

Racquet Club Estates Neighborhood Organization

Board of Advisors Monthly Meeting

March 13, 2010

Minutes

Reported by Ron Oliver

BOA member Rick Vila called the monthly meeting of the RCENO Board of Advisors to order at 10:00 am on an extraordinarily warm and sunny March 13, 2010.

The meeting was held at Your Reporter's cunning Alexander home at 801 E. Francis Drive in glamorous Palm Springs, and was attended by BOA members Ney Fonseca, Dean NiCastro, Lauren Scarbro, Ray Trim, Rick Vila, Scott Kennedy, Ron Oliver and Joseph May.

Many other RCENO members were in attendance as well, and while we appreciate their enthusiasm we are simply too lazy to list them all. To make up for this grievous omission, we do hope they enjoyed the refreshments provided as well as the delicious muffins and banana loaf baked fresh by Your Reporter's Long-Suffering Boyfriend and RCENO member Eric Bowes (and we hope The Reader will forgive this self-indulgent sidebar, but it keeps Your Reporter out of the proverbial Dog House).

Our special guests at this meeting were two members of the Palm Springs Police Department, Officer Mark Stafford and Officer Mike Heron, both smartly dressed in full uniform.

Ney Fonseca, due to a prior commitment, gave his Palm Springs Neighborhood Involvement Committee report at the beginning of the meeting. He presenting the following points:

- Suggested sponsoring the upcoming PSNIC picnic.
- Proposed putting out a first class mailing announcing the RCENO's upcoming General Meeting.
- Discussed various upcoming events including the Police vs. Palm Springs High School Faculty Basketball game, the Sunmor Estates Home Tour;
- Urged members to fill out the soon-to-arrive Census forms (this was reiterated by Officer Stafford, who suggested that an accurate appraisal of the population of Palm Springs could result in more Federal Funding and help with the policing of the City)
- The City budget deficit is quite substantial and could soon result in cuts to such essential services as Police and Fire Department.

Ney also displayed a Key Fob designed by the Indian Canyon Neighborhood Organization, used as a fund raising device and to encourage shopping at downtown businesses; this met with interest from the BOA and guests, although some suggested that given the proclivities of some of our neighborhood, perhaps a bottle opener would be more useful.

It was suggested that we pursue something similar, tabled until the next meeting.

Ney departed on his quest to instruct local Tots in the art of Terpsichore and the meeting continued.

Dean NiCastro gave the Treasurer's Report; the RCENO account currently holds \$14,150.28; this does not include several late Paypal payments nor a smattering of checks and

cash taken at “the gate” at the recent Home Tour. This will swell said coffers to the tune of roughly \$17,000.00.

The BOA are delighted, to say the least.

Our special guest, PSPD Officer Mark Stafford discussed several very interesting topics. Highlights included:

- The newly implemented “Crimeview” program, accessible on the front page of the PSPD.COM website, allowing the user to see “real time” data on crime in the community.
- The next “Citizens Police Academy” is coming up on May 6, 2010; a 13 week course which BOA member Ray Trim highly encourages those interested in community law enforcement to take; the applications are available on the PSPD.COM website.
- The direct telephone line (not 911) to dispatch the PSPD to a non-emergency situation is 760-327-1441. Officer Stafford encouraged its use.

Officer Stafford also mentioned that if anyone was unhappy with his performance, they were encouraged to call HIS boss, John Booth at 760-327-1441.

(Your Reporter expressed surprise that the man who had shot President Abraham Lincoln was currently running the local police department; he was reminded that that was John WILKES Booth, and they are two different people. The THINGS you learn at the RCENO meetings!)

The floor was opened up for questions.

Rick Vila asked about forming a Neighborhood Watch; it was suggested that we create one ourselves, with the help of

Leslie Cyphers at City Hall. It was suggested that we invite Ms. Cyphers to our next meeting to discuss same.

Member Donna Chabon told a rather labyrinthine tale of an Inebriate she'd spotted during one of her evening surveillance missions; she had then called the PSPD and had, she said, a marvelous experience with a very thoughtful and courteous Dispatcher. Officer Heron reported that said souse had been arrested thanks to her phone call. Well done, Donna!

(This Reporter suggested that the Iraq and Afghanistan situations wouldn't last another three weeks if Ms. Chabon were sent over to intervene.)

Officers Stafford and Heron both reported that the crime rate in Palm Springs has gone down over the past several years, with the Racquet Club Estates being one of the safer and quieter neighborhoods. However, they still suggested some safety tips:

-While Home Burglar Alarms are a very good idea, another very effective solution is a motion sensor light system. Scott Kennedy mentioned that one of the drawbacks of our sometimes windy spring time weather is the constant triggering of motion sensors; it was suggested that an on/off switch be installed to keep that vaguely "Stalag 17" ambiance problem to a minimum.

- Mail theft continues to be a problem, and having a LOCKED mailbox is a quick and effective solution.

Finally, it was also suggested that a phone call to Richard Jenkins at City Hall could begin the process of installing "traffic calming" speed bumps on neighborhood streets, to

promote the notion that even the straighter RCE avenues are not drag strips.

Finally, it was revealed that a recent police pursuit in the neighborhood - the tail end of a car chase which started in Cathedral City and involved a convicted felon and what used to be known in some circles as his "moll" - which resulted in a crash at the corner of Via Miraleste and Racquet Club, could have ended in much more significant damage and violence if not for the brave work of one of our guests, Officer Mike Heron.

Bravo, Officer Mike.

Rick thanked the Officers, and they left, but not before snapping up a couple more muffins on the way out the door (This Reporter sees ALL...), and the meeting continued.

The minutes of both the January and February 2010 meetings were approved unanimously; Your Reporter felt quite validated, thank you.

A debriefing of the Home Tour followed.

Nat Gozzano thanked all who participated. Scott Kennedy was applauded for his fine work providing food and beverages at the Reception after the Tour; he graciously asked for a little more help next year, and volunteers stepped forth instantly. Such a fine group of people we have in the RCE.

Nat suggested arranging a Home Tour for the Docents to attend, as they are generally unable to see the other homes.

It was also suggested that a Guest Book be placed in either each home or at The Reception to keep our mailing list updated and to promote the following year's tour.

Lauren, Scott and Donna will investigate the possibility of having RCENO t-shirts available for sale at the next RCENO event; they will report back on this at the April meeting.

Rick asked for new business to be discussed.

Scott Kennedy discussed a problem he has been having getting Nadine at the PS Code Enforcement office to respond to his requests for some action on both the problem he has been having with the Rivera Resort and Spa's rear parking lot lights (which apparently beam directly into his backyard and ruin both his ambiance and his view of the night time sky) as well as a neighboring property suffering from serious neglect.

RCENO Member Ken Lyon suggested that Nadine is trying to balance several complaints and problems with the Riviera, and perhaps inviting her to the next BOA meeting would help clear the air. Scott Kennedy said he would handle the invitation himself.

Rick then discussed the Blade Signs. (Your Reporter feels certain that he shall be hearing about the blade signs until the day he shuffles off this mortal coil...)

He planned to survey the neighborhood and make sure all the signs are up. Two are missing – one at Starr and Sims, the other at Miraleste and Escuela – as well as another knocked over at the corner of Miraleste and Racquet Club, the site of the aforementioned car chase handled in part by our own Officer Mike Heron.

As several members wish to purchase Blade Signs, and it was suggested that having one to raffle off at our next event might be a good fundraising idea, Dean NiCastro put forth a motion to buy 10 extra signs. Motion passed unanimously.

Rick suggested creating a schedule of meetings and locations in advance, this the result of Your Reporter's utter failure to consult his calendar until 24 hours before this meeting. The schedule created is as follows:

- April 10th, 2010; Lauren Scarbro's house (address to come)
- May 8th, 2010; Annual General Meeting to be held at The Fire House, corner of Via Miraleste and Racquet Club (assuming no further car chases in the area.)
- June 12th, 2010; Ray Trim's house (address to come)
- July – no meeting in July as it is just too darned hot.
- August 14th, 2010; Joseph May's house (address to come)
- September 11th, 2010; Rick Vila's house (address to come)

Rick opened a discussion of how to spend the money the RCENO has accumulated since the last home tour, and what to do about Dues renewal for membership? Given the hour of the day, Ray Trim put forth a motion to table the discussion until the April meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Your Reporter put forth a motion to sponsor the PSNIC picnic at the maximum Platinum level of \$250.00 Motion passed unanimously.

Rick motioned to open an interest bearing account for the RCENO. Motion passed unanimously.

Donna Chabon suggested including the safety tips from PSPD and mention a “Dues Table” in the email announcing the next meeting.

Your Reporter plans to start a Blog for the RCENO; information to follow.

Rick mentioned that the Development Company responsible for the controversial 3132 N. Indian Canyon project mentioned in previous minutes would like to attend the next RCENO meeting and present their case. They understand there will be a Q and A session after their presentation. (Your Reporter feels this will be quite interesting and cannot wait to type THIS meeting up...)

Your Reporter pledged to do an email “blast” two weeks before the next meeting, and another one-week prior. This is more of a “mea culpa” than a pledge, but there you go.

Scott Kennedy suddenly blurted out “coyotes, coyotes, coyotes” which caused us all to look around until we realized he was just reminding us all that there are still coyotes roaming in the neighborhood and no amount of ACME brand anvils seems to be stopping them.

Your Reporter urges caution when leaving cats, dogs or small children in the yard at night.

Finally, at the end of what it must feel like to sit through James Cameron’s “AVATAR” without a pair of 3D glasses, Rick Vila motioned to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously – and with relief.

