



Venice Neighborhood Council

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294 / www.VeniceNC.org Email:
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Joint Meeting of Ocean Front Walk(OFW) and VNC Board Meeting Minutes

Time: May 4, 2021 5:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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OCEAN FRONT WALK MEETINGS: The OFW holds its regular meetings on the third Monday of the month and may also call any additional required special meetings in accordance with its Bylaws and the Brown Act. All are welcome to attend.

TRANSLATION Services: Si requiere servicios de traducción, favor de notificar a la oficina 3 días de trabajo (72 horas) antes del evento. Si necesita asistencia con esta notificación, por favor llame a nuestra oficina 213.978.1551.
PUBLIC ACCESS OF RECORDS: See last page.

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1. Call to Order **5:05 PM**
2. Roll call
3. Approve Agenda as presented or amended
4. Approve minutes of last meeting **Items 3 & 4, JR/BA second, 7-0-0**
5. OFWC members to declare any conflicts of interest or ex parte communications relating to items on this meeting's agenda

6. Chair Report

7. General Public Comment on non-agendized items related to Venice Neighborhood Council Ocean Front Walk Committee

8. Presentation by Lawrence Reyes from LA County Mental Health Services (15minutes)

9. MOTION: Support for the Venice Boardwalk Action Committee's Oceanfront Walk Proposal (as written)

We are writing on behalf of a coalition of long-time Venetians representing multiple established community groups. Our objective is to make meaningful, compassionate progress along Venice's Ocean Front Walk and its historic walk streets.

By any objective measure, we are now in the midst of an undeniable health and safety emergency here in Venice. Violent crimes are an almost daily occurrence now, especially near our beach. According to LAPD, from 2019 to 2020, in area 14A11, which includes our boardwalk, robberies are up 46%, aggravated assaults are up 43% and homicides have gone up 100%.

Homelessness has skyrocketed, resulting in an ongoing humanitarian crisis. LAHSA documented a 57% increase in unsheltered Venice residents from 2019 to 2020, with current estimates now well over 2,000 people.

The current magnitude and rapid growth of these issues have clearly overwhelmed city officials, turning our once vibrant home into a very divided, angry, scared, desperate neighborhood, while also doing immeasurable damage to this community and entirely changing the character of the Venice boardwalk. Our unhoused neighbors are left in an especially dangerous place, as they are both victimized by the beach's violent criminal element and, sadly, blamed by many in the community who feel frightened, under siege, and ignored.

We understand that addressing homelessness is a tremendously complex challenge that needs to be handled with a combination of compassion, realism, flexibility, and efficiency, but our concern is that we see very little in terms of a plan or even any general strategic vision for addressing the current situation, even as COVID restrictions begin to lift.

Collectively, as Venice organizations and individuals, we'd like to suggest a meaningful first step.

With over 10 million visitors per year, our neighborhood is one of the most visited places in the city of Los Angeles, and the great majority of those people come here to visit the beach and the boardwalk.

Our beach is one of LA's undisputed treasures. People come here from all walks of life to enjoy a stroll in the sand, check out performers on the boardwalk, swim, bike, surf, exercise, picnic with friends, or just simply sit and watch a beautiful sunset. For many, this is now no longer an option, as people simply do not feel safe bringing their families here. Our once bustling boardwalk has become a dangerous and unpredictably lawless environment. Businesses along our boardwalk, already barely hanging on through a devastating global pandemic, are also dealing with the painful fact that many people are simply now choosing to avoid the beach.

Based on biweekly counts by community volunteers, the number of unhoused neighbors on Ocean Front Walk hovers at about 250 people.

We are asking that shelter and housing for these 250 people become a top priority for the City and County.

We are asking that you identify and streamline access and funding for 250 available beds through any and all available vouchers, Project Roomkey, and any other methods currently at your disposal, including safe parking, safe sleeping, and safe camping throughout Los Angeles, as the Venice infrastructure is clearly overwhelmed by the current situation.

We are asking for shelter and/or housing resources in all parts of the LA so that our community of 3 square miles is not overwhelmed with more than it can support. To draw a comparison, LAHSA estimates Los Angeles, with a population of 12.5 million, has approximately 70,000 unhoused people or 0.6% of the population. At the same time, this percentage is about 5% in Venice, clearly indicating that our community is disproportionately affected by the crisis.

We are asking that you very strongly support and fund compassionate outreach through LAHSA, St. Joseph's, and, if deemed necessary, additional third party outreach.

We are asking that once this is accomplished, Ocean Front Walk and its environs be kept clear and in compliance with the State Coastal Act Law, Section 30210 and LAMC, Section 63.44.

We are NOT asking to simply enforce the law and remove people from the beach and the boardwalk. We are asking that a relatively small amount of compassionate, humane, mutually beneficial progress be made by helping people living on Ocean Front Walk move into safe shelter and/or housing.

Housing 250 people from the boardwalk would represent roughly **12% of the total unhoused population in Venice**, and we believe this is a fair, equitable request for several very important reasons.

- It would reduce the overly heavy responsibility our community now carries.
- It would reopen our boardwalk space to everyone by eliminating the concentrated use that results in blocked access and unsafe conditions.

- *It would allow residents, children, seniors, and families to once again enjoy recreational activities that are essential to physical and mental health.*

In summation, we are simply asking that our unhoused neighbors at the beach be given top priority for any available shelter and/or housing throughout Los Angeles to restore safety, livability and public recreational opportunities. This relatively small, reasonable step would go a very long way towards healing a neighborhood that's currently being pushed to its breaking point.

This community needs your help.

CC: L.A. County Supervisors, Honorable Judge Carter, L.A. County Beaches and Harbors, L.A. City Recreation and Parks, LAHSA, St. Joseph Center, Mayor Eric Garcetti, City Attorney Mike Feuer, City Controller Ron Galperin, City Councilmembers, Senator Ben Allen, Congressman Ted Lieu, the Coastal Commission.

The Venice Neighborhood Council strongly supports the Venice Boardwalk Action Committee's Oceanfront Walk Proposal and recommends its timely implementation with letters sent to all of the original proposal's recipients.
BA/JR second Motion passes 6-1-0, LP no

10. MOTION: Immediate Bollard installation

Whereas automobiles routinely drive on OFW, both accidentally and purposefully, including one recently estimated at 70mph, the Venice Neighborhood Council recommends timely OFW bollard installation with letters sent to Mayor Garcetti and Councilmember Bonin urging the expedition of this process.

JR/BA second. Motion passes 7-0-0

11. MOTION: Restoration of Vendor/Performer spaces

Whereas performers and local vendors have been an enormously important part of our iconic boardwalk for decades,

the Venice Neighborhood Council recommends that these spaces be cleared, cleaned and repainted if necessary with full usage returned to our vendors and performers. Letters will be sent to Mayor Garcetti and Councilmember Bonin urging the expedition of this process.

JR/BA second. Motion passes 7-0-0

12. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE MOTION: The rapid recent preponderance of electric vehicles, scooters, etc, being rented from boardwalk vendors and ridden recklessly on OFW and the bike path.

Electric vehicle rentals on OFW (Jim Robb on behalf of the Ocean Front Walk Committee) MOTION: The Venice Neighborhood Council insists that the City immediately address the rapid recent preponderance of electric vehicles, scooters, etc, being rented from boardwalk vendors and ridden recklessly on OFW and the bike path. Recommended by Ocean Front Walk Committee **JR/BA 7-0-0**

PUBLIC INPUT AT NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MEETINGS: The public is requested to fill out a "Speaker Card" to address the Ocean Front Walk Committee on any agenda item before the Ocean Front Walk Committee takes action on an item. Comments from the public on agenda items will be heard only when the respective item is being considered. Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda that are within Ocean Front Walk Committee jurisdiction will be heard during the

General Public Comment period. Please note that under the Brown Act, the Ocean Front Walk Committee is prevented from acting on a matter that you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a member of the public may become the subject of a future Ocean Front Walk Committee meeting. Public comment is limited to 1 minute per speaker, unless adjusted by the presiding officer.

POSTING: In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the board members in advance of a meeting may be viewed at Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd; Venice Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd; and at our website by clicking on the following link: www.venicenc.org, or at the scheduled meeting. You can also receive our agendas via email by subscribing to L.A. City's Early Notification System at www.lacity.org/your-government/government-information/subscribe-meetings-agendas-and-documents/ neighborhood. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please contact chair-ofw@venicenc.org and james.robb@venicenc.org

RECONSIDERATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS: For information on the VNC's process for board action reconsideration, stakeholder grievance policy, or any other procedural matters related to this Council, please consult the VNC Bylaws. The Bylaws are available at our Board meetings and our website www.venicenc.org.

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It's YOUR Venice - get involved!