

**Silver Lake Neighborhood Council Homelessness Committee
May 11, 2021 meeting minutes**

1. WELCOMING REMARKS

A. Call to order at 6:33 by Samantha

B. Self-Introductions of committee members and guests

Samantha: finished term on SLNC, has been co-chair for 1 year, lives in region 1, been involved in homelessness in this area for about 4 years

Imran – current co-chair and at-large rep on SLNC

Neil - stakeholder, writer, filmmaker, activist, spearheading a myth busting campaign

Tracy – resident on Maltman, here because she has concerns about an encampment on her street

Albert – newly appointed secretary, happy to be here, will be in and out

Cathy – longtime resident who has belonged to SELAH since beginning but have been home due to pandemic

Kristen – she/her, newly elected region 1 rep, excited to see everyone and work on the committee

Jessie- Lives on Maltman Ave and there to support letter writing.

Paras – arrived at 6:40. This is the second meeting he’s attended, he wants to show support and be a part of the committee moving forward.

2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

None

3. PRESENTATIONS: (5 minutes)

A. Updates from any City/County representatives in attendance

None

4. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS: (5 minutes)

A. Committee co-chair elections

Imran – nominates Samantha

Samantha – accepts nomination

Kristen – nominates Imran

Samantha – we have two nominations and two seats. Seeing no other nominations, will move to nomination speeches.

Samantha – It has been a great honor to co-chair this committee. She was a board member when she last ran and was a little bit over committed. She has been on SELAH for over three years. It’s a great opportunity, it’s both depressing and eye opening but enjoys the work and has been honored to co-chair and would love to continue.

Imran – He is looking forward to doing his best to keep working with homeless population. Always going to have to keep learning. This is always an evolving issue. It is complicated and takes patience.

Albert – won’t be present to vote but supports Imran and Samantha

Roll Call Vote

Cathy – yes

Samantha – yes

Imran – yes
Kristen – yes
Neil – yes
Paras – yes
Tracy – yes
Albert – stepped away (Present not voting)
Jessie – yes
8-0-1, motion to elect Samantha & Imran passes
Samantha – Congrats to herself and Imran!

5. MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS: (60 minutes)

A. [Morgenthau] *Discussion and possible action on drafting a letter and/or other requests for action to be sent to SLNC board for discussion and approval. Topic is regarding an encampment around Maltman Ave. and Sunset Blvd.*

Samantha motions, Kristen seconds

Samantha – heard about encampment from Jessie and Tracy, then attended neighborhood watch meeting with Mary Rodriguez from CD13, LAPD Officer Aispuro, Gabrielle (assistant DA). She recommended drafting a letter to be approved by SLNC governing board, and if they do support it, they can send it out to appropriate parties. She asks Tracy and Jessie to briefly describe the situation and any action items they would like to see included.

Jessie – Speaking on behalf of Maltman Ave residents, homelessness is part of Maltman. It's never been something we think should not be around, but the current encampment is a group of men selling drugs, and there is prostitution and weapons which is all a new development. They are parked on a sidewalk outside of St. Francis of Assisi school. There is a lot of illegal and criminal activity, and people taking advantage of looser enforcement of homelessness laws.

Tracy – We have lived on Maltman for a long time and we are accustomed to homelessness. Neighbors will bring food and water and offer help. It's the first time she's felt unsafe because there are guns, and one guy keeps a baseball bat with him, lots of people catcalling, and drug use out in the open in front of a school. Neighbors are looking for help to get the criminal activity to stop.

Neil – asks where is it on Maltman? He is a neighbor on Hamilton and would like to check it out.

Tracy – it's just up from Sunset Blvd on Maltman Ave. It's not just a homeless encampment, it's a group of men doing business. At night you might see a truck circling the block.

Jessie – there is an old man there we bring food and water, we have gotten him a caseworker. She urged people to be careful about going over there as she believes one of the residents is affiliated with a gang.

Jessie – One of the LAPD officers who is helping is getting footage, but overall feels people are taking advantage of looser laws from Covid.

Imran – prerogative is more about illegal activity and not moving people. Feels that it might be important to focus on homeless trafficking. Feels it's important to be sensitive to unhoused people who may be victims of drug trade too.

Jessie – Also have seen outreach workers from Urban Alchemy

Tracy - also mentioned to Gabrielle (assistant DA). She feels sad about the prostitution especially.

Samantha – asks about timeline for action and who to write to?

Jessie – will check when LA-HOP request went in. Would write to CD13, Mayor, LAHSA, LAPD

Tracy – frustrated that Mitch O’Farrell (CD13) is not helping.

Neil – has a number for community outreach for LAHSA if needed.

Tracy – LAHSA came by on Monday. Trying to get older man who used to work at United Bread and Pastry housed.

Samantha – summarizes key topics: LA-HOP request, drugs in front of school, weapons (bat that guy carries around for intimidation), human trafficking, abuse of elderly gentleman.

Paras – has concerns about public safety - is this first request to CD13?

Tracy – She has brought this to Mitch before and is thinking about bringing this to press.

Samantha – It sounds like the request for action that would be most important is around drug dealing. It’s complicated because there should compassion for people with drug addiction, but the issue is drugs around kids

Jessie – there are a lot of laws to deal with this and the rest of us shouldn’t suffer. Believes there needs to be systemic change. Mary Rodriguez said she’s sending someone over there. There may be a human trafficking unit.

Tracy – there’s now women there, it’s really sad. We know that it’s on the city’s radar but not sure anything has actually happened.

Samantha – It sounds like there has been some movement, though it takes a while to get LAHSA out. For our letter, maybe narrow it down to key items that are time sensitive.

Tracy – was told that a timeline was an unreasonable question but the sooner the better.

Samantha: Since the LA-HOP request was already made, that’s our only other response. Those can take a really long time, in her experience you’d be lucky if someone comes in the first month after the request.

Tracy will follow up with Jessie.

Samantha – It’s really hard to get any accountability with the LA-HOP requests. Suggests having timeline for HOP request, the issues of potential human trafficking, drug use near school/kids, and can advocate for service for the gentleman who worked at United Bread who became unhoused. If there is victimization of anyone that’s a big issue, and that would be worth bringing up as well. We should identify some key players at city level, that maybe we can write to, certainly CD 13 would be someone worth including in letter, and asks for other recommendations from Tracy and Jessie.

Tracy – Everyone keeps telling us Mitch O’Farrell can help us if he wants to

Samantha – Working with his office has been frustrating to us all. LAHSA might be an organization we can CC though they are a city/county partnership. Since you have been in touch with senior lead officer already it wouldn’t hurt to CC LAPD as well.

Neil – has LAHSA’s number

Jessie – They came by Monday, outreach worker was trying to get help for the man from United Bakery

Samantha – Thanks Neil for that suggestion. I think one of the things that happens right now is that housing is offered but it's temporary and/or far away. She would want to know what services were offered before we can say these people totally refused services, and that is not really an issue relevant for the letter. For the purposes of keeping it concise, I think the stronger case is trafficking, if that's the case it would be more useful to describe, so we have spent 25 minutes on this, what I think I would offer to do is work with Tracy and jessie on composing a letter, if that would be ok with those on the call I would be in support of forwarding that on to the board, the topics would be about concerns about illegal activities, concerns about hop request, concerns about gentleman being abused, does that cover key topics ?

Cathy –Someone mentioned firearms?

Jessie – He was a pretty scary guy, there was an incident on Maltman and there was a manhunt for him, I have not seen him in the encampment since then, he was the one who had the gun, now there is a guy with a bat, who seems to be the guy running the show, he seems to be kind of running things, it's an organized situation down there. I'm not going anywhere near the encampment now

Neil; I did hear that they caught that man.

Tracy: The baseball guy is def there, I almost had a heart attack, he almost always out there with the baseball bat

Paras – regarding concerns about public safety, is this first request to Mitch O'Farrell?

Tracy – have brought this to Mitch and thinks about bringing to press.

Paras – suggests getting Los Feliz Ledger/others involved. Mitch may not want to get involved in other affairs like this.

Jessie – thinks the recent encampment activity is due to people moving from Echo Park.

Samantha: just to narrow discussion, SLNC would not be involved in bringing this to the press. What we can do is recommend action to the city as that's where we have most power. If private citizens want to go to press they could organize that outside of this committee but SLNC would not be part of it.

Neil – recommends being careful who we outreach to. LF Ledger and ABC 7 have made some irresponsible claims about unhoused folks in the past.

Paras – also recommends reaching out carefully. Get school involved or have them sign petition. They could support neighborhood council actions. Due diligence to get people acknowledging the situation. Going to press is the nuclear option.

Tracy – agrees with Paras. Does want to get on Mitch's radar and just wants it to be effective.

Kristen – suggests working with St. Francis of Assisi school would be good.

Tracy – has been in touch. They might sign a letter. They're in a bad position and might be closing. Principal is somewhat casual about it. Wants help for her neighborhood, not to get into a battle with Mitch. Would try to get local business involved and band together to go to press only after they don't get a result.

Albert – thanks folks living on Maltman for letting us know about this. He is surprised that Mitch O'Farrell hasn't stepped up here. CARE+ teams do comprehensive cleanings that are disruptive toward encampments. These have been

very liberally applied in other parts of CD13. While they're meant to be cleaning, they end up being evictions. Offers outreach help through Street Watch.

Samantha – Offered to help facilitate that.

Neil – Offered help as well, and noted that he has to sign off

Samantha – Wants to make sure everyone is heard. Summarized discussion to send to CD13, LAHSA, LAPD Senior Lead Officer, Suggests working with Tracy and Jessie offline to complete the letter and forward that to board for next meeting.

Roll call vote

Samantha – yes

Tracy – yes

Imran – yes

Kristen – yes

Paras – yes

Jessie – yes

Cathy – yes

J - yes

Albert- not present

8-0-1; Motion passes

B. [Danner] *Discussion and possible action regarding a mini homeless count of the Silver Lake area to take place June 10, 2021. Possible topics include timeline, volunteer management, supplies needed, partner organizations, etc.*

Samantha moves, Paras seconds

Samantha – Delayed the original date as May 6 was not possible, we will now do June 10th. SELAH has agreed to be a part of this, we are also in touch with CD4 about getting the Bank of America parking lot for this, but it may not work because BofA will only let us use the parking lot if we have insurance. We could also revisit the Silver Lake Community Church, as Covid restrictions are lessening, it wouldn't need to be as strict as the drive through that the Hollywood count planned.

Albert – He participated in the Hollywood count, which went really well. Albert offered to help or explain his experience or connect us with

Samantha – Yes, that would be helpful. If Albert has some time to help with census tracts that would be great help.

Albert – offered to help with that

Imran – Will SELAH be involved?

Samantha – Yes, they are supporting in many ways including by offering members of their organizing committee as volunteers, it is volunteer-led so not sponsored by SELAH, but they'll help.

Motion to extend meeting by 5 minutes, made by Samantha and seconded by Imran
Voice vote: 5 supporting, 2 opposed, 1 abstaining
Second to extend meeting by 5 minutes

Imran – would people be expected to walk tracts instead of driving?

Samantha – They would still only count from their cars, but in previous counts, they were really concerned about keeping the count to household pods to avoid mixing

different groups. At this stage things are opening up a lot more, it wouldn't change how people participate in the count itself, but event logistics would be more feasible to do at SLCC. We are getting into crunch time, so the goal is to have this come together quickly. Samantha started a working group, so if anyone wants to participate get in touch.

Kristen – offered to be a volunteer.

C. Discussion of Silver Lake community fridge. Fridge is operational; discussion topics to include volunteer organization around maintenance and food donation and other relevant topics as appropriate. Volunteer sign-up form available here: <https://forms.gle/BQ8xQNVATRoFczSg7>

Samantha – If anyone has experience in creating automated calendar reminders to remind people to clean the fridge regularly, we can use that.

Paras – Where is the fridge?

Samantha – It's at United Bread and Pastry. It's a free community fridge that is part of the LA Community fridge network, which operates under the principles of mutual aid. The fridge host has been really good about stocking things, cleaning and making sure everything is looked after. A lot of times farmers from the SL Farmer's Market will donate. It's a great program that is very helpful, but the Silver Lake is a little underutilized compared to other fridges in the area like East Hollywood. This may be due to a lack of knowledge. The goal would be to clean and maintain the fridge regularly and to promote it more heavily so that it lives up to its potential.

Kristen – will volunteer.

D. Discussion regarding creation of a directory of volunteer opportunities with mutual aid and service organizations supporting the unhoused community

Tabled for discussion until later

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS: (5 minutes)

A. Co-chair or Member announcements

None

7. REQUESTS/MOTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: (5 minutes)

None

8. ADJOURNMENT

Samantha adjourns meeting at 8:06pm