

CO-LOCATED MEETINGS OF THE SLNC HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING & TENANTS' RIGHTS, AND MATURE ADULTS COMMITTEES

5/13/19 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Homelessness committee

Item 1.A. & 1.B. Call to Order & Roll Call

Called to order at 6:08pm

Darius Derakshan: Public meeting - 2 minutes for comments per speaker

Nithya Raman suggested doing introductions, she will go first.

Item 1.C. Introductions

Nithya Raman is co-chair of Homelessness committee and co-founder of SELAH, passionate about finding ways to support residents

Stephanie Vendig - aging liaison to SLNC, and doing advocacy for older adults through Griffith Park Adult Community Center, and writes a column in Los Feliz Ledger about senior issues, president of Senior Citizens Clubs of LA

Nina Sorkin - co-chair of SLNC Mature Adult Advocates and has lived in Silver Lake since 1967. Recent meet and greet with O'Farrell brought up housing and older renters which made her interested in discussing issues together

Lynda Burdick - lives in Silver lake and has been experiencing harassment as tenant

Sarah Brady - Lynda's neighbor; both have had several difficulties at their current rental properties with landlords harassing them and want to find resource to get help

Stevie Rangel - Realtor and property manager in Silver Lake who wants to be compassionate and set a good example for people in the neighborhood

Jane Demian - has been evicted twice on no-fault basis and moved to Eagle Rock. Started housing committee with Carol [Cetrone] because of a clear need in this part of town

Matt - just wants to get more involved and learn more

Paul Emmons - chair of SLNC Transportation committee

Angie Aramayo - works with city in Mayor's office

Carol Cetrone - co-chair of the Housing & Tenants Rights Committee, member of

Urban Design and Preservation Committee, works with historic preservation, lived here since 1980.

Ninotchka Regets - co-chair of SLNC Housing and Tenants' Rights Committee, also a member of the Urban Design and Preservation Committee. Interest in tenants' rights, thinks we should be meeting regularly.

Darius Derakshan - co-chair of SLNC Homelessness committee, lots of things we wanted to do couldn't do through committee, so co-founded SELAH to get outreach to people. Housing crisis has affected homelessness crisis and wanting to find more solutions higher up the chain

Maebe A. Girl - new to Silver Lake NC and now the Homelessness liaison. Volunteered as supervisor at overnight shelter in Chicago, saw how complex of an issue homelessness is.

Item 2. Public comment

Angie Aramayo - provided Garcetti's budget press release and wants to note Beautification event to learn what city is doing about zero emissions and other green initiatives; happening this Saturday, May 18; also Hire LA Youth is happening. Also, mayor's budget press release came out recently. City council can vote as early as May 17 and budget must be adopted by June 1. Initiative to open 6 new safe parking sites and continue 5 already existing and also have more needle drop-off locations [pit stop programs]

Paul Emmons - attended webinar for safe parking, overviewing program - just getting off the ground but wanting more safe parking sites in LA city. Mostly city-owned land but may expand. Safe Parking sites provide security and outreach services.

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Jane Demian - Glassell Park NC approved safe parking for that area

Darius Derakshan - Echo Park has a pilot program in place that will probably be extended

Carol Cetrone - Mitch O'Farrell has event this coming Saturday at 9:30 am at juice bar Oaxaquena, and she [Carol] has LAHSA info and a list of legal services for tenants

Maebe A. Girl - interested in forming LGBTQ committee and has intersections with homelessness issues - reach out with questions

Jane Demian - in Portland, seniors are called honored citizens

Item 3.A. General discussion of the common issues faced by the stakeholders of the Housing & Tenants' Rights, Homelessness, and Mature Adults committees and possible action on the following questions:

- What kinds of vulnerabilities are people facing in Silver Lake, especially those that result in homelessness? How can we identify and proactively help people facing such vulnerabilities, particularly older adults living on a fixed income?
- What resources are available for people, especially older adults, facing foreclosure, eviction, or other housing risks? Can we make information about those eviction, foreclosure, or resources available more widely, including at community resources like the GPCC, the Silver Lake Library, and council member offices? Can we spread the word about these resources?
- Are there ways of bringing people together in ways that are informal, and especially in reducing the shame in asking for help?

Nithya – we've seen double-digit increases in percentage of homelessness in LA, and seeing similarly large increase this year. We are in a resource desert in this area of town (not just Silver Lake but many areas of central/northeast LA). 50k homeless in LA county, 26k in LA city, less than a quarter of the shelter beds needed to house people and not all shelter beds are walk-in. Through SELAH and SLNC, can we work together to prevent people from becoming homeless? Largest demographic increase was among elderly (22%). Don't have right to counsel right now. Wanted three committees to come together to respond jointly to the crisis to help neighbors facing eviction or other vulnerabilities. SELAH has been trying to create a drop-in center. Want to share resources and make a group to help in solving these problems

Discussion on Item 3.A.

Stephanie - wants to compile resources and have a place that is a hub of information, someone can call through something like 211 or 311 and seamlessly connect people to resources they need at a base level. Because NCs are link to city, it would be a good idea to use them as way to connect people to the right information, and have a perfect, seamlessly integrated system

Nina - 75 years old and can't wait for another report to be written. Have a situation that is happening right now. When we met with Mitch O'Farrell, it was apparent that there *are* resources, but they don't work fast enough. Need to prevent more people from becoming homeless. One issue is that seniors may not have access to internet resources.

Stevie - access is very important. Want to automate and avoid making more bureaucracy. One example is there could be a code to get necessities like blankets or hygiene items from an Amazon locker and would not even have to talk to people. Also, ways to structure home ownership that may make home ownership more accessible to more people

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Lynda - Carol has been very helpful in connecting people to resources, including legal clinic at Poinsettia park, which meets every Wednesday night and Saturday afternoon.

Nithya – SELAH runs a hot meal and participates in a food bank at Silver Lake Community Church, and we could get someone from the legal clinic at Poinsettia to come to Silver Lake to provide services in our community

Sarah - problem with section 8 is that her case manager is not helping and she is expected to go find her own housing and talk landlords into allowing her to rent using a voucher, which is difficult. When she was asked to move, had to get a new voucher, but it is only good for 3 months and that's not a long time to find housing.

Stephanie – Sec. 8 is a federal government program and doesn't always mesh with local situation

Nithya – We could use the SLNC newsletter to try and recruit Section 8 voucher accepting landlords

Jane Demian - Krekorian proposed an anti-discrimination ordinance for Section 8. Krekorian and other City Council members needs to hear from people like Sarah. Another thing is rental assistance

- Santa Monica has a very good program but LA doesn't. Also, right to counsel - Koretz proposed this to give tenants access to attorney free of charge for those with limited income. Mayor's budget could cover up to \$2 million. Various other cities have started this already but LA doesn't have it.

Lawyers don't take these cases because they're not guaranteed attorney's fees so they typically have to do pro bono work, not possible for everyone.

Darius – We could reduce costs associated with homelessness if we take care of housing issues up front as they are happening and don't let people fall into homelessness

Jane - Koretz acknowledges that reducing homelessness starts with reducing evictions but people say there's no link. LA Tenants Union has 10 locals throughout the city. They are activists who meet every night of the week in different areas of town. Idea is to keep people housed for as long as possible. 30k unlawful detainers in one year in LA is too many

Carol - appreciates that Stevie is here. Started ethical realtor forum to discuss ways of philosophically dealing with issues and wanting to buy buildings and keep tenants instead of evicting them. The forum disintegrated over misunderstanding of Ellis act. Also, Tenancy in Common had been misused and there is a lot of misinformation about it. The Rental Girl has done TICs too but misused the program.

Stevie - important to prevent big buyers from playing games with legal rules and wanting to prevent corporate landlords from taking over

Darius - right to counsel, anti-discrimination ordinance, and rental assistance are all things that should be advocated

Jane - report being put together on rental assistance.

Stephanie vending - Ellis Act is the same?

Jane - not the same. Intention was to allow property owners to leave the rental housing business, but it's being abused to evict people.

Paul - Ellis Act says you must take property off rental market but for only 2 years and in that time could build something new and re-rent. It is supposed to give original tenants right of return, but that's not often happening because the building takes too long to construct.

Nithya - Is there a joint action we can do? Gap of information and outreach, gap in terms of bringing resources to our neighborhood, opportunity to engage with landlords and to engage with landlords/realtors on ethics involved

Darius - co-advocate for these changes to happen

Angie - PATH may be another group to work with, RSO units that HCID presents on and can help with. PATH has program for evictions. Call Angie if you're having issues.

Jane - if HCID doesn't respond can we call Angie?

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Angie - if HCID doesn't get back fast enough, yes.

Jane – The problem is always that city services won't respond as quickly as needed in cases of eviction.

Darius – a motion can't be made about this now, but we can take a joint set of actions to bring more information and resources and co-advocate on this issue, and we can present a motion at next meeting. Figure out immediately how to make resources available at things like hot meal and senior centers and public libraries.

Nithya - ask pro bono lawyers to come to events in Silver Lake area and find a place in community where they can come.

Stephanie – would be great to be able to have people meet a lawyer in time to deal with evictions

Carol – Could do something at farmers' markets where a knowledgeable rep comes once a month and sets up at a booth.

Nithya – Could have legal resources come to SLCC food bank

Stephanie – could also have them at community events with outreach

Nithya – governing board members should be in touch whenever events happen to make resources available. Put information on SLNC website. Asks who wants to help with making a list of resources?

Volunteers: Carol, Ninotchka, Nithya, Stevie, Matt, Maebe, Samantha

Item 4.A. Discussion and possible action to draft and send to the full board a Community Impact Statement in support of Council File 19-0450, recommending a report on the city's strategy to address homeless encampment clean-ups (a.k.a. "Sweeps"), including "efficacy of existing clean-up efforts, detailing key objectives and providing metrics of success or failure"

(<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=19-0450>)

Discussion on Item 4.A.

Nithya motions to craft a CIS in favor of addressing sweeps.

Nina seconds

Darius – Sweeps affect homeless people very severely, taking away medications and needed documents. There are many ways to address the need for cleanliness with more compassion. Want to make the cleanups a more regular occurrence. Everyone else in this city has a regularly scheduled trash pickup. Make a specific receptacle available, on a regular day, and a routine process to serve everyone's needs. People who make progress in finding housing and then have their papers and documents taken away during sweeps are really hurt by this.

Samantha - this is just a proposal to study the process of sweeps, but Darius's comments would be helpful to include in CIS, in favor of not just studying but taking action on these items

Paul - have there been discussions about more regular services for homeless people?

Darius - yes. The mayor is open to it but there are competing interests. There has been no change in the way that the city is doing sweeps. The current protocols are a result of several lawsuits and they are just complying, not improving.

Maebe – returning to previous discussion, one additional resource for affordable shelter/housing is to do mobile HIV testing. Could go to encampments.

Cathy – gets asked for HIV resources during outreach often, this would be a very good thing

Nina - how many people are for or against sweeps? Nina is on police advisory board and police are frustrated because they want to get rid of sweeps but can't. Police advisory board wants to set up a homeless committee. If anyone is interested, let Nina know. Take an approach that doesn't hurt anyone.

There was a bad situation in the valley and no one wants more like that

Stevie – expresses sympathy for the police who just have to work within the laws

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Jane – Ktown for all group has people guarding encampments during sweeps

Darius – motions for a vote on item 4.A.

Item 4.A. passes unanimously

Item 7. Adjournment

Darius - meeting adjourned at 7:22 and turned over to Housing committee