (VCC) \$1500 NPG WAS approved on 4/21/22.**
- **Per Feb GBM → On 2/16/24, Minasian emailed NEA Darnell the Zoom recording of the GBM 4/21/22 VCC presentation of the NPG, the VCC presented Budget, Agendas & Minutes.**
President Minasian asked NEA/Autiero if NEA/Darnell had given him any update on this item since Mr. Darnell was asked to look into this issue since February 2024. NEA/Autiero noted that he wasn't provided with any update regarding this item.

15. PENDING: The mailer is pending for future consideration.

During 5/16/24 GBM, two Draft NHWNC Brochure mailers were presented. The Board approved one of two draft Brochures. [NHWNC Brochure Mailer](#) On 2/15/24, GBM approved an NHWNC brochure as an Outreach effort for mailers. The quote included 5K brochures, design, printing, and mailing. Minasian requested Board member participation, but no one contributed.
President Minasian updated the Board by noting that she was contacted by AM Direct, and she was informed that the Quote given to the NC was not accurate as far as the postage was concerned; therefore, the mailer has not been mailed. The Board will need to reagendaize this item and ask AM Direct to provide options. AM Direct representative should also be invited to the next board meeting for a Q&A so the board can decide how to move forward.

16. PENDING: During 3/21/24 GBM, Minasian reported that EmpowerLA has agreed to canvass NHW neighborhoods as an Outreach effort. ACTION ITEM: For Board members to email DONE NEA/ Darnell and CC the President on recommended areas within NHW boundaries for DONE to canvass to help recruit new stakeholder participation. As of this posting, Board members have not submitted any suggestions.

President Minasian noted that no Board member as of today has made any recommendations of areas for EmpowerLA to canvass, and EmpowerLA has not made any efforts to canvass either.

17. PENDING: Welcome to NHW sign. Detailed information about what is needed was presented during the 2/15/24 GBM. Board members were asked to help by finding the professionals needed to start the project.

President Minasian noted that this is still pending. No Board Member has contributed any information, and it is possible that the Board can consider doing the Welcome to NHW signage for the 2024-2025 FY as CIP.

18. UPDATE: Bus Bench Ads—An initial deposit of \$1192.00 was submitted and approved by Funding for the NHWNC Bus Bench Ads.

During 3/22/ 24 GBM, the Board approved \$7152 for four (4) PSA Bus Bench Ads from [InSite Street Media](#) for one year of Outreach effort to bring awareness to NC.

President Minasian provided an update that the vendor has provided three samples as mockups for the Board to choose from. They were posted on the website as supplemental material for viewing. Minasian polled to see which sample was more favorable, and the majority chose sample #66424124B. Minasian will convey the Board's decision to the vendor. Also, the Board will need to agendize the remaining balance to be approved during the 2024-2025 FY.

19. UPDATE: The EmpowerLA Liaisons webpage has been down since 10/2023. Minasian emailed DONE on 10/26/23 and again on 11/14/23.

As of this publication, 6/17/24, the page is now active.

20. Discussion and possible action to appoint Homeless Liaisons: Kreshell Ramey and Mike Khalid

MOTION (by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Elliott): The North Hills West Neighborhood Council appoints Kreshell Ramey and Mike Khalid to represent the NHWNC as its Homeless Liaisons

MOTION PASSED by a voice vote of the seven eligible voters present with all seven in favor ("Yes" or "Aye") (Brown, Crone, Elliott, Gohel, Fordyce, and Minasian (7-0-0-1))

21. Committee, Liaisons, Alliances (if applicable), Board member/Chair(s) — suggestions on what more can be done to improve/promote NHWNC and participation by stakeholders —up to two (2) minutes each.

There were no report-outs due to the lack of active committees.

22. Discussion /Motion about polling/Surveying NHW Stakeholders on the NHWNC Next Door Account. This item was tabled.

23. Discussion about the primary election results on March 5, 2024.

[LAVOTE.GOV.](#) This item was tabled.

25. Discussion on the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year NC Assessment and Accomplishments of the Board members.

President Minasian went around the table and asked Board members for their assessment of the Board's accomplishments for the 2023-2024 FY.

Garry Fordyce - commented Nothing: nothing was done in committees, and there was no functioning committee.

Pat Crone – commented that Mr. Fordyce was correct because we had no committee meetings. Ms. Minasian asked if anyone knew why there were no committee

meetings. Pat Crone: "Because we don't have enough Board Members". Minasian noted we are highlighting accomplishments. The board should focus on recruiting board members.

Kreshell Ramey - commented that she loved the Street Pole Banners. She acknowledged that not much outreach had been done; however, at least now, with the banners, stakeholders know we are here and our efforts are not in vain.

Maggie Elliott - commented that even though we didn't have committees, we still did a lot, even outreach, and we accomplished a lot.

Dave Brown – commented by displaying the NHWNC website

<https://www.nhwnc.net/news-2/> to show what the NHWNC had accomplished during the 2023-2024 FY.

Madlena Minasian - commented on significant progress in Transparency and Time Management. Over the past two years, meeting durations have decreased from four or five hours to around three hours. In line with our commitment to transparency, we've prepared and provided the drafted CIS (Community Impact Statements) seventy-two hours before board meetings, allowing everyone to review in advance and come prepared for discussions. Additionally, all approved CISs were promptly submitted to the city clerk's website and showcased on the NHWNC.net website, ensuring that the voices of North Hills West residents are represented. These changes have been received well by most of our Board members and stakeholders. Ms. Minasian also emphasized that some Board members' claims of "Nothing" being accomplished were undermining, and she highlighted the significant outreach efforts made, such as Street Pole Banners and upcoming Bus Bench Ads. She noted that the Board couldn't remember if these types of outreach were ever achieved; therefore, considering the number of vacancies on the Board, she felt it was important to show a presence in the community. She mentioned it took over fifty emails to get the project accomplished. Additionally, the NHWNC brochures and mailers and various community outreach initiatives were undertaken to raise awareness about the NHWNC. Ms. Minasian thanked the board members who participated in these efforts, who, most of the time, are the same people. Other board members should also participate and stressed the importance of results and impact beyond merely showcasing the existence of the council. She highlighted the efforts put into updating the NHWNC.net website to inform stakeholders of pertinent information and make Board meeting documents readily available. While President Minasian was speaking *NEA/Vincent Autiero called a point of order on behalf of the Department to call the meeting. He stated that the NC could not continue the meeting and that it was officially over.* President Minasian asked why and replied that his director had said so. She asked who his director was, and NEA/Autiero stated Gibson. No other explanations were given for why Gibson called to end the NHWNC Board meeting.

24. Board Member Announcements: Three current Board Members (Maggie Elliott, Punam Gohel, and Dave Brown) read statements explaining why they were resigning from the NHW Neighborhood Council. When the Board meeting was hastily called to end without explanation, President Minasian stated she, too, was resigning.

The public expressed disappointment and frustration at the lack of respect shown to the Board by NEA/Vincent and Director Gibson. EmpowerLA ended the meeting prematurely based on incorrect guidance following Board resignation announcements. The resignations, which were intended to take effect after the Board meeting, would have caused a loss of quorum if they had been effective immediately.

It was evident that some information was being communicated via text among certain individuals, including NEA/Vincent Autiero. As a result, EmpowerLA, feeling criticized, decided to shut down the meeting as they believed they were primarily to blame.

Despite attempts to provide additional guidance and clarity on the matter, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm after it became clear that no progress could be made. Many attendees remarked at length that these challenges make it difficult to recruit and retain Board members and stakeholders.

Statements read during the meeting by Board members are posted as Supplementals on the June 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes page.