

Porter Ranch Community Advisory Committee

Meeting #9

Thursday, February 25, 2016
Cal State University Northridge

DRAFT NOTES

First Posted: 2/26/16 at 11am

Last Updated:

Paula Cracium, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

Members Present:

Paula Cracium
Craig Forray
Rana Ghadban
Tom Johnson
John Lee
Mary Melvin
Matt Pakucko
Issam Najm
Dina Sim
Jane Stanton
Andre Van der Valk

Guest Speakers:

Michelle Riebling, LA City Emergency Management Department
Matt Peterson, LA City Chief Sustainability Officer
BNIM representatives
Gillian Wright, SoCalGas

Michelle Riebling, from the Emergency Management Dept. presented information on the City's activated local assistance center. It was opened last Friday located at the Mason Recreation Center in Chatsworth. The purpose of the center is to have a one-stop location for families, businesses and residents to provide them with resources.

They have a wide range of resources. Having been there for a week, they hear from people is that information being provided is useful. Clients are able to access applications for services and programs currently availability and in the future. The agencies are also able to refer people to other agencies if additional resources are needed. The leads include the Mayor's Office, Department on Disability, DWP, Fire, Public Works and sanitation, EMS, Council District 12, Rec and Parks, County Public health, County mental health, County assessor, County EMS consumer affairs, State Insurance, AQMD, EDD, and a private nonprofit WorkSource center. If we don't have all

services on hand, we can refer residents to the Mayor's website to access SCAQMD lab results, Public Health FAQs, and LAUSD.

They have gone around and talked to clients, who say they are very happy that the center is available and that agency representatives are there and providing information. From here, the center will extend through Saturday 10am-3pm, 10am-8pm during the week.

They have activated a recovery operation center. They are getting messaging out there about services being provided and ask that you get the messaging out there to let your members know the center is there and available to help. The City activates depending on a disaster to serve our residents.

Andre: What are the top 3 items people look for?

A: Air Quality information where we refer them to the experts, billing and what can sanitation and DWP do for them. Other issues are handled on a case-by-case basis.

Matt Peterson, Chief Sustainability Officer and his team shared the Mayor's Sustainable City Plan, which is available online at <http://www.lamayor.org/plan>.

REFER TO 11:20 ON THE VIDEO FOR SLIDES

To ensure our bright future, we must protect what makes our city great: our incredible natural environment, our diverse economy, and the people that make our city thrive. Los Angeles is facing a "new normal" of challenges to our environment, economy, and equity, and we have responded by:

- Developing strategies to address current and future climate change impacts on our neighborhoods, including persistent drought, extreme weather events, and increasing extreme heat days;
- Preparing our city to be more resilient in the face of the "Big One," doing all we can to protect our residents and our economic lifeblood; and
- Delivering back-to-basics results that improve the quality of life for all Angelenos by breaking through barriers, creating new tools, and connecting the dots.

How do we help Porter Ranch return to normal?

50% of our vehicles need to be battery electric and looked for someone to lead. LAPD stepped up an innovated the most by leasing 100 battery electric cars.

BNIM representatives discussed their work on the recovery of communities in New Orleans impacted by hurricane disaster as well as communities in Greensborough Kansas ravaged by a level 5 tornado. This work has continued to North Charleston where a developer wanted to purchase a Naval base. The city asked them to devise a master plan, which would include community involvement. It became important to restore civic and transportation systems and restoring sensitive ecological areas. It was a deep dive on restoring these systems that would be used to enact innovative changes. One of the tools was a way to weigh and balance all of the priorities in a sustainable project, the Princeton Modeling Tool Energy plan. They looked at their campus and understood their energy footprint. It meant being able to access energy data for comparative analysis. They also developed a website for the city of Seattle, which allowed them to look at best practices. It was a device for widespread information sharing.

Paula: A few weeks back, the Mayor met with some of us and we discussed a recovery strategy. In this discussion it was much larger than Porter Ranch. It included Chatsworth and Granada Hills. We talked about one of the multipronged approaches to get our businesses started again and to remove the stain of the Gas Leak. In addition to that, we talked about moneys levied against SCG, which should come back to the community. The Mayor talked about making some really green moves and how our new face can be a positive face environmentally. We felt like this would be a good place for this discussion.

Matt Peterson: The immediate need is recovery and returning people to their homes and returning to normal. The Mayor wrote to the Governor asking for SBA assistance, and the need to influence the CA Air Resources Board methane mitigation plan. The Mayor asked that the mitigation money be spent in the Porter Ranch community. We will put the stake in the ground as to what is possible for Porter Ranch. The money not going to individual homeowners but it can go to neighborhoods, schools and other community assets.

Andre: You met with a small group that represents one point of few. Define the community you consider. And, are you advocating closing the facility?

A: We aren't calling for closing the facility. The Mayor wants to invest in things that will improve home equity and improve the neighborhood.

Paula: This is the beginning of the conversation. While it happened in Porter Ranch, it impacts other neighborhoods. He brought in these other people to help us look at what that would look like. Measures that would help increase the value of home.

Tom: NWNC is concerned about the sustainability of the trees in our parkways including Tampa Parkway. The City has opted to discontinue watering and 30-40 year old trees are dying. It is turning our community from green lush carbon eating to a carbon producing dustbowl. We need the mayor's office and the state to recognize that in order to improve our community we need to support these trees. Green buildings are important but we also need to support the carbon consuming trees.

A: That's a great point. The drought has been a challenge. The Valley has been a leader in water conservation. The challenge is that the urban canopy is in an acute situation making trees vulnerable. In this case we would advocate that the plan include green infrastructure, which would allow better adaptation for medians, including in drip irrigation. Also, trees can be trained to live on less water. If they are used to a lot of water, the roots don't dig deeper. Our intention is to include planting more trees in the plan.

Issam: The City's recycling water has not reached our community, which would provide relief on this community.

Matt Peterson: The reason we are talking about an ultra low emissions community is that this community has an exciting opportunity to lead globally. The Mayor's met (LA and London) and were excited at the opportunity to create this in this community. We would like to see how to transition from natural gas to other sources of energy. The work we do here could be a roadmap for other communities. We also want to lean on national best practices. The benefits are that you will have a more livable neighborhood and residents will save on energy costs.

The presentation continued as the elements of the plan were discussed including major emission sources. It is essential that this plan be community driven. Christine talked about the near term in order to create a proposal that could be included in mitigation funds determined by state agencies. They would like a Community Vision by March 4, then analyze appropriate strategies by March 11, moving on to create compelling proposals by March 31. This would include design programs that implement pathways upon award of funding.

Matt explained that this timeline is in order for CARB to consider it in their process and in other lawsuits and actions that will come up.

Andre: My wife went a shopping center, and there was a methane monitor with an alarm there. Why can't we have this type of thing in the short term? Please consider the schools first and implementing these types of things there.

Matt Peterson: we have talked about air monitoring.

Issam: What I liked is that it will start a positive story about the community. Is the idea here to create a pilot program for a Net Zero community?

Matt Peterson: it is.

Issam: Are there others in the state?

Matt Peterson: It has not been on an intensive scale. Some developers implement these measures but not a neighborhood.

Craig: We have a solar pool and we are looking for rebates.

Matt Peterson: There are some rebates that we are looking to distribute. We will get that information out to you. You will save money even without rebates.

Craig: You keep talking about funding --?

Matt Peterson: We are looking for that type of feedback as we go to the agencies that will be determining the mitigations and fines.

Craig: I am struggling to get practical and you get theoretical.

Matt Peterson: The money is not on the table yet but we are arguing for funds for these types of things. We are theoretical because we don't have the money yet.

Paula: the point of the conversation is so they have data from us and go to the people assigning the funds to understand what is needed. The schools should think about the things that would make sense to ask for. Our input is needed going as they put together a document that makes sense.

Matt Peterson: The individual community needs will vary. Us coming her helps us hear that so we can build a suite of needs and requests.

Craig: What is the communication like during this process?

Matt Peterson: We will give you our email addresses, and we will talk to Paula. We will come back with a more specific plan and have it out the door by the end of March. In order for the plan to reflect your needs, we need the information from you. We will draft an email with questions and a deadline.

Craig: Issam and I represent 17 HOAs. I hadn't thought about these types of needs until an hour ago.

Issam: The elements of the plan help us wrap our heads around it.

Tom: I want you to walk away with the understanding that the Tampa medians are of the utmost importance.

Paula, Andre, Craig all agreed.

Matt Peterson: The mayor is using this process as a budget structure.

Mary: In Porter Ranch our school is the hub of the community. Our facilities are used from 7am until 9pm. Our trees are tiny. More trees planted on our campus, strong trees, would help. Solar would also help. A new building is proposed and adding solar support to that would be great.

Matt Peterson: that is a great opportunity. Putting solar panels on schools allows electricity to be stored for emergencies. Older homes are less efficient. Newer are more efficient. Keep that in mind as you think about your neighborhood needs.

Paula: Is there any federal money?

Matt Peterson: The mayor is asking the secretary of energy for funding to fund an innovation center. We are asking for studies of natural gas and how we can reduce our dependence on that.

Issam: It is extremely windy in the community. Have you looked at harvesting that wind?

Matt Peterson: We are looking at long-term solutions as well.

John Bwarie read from a message that Jarrod DeGonia from Supervisor Antonovich's office provided:

- 1. The County was successful today in receiving a restraining order against the Gas Company in seeking to delay the mandatory return of residents from the 8-day agreement to 30 days, March 18. This time will allow the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the County Public Health Department to continue to finish developing and implement a plan for long term air monitoring as well as individual home sampling of air, soil, and water (for pools).*
- 2. At the time of me typing this report, we do not know the logistics the Gas Company plans to use to implement the judge's ruling or any other action the Gas Company may take.*
- 3. We ask for the patience of the Committee as the County continues to develop the home sampling process. This is a very unique situation and the County has not conducted a mass-testing program like this at individual homes. Our office will continue to update the committee.*

The flow chart from DOGGR has been provided and was sent to committee member's emails. Further questions can be sent to pao@conservation.gov .

Gillian Wright of SoCal Gas answered questions received during the week.

Pending claims: I don't have a precise count. We get more in each day. We have mailed 4603 checks in the last week. Those are primarily meal reimbursements. Our next big batch will be for mileage. Our process did not anticipate the number of times people would have moved. Most have moved at least once. One moved 31 times. We are looking for an equitable way to calculate. We found that people have moved many times with varying distances and that has created some complexity in calculating.

Paula: Are housing payments and other reimbursements being processed on an ongoing basis?

Gillian: I have some separate teams. Meals and mileage are one team, housing is another team. We have found hotels are straightforward while leases are all over the map. We are pushing hard to get the answers for the additional information we need from residents.

Paula: Are you able to stick to the two-week turnaround time?

Gillian: If submissions are complete we are, if we need additional information it can take longer.

Issam: We talked about reimbursing for the commute for checking on homes once a day.

Gillian: We are not in a position to consider that right now. We are processing items we were committed to and we aren't able to look at extras right now.

Issam: Are hotels providing letters notifying residents of checkout requirements?

Gillian: Yes. The hotels have been delivering those. We did not put packets under the doors for today's decision, however.

There was a court decision to extend till March 18. It is important to understand that these are new reservations. The order came after check out time. For residents who want to stay, they will have to get a new reservation. If there is not room in that hotel, they can find another hotel. We don't know yet how many want to stay. We do not have the capacity to place them all in the way we did when we first started relocating residents. The best way is to place a reservation themselves. We have a form to verify eligibility for reimbursement. We will be utilizing the housing companies but they have reduced their staffing. To the extent that it is possible, we will transfer to those companies.

Issam: If the hotel is receiving a homeowner who just checked out wanting to check back in. If there is availability, what is the process?

Gillian: resident needs to notify the hotel and get a new reservation and probably provide a credit card. The housing company will then take on the reservation. We just now approved the communication based on the order received this afternoon.

Paula: How many were in hotels?

Gillian: 3400 families were in hotels as of today. There can be lags in data that may not have been reported yet.

Andre: When people say they haven't been paid, can you go back and see, back to October, if there are any missing payments and will they be getting big checks?

Gillian: Some have said there have been delays. The checks that went out yesterday included anything that was pending.

Andre: In those extreme cases, can they walk into the branch and get a check?

Gillian: No but we are increasing our number of representatives to process. They can't do it on the spot but we are improving their ability to quickly process. In many cases the cases coming into the storefronts for assistance are very complex cases.

Andre: I feel like as soon as we end the negative stories, the positive stories will begin.

Gillian: We are trying to clear the backlog. Your point is important. The reimbursement is not to the penny. We ask that staff get it to a reasonable amount and get it out. If we have to adjust in the final accounting, we will do that. The performance hasn't been what is wanted and we keep trying to make it better.

Matt: The order came out today. Are you planning to appeal tomorrow?

Gillian: I don't know the answer to that.

Matt: Now that it is going to March 18 are reimbursements continuing?

Gillian: The things that go along with hotel stays are continuing.

Matt: SCG didn't have a plan B in case you didn't win? You didn't notify the relocation companies today?

Gillian: The companies on the east coast had closed for the day. Even with what happened today, even with a plan. What we are doing today is the plan B. We have to create the entire process in a day.

Craig: It was the county that went in today? Did you know yesterday that they were going to court?

Gillian: We knew yesterday that they were going into court today.

Paula: Let's remember that we need to be respectful as we are looking for information.

Craig: DOGGR has issued their schematic for the assessment. Is SCG resisting the requirements?

Gillian: No. We are complying.

Tom: The health study from AQMD, do you have a report on that?

Gillian: I don't have an update on that. AQMD is running the process and we get to provide input on their selection.

John Bwarie: I will reach out to AQMD.

Tom: In regard to the safety inspection of the wells, there were 17 wells similar to this well? Are they in operation?

Gillian. Those wells are filled with fluid and not in operation. We are proactively inspecting and prioritizing by which wells are most important to have integrity and which are likely the most efficient wells. So, those wells will likely not be inspected for a while. We also want to inform the community that there will be an increase of truck traffic bringing work-over rigs to the site.

Tom: Has relief well #2 been abandoned?

Gillian: Yes.

Craig: Are there any new wells being drilled?

Gillian: No.

Paula: When they plug the wells, is there a release of gas from opening up to put in the plug? We are getting ongoing complaints of smelling gas.

Gillian: It is possible that when we do a fluid kill that there could be a small release of gas.

Paula: Could you find out what the levels of release may be during testing? We continue to get complaints. They don't last long but we get complaints.

Gillian: If the smell is stronger inside than outside, contact a technician.

Gillian: There are 18 wells similar to SS25. We put them out of service as a precaution.

Craig: Is it because they are older?

Gillian: They are of similar construction and vintage. They were built around 1953 and the others are from 1972.

Andre: When was the last report of smell?

Paula: It has been in the last couple of days.

Andre: Is it showing up on the readings?

Paula: The meter is jumping up. It is still in levels where people are not at risk. I asked CARB and they said they are elevated but not a risk.

Andre: Has benzene gone up?

Paula: It has been undetected.

Matt: There have been some spikes.

Paula: It is the perimeter monitor in the Renaissance. I have only heard one complaint in the last two days.

Andre: There are trash pick-ups on Tuesday. Ironically, that is when levels are elevated.

Matt: This is on the Facebook chatter but there are a lot of people smelling gas at various times.

Gillian: Again, if it is strong then call us so we can check to see if there is an actual leak. It is important that we check that there isn't another cause of the odor that needs to be addressed.

Rana: The checks that you said people should receive on Saturday, how far does that go back?

Gillian: As far as we go back, up to February 19th. These are for meals only. The meal reimbursement is calculated on the number of people in the household and the number of days. If the check doesn't match up or didn't receive a check, let us know.

Rana: Hotels, if they have availability, you are saying they are supposed to use their own credit card tonight? Will the housing company be able to take it over tomorrow?

Gillian: I can't guarantee that they will be able to handle it yet. The largest peak we ever experienced was 300 applications at one time. We don't know the number of people will go back to the hotels but, if it is all 3400, it will be a larger number than our peak.

There are 19 housing companies. It could happen that residents simply want to extend what they have. Some may want to change locations. If we need to handle all 3000 families it could take us 10 days.

Matt Packuko: As far as people being compensated for staying with friends and family, do people qualify for this?

Gillian: We will need to verify that they are staying with friends and family and they will be eligible. Each person knows if they are eligible.

Paula: Do they call the housing company?

Gillian: It is a web-based form on our website. Compensation is not open to anybody to newly relocate. We need to confirm that it was a person who was actually relocated. I expect we can get emails out in the next day.

Issam: Considering the order the Gas Company is under now, can you see any scenario where they go back to the hotel and the Gas Company reject?

Gillian: If they go back to the same place and same number of rooms, they won't be denied.

Issam: what about people who were out of town for a few days.

Gillian: In the order, it clearly applies to people who were relocated. We don't know if it applies to people who interrupted their relocation. What is a reasonable way for us to consider how much time someone is home to consider them relocated?

Issam: Is it something that we need to ask the court on?

Gillian: I'd like to hear your opinion.

Issam: When the leak was plugged, we got contacts on the timing. People started to manage their situation. They checked out because they had to. You are penalizing people who checked out before today. The extension order is based on an underlying assumption that people need more time to get back to their homes. The idea is to extend this to residents who were relocated and returned because they were told to.

Gillian: I truly am asking what is the date is a reasonable judgment? We truly have to make a decision.

Issam: for those who came back before you announced the closure of the well made it for other reasons. For those who returned after the announcement, they should be considered.

Gillian: Thank you. That is helpful.

Matt: For people in leases, what would reimbursement be?

Gillian: They can get reimbursed for the daily commute. All of the agencies have come back saying that it is safe. There has been no change in that information.

Paula: Are you waiting for further clarification from anyone? There are a lot of questions on the how's and why's and what's.

Gillian: The short number of hours between the order and getting the housing companies back on line, we are trying to focus on first things first and getting those things going. We may just navigate as we go. Do the clear things first and move to the ambiguous.

Paula: When can you get us a timeline? Within the next 12 hours?

Gillian: The question will have to be answered in the next few days.

Paula: When will you make that decision?

Gillian: I can tell you we will honor those who checked out today. We are sending out an email with information and the form as well as an outbound dial. If they are not able to go back tonight, they have three days to get back into it. We will push to get answers and clarity. Primarily, how long can you have been home and still be eligible?

Rana: Any update on the business claims?

Gillian: I don't have status on any of the forms but we are processing those claims. That will require more information from applicants.

Rana: That is fine. We ask businesses to keep documentation.

Gillian: We have brought in outside resources to be able to process in the next week to gather documentation and information.

Rana: Who will be the point of contact?

Gillian: It will be the same claims contact and I will notify you if that changes.

Issam: Is there minimum information so business can get prepared?

Rana: Their attorney wouldn't provide that information. The workshop was canceled.

Paula: Specifically speaking to the seven days, there was a weekend in there.

Gillian: If they moved during the weekend because it's easier to move during the weekend, according to our numbers, we didn't see many move during the weekend.

Paula: If you can address any outgassing we'd like that information.

Gillian: there are other odors that are mistaken for mercaptan. But we will certainly make sure we verify if it is mercaptan.

Issam: Circle back with AQMD to assure those monitors don't get dismantled.

Gillian: They are part of the order, and long-term health study and will be ongoing.

John Bwarie brought up the future structure of the committee. After discussing changing the frequency and location of meetings, it was determined that the committee would continue meeting weekly until March 18th where frequency will move to once a month, the first Thursday of each month at a location to be determined, possibly a local school. Meetings will continue as closed meetings and be videotaped. There was also discussion of a committee name change and how this committee interacts in the future.

Paula closed the meeting with an announcement SCG did file this afternoon, an appeal. We will continue on this and that may have bearing on it.

Adjourned at 8:49PM