

Racquet Club Estates Neighborhood Organization

General Meeting Minutes - May 22, 2010.

Your Reporter: Ron Oliver

BOA member Rick Vila called the semi-annual General Meeting to order at 10:10. It was held at the historic VISTA DEL MONTE elementary school on Via Miraleste. Your Reporter was delighted by a large turnout featuring many new faces, some of which were attached to equally new bodies.

Several of the classic Alexander homes in our neighborhood have recently been purchased and a casual stroll along our streets would indicate that the remodeling and restoring of these beautiful pieces of mid-century architecture is in full swing. We enthusiastically welcome our new neighbors, as well as the long-time residents who have just discovered our organization and look forward to seeing them at the many exciting events we have planned for the future!

Now then, on with the meeting.

Board of Advisors member RICK VILA welcomed the assembled, and thanked BOA member SCOTT KENNEDY for, once again, organizing the delicious food and beverages. This Reporter, for one, is grateful for Scott's continued contribution to the RCENO; the spicy cheese/sausage canapés, while not a part of our regular "vegetarian" diet plan, were beyond delicious and RCENO Canine Member Crawford T. Manchester enjoyed the leftovers for several days. (He says "thank you, Uncle Scott!")

Rick then introduced the Board of Advisors to the audience; in attendance were SCOTT KENNEDY, NAT GOZZANO,

LAUREN SCARBRO, DEAN NICASTRO, JOSEPH MAY,
RICK VILA, RAY TRIM and your Reporter.

Lauren made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 2010 RCENO meeting; passed unanimously.

Rick presented a list of proposed changes to the RCENO Bylaws. These included:

- 1) A staggered term for Board members to create continuity.
- 2) The title of General Coordinator changed to President for clarity.
- 3) Number of BOA members changed – minimum of 9, maximum of 11.

Rick moved for a motion to approve the Bylaw Changes. Your Reporter motioned to approve same and the motion passed unanimously.

However, in a SHOCKING turn of events, founding BOA member and renowned artist NAT GOZZANO offered his resignation to the Board. While Nat wished to continue to participate, he expressed a desire to allow for fresh blood, as it were, on the Board.

(His resignation did not, as Your Reporter at first suspected, have anything whatsoever to do with a recent string of bank robberies throughout the Inland Empire.)

Needless to say we were collectively aghast Nat's artistic vision for the neighborhood has been a driving force in the RCENO, but his gracious "stepping aside" is certainly in keeping with his natural humility – not something with which Your Reporter has been afflicted – and we look forward to his ongoing contribution to our Organization.

This allowed for a maximum of FOUR new board members. Immediately, BARBARA MACCARILLO, DONNA CHABAN, BOB MERLISS and ROBERT PERRY stepped up to the podium and presented themselves as potential board members. After a few brief remarks from each regarding their interests and qualifications, ALL FOUR were voted in and took their place on the Board of Advisors.

Your Reporter and the rest of the BOA welcome them with open arms and hope they know what they're getting themselves into!

BOA treasurer Dean NiCastro reported the current RCENO bank balance as of May 22, 2010 was \$15,507.67 (FIFTEEN THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS AND SIXTY SEVEN CENTS). This represented deposits from our very successful RCENO Home Tour, which saw a 58% increase in revenue over the previous year.

Rick applauded Dean's tireless efforts in taking care of the business side of the RCENO and our unsung hero of a Treasurer received a warm round of applause for his efforts.

Next up, Rick discussed our much-admired Blade Signs dotted throughout the neighborhood and how we are seeing, little by little, a significant improvement in our neighborhood, both aesthetically and in its character. He then read excerpts from an unsolicited "fan letter" written by someone who just happened to take a walk through our RCE streets and was impressed by what she saw.

We all glowed for a few moments, feeling quite proud of what we'd managed to accomplish so far, but knowing we have

much yet to do. Our work, like that of Batman or perhaps Alice, the maid from The Brady Bunch, is never done....

This led us to BOA members Joseph May and (new BOA member) Robert Perry, who presented their findings on the idea, discussed at a previous meeting, of giving some financial aid in the form of a “scholarship” to Vista Del Monte Elementary School. While the exact needs of the school will be discussed at the next meeting, VDM Principal JOE SCUDDER was introduced to the assembly and gave a brief overview of how the money may be used.

Principal Scudder had very graciously donated the school’s gym for the RCENO’s use on this day, and received a rousing round of applause not only for this kindness but, your Reporter suspects, also for his bravery in trying to wrangle several hundred “little darlings” on a daily basis. Perhaps beyond financial aid, we should also be giving him a Purple Heart.

Rick Vila then presented the PSNIC (Palm Springs Neighborhood Involvement Committee) report.

As is well known, Palm Springs is currently under a budgetary Sword of Damocles, with a 7 million dollar deficit. Services are being impacted across the board, including the Library hours being cut and, as per Lt. Booth of the Palm Springs Police Department (in attendance), some city emergency services are noticeably slower in response time.

But it’s not ALL bad news –

- 1) The Gateway Park Project at Vista Chino and Gene Autry Drive, part of the federal government’s “shovel ready” financial assistance initiative is coming along very well, and looks to be a wonderful addition to the city;

- 2) The Palm Springs Tram is offering a \$60.00 summer pass, for unlimited use all season;
- 3) The PSNIC Picnic was a success, with 550 people in attendance.
- 4) The Cathedral City Ice Rink will be open all summer; Your Reporter hopes you aspiring Sonja Henies out there enjoy the facility, but as far as he's concerned, ice belongs in a cocktail glass, not underfoot.

The discussion moved on to the much debated "3132" project, the proposed moderate-income housing development at Indian Canyon and San Rafael. While the project has been denied once again by City Council, there is yet another appeal by the Developers which will be heard in the near future.

Rick restated the board's neutral position on this project; while most members have strong opinions about the situation, Rick and the majority of the BOA feel that in order to take a stand one way or the other would require polling the 550 homes in the RCE. BOA member Scott Kennedy suggested, however, that the Board needed to get more involved in some way.

Several people in the assembly spoke on the matter, including Wexler homeowners and residents, and newly minted BOA member Donna Chaban mentioned that the City Council meeting where the 3132 project was denied most recently would be broadcast on local cable television.

The discussion moved on to Code Enforcement in the city. Rick and Scott Kennedy outlined the mechanics of Code Enforcement and discussed a meeting they had with two Code Officers: the phone number to anonymously report code violations is – 760-778-8434.

Further information at the city's website – www.palmsprings-ca.gov.

After this rather intense discussion, we moved on to lighter fare:

- a suggestion for the creation of a “vendor list” to help new residents and those looking to remodel or renovate their homes find reliable service;
- new BOA member Barbara Maccarillo suggested that when one sees a lone shopping cart abandoned in the neighborhood, calling the store of origin often gets a very fast response;
- RCE resident Linda Schuyler told a lovely story about helping a neighbor, which led to several other heart-warming anecdotes from others in the room – in your Reporter's humble opinion, this is what being a “neighbor” is really all about.

We then moved on to future events, including the Annual Home Tour, slated as usual for Palm Springs Modernism Week.

Nat asked for those with Alexander or other mid-century houses in our neighborhood to consider opening their homes for the tour. Rick put forth a motion to contact the Modernism Committee and become an “official” part of their schedule for the 2011 calendar. Motion passed.

Saturday, October 9th, 2010 has been chosen as the date for the annual RCE Picnic, to be held in Victoria Park. Details will follow, but Lauren, Joseph and new BOA member Bob Merliss have agreed to form a sub-committee to organize the event.

Rick advised that as we have a substantial balance in our RCENO bank account, perhaps it was time to review our options for its use. These include: scholarship fund for homes that need

help; a monument sign celebrating the history of the RCE neighborhood; a dog run in Victoria Park; a community bulletin board to be placed on the Victoria Park Public Rest Rooms building. All fine ideas, and worthy of further consideration at future meetings.

RCENO member Kurt Beabes suggested a “Yard of the Month Club”, to photograph and celebrate monthly one of our local resident’s landscape efforts; a marvelous idea, in your Reporter’s opinion.

Barbara Maccarillo presented her wish to do a “Docent Tour” of a few neighborhood homes via the Palm Springs Art Museum. She assured us this wouldn’t compete with the Annual Home Tour, but rather be a smaller, museum-based event.

Rick mentioned that he’d like to see a neighborhood Emergency Response Plan, in case of natural or man-made disasters; this will certainly be revisited in the near future, we are sure.

RCENO Member Ken Lyon encouraged the attendees to get involved and participate in the RCENO activities. This was met with much head nodding and agreement.

VDM School Principal Joseph Scudder once again thanked the RCENO and all for coming, and welcomed us to use the school gym for meetings in the future. A marvelous gesture on his part, and much-appreciated.

Finally, Rick thanked all the attendees and BOA members and moved to adjourn. Lauren seconded and it was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 12:12 pm.

However it should be noted that most in attendance stuck around for quite some time to partake of the most excellent treats provided by Scott Kennedy and enjoy a bit of socializing. There was much intelligent conversation and lovely meetings of friends, old and new, which speaks volumes for the fine group of people we are proud to call our neighbors.