

Village Residents' Association Meeting Official Minutes
August 17th, 2005

I. Introduction:

Members of the VRA Board as well as residents in attendance all introduced themselves. Annie Ingomells began the proceedings as meeting coordinator and explained the basic role of the VRA in village life. The VRA is a forum for residents to come and share their concerns, socialize with their neighbors, and discuss safety, health, and community issues. VRA meetings are open to all village residents.

A. Public Safety

The Village local peace officer Brian Parsley discussed a number of issues which concern both new and old residents alike:

Inadequate parking continues to be a problem throughout the village and the Village Office has authorized the towing of cars illegally occupying spots and those with five or more outstanding tickets. Brian has already placed warnings on vehicles with outstanding tickets and they are liable to be towed away within a week. Family Housing recognizes the fact that many families have more than two cars, but the limited number of spaces requires that it stringently enforce the rule of "one apartment, one parking space" so that all residents have at least some parking. Many residents often find their spots taken by unauthorized vehicles because of the car crunch and after 8pm there are usually no guest spots available.

AC transit made a few complaints to the Village Office because some people have been parking the wrong way on Ohlone and Jackson. Resident cars should face the same direction as public transportation.

If there is an emergency, dial 911. Be sure to use a land line since cell phones will be referred to the Albany police instead of the UC police. Do not call the Village Office since it will just contact the UC police which can just as easily be reached by dialing 911

Armed robberies and break-ins are uncommon in the village, but bicycle theft is commonplace. Please make sure all bicycles are locked (including children's' bicycles). If you see recyclers or anyone suspicious going through your courtyard, please call and inform the UC police.

B. Section Club

Sally Presser explained that the Section Club was composed of faculty wives and has emergency funds to help students in need. The Section Club would like to sponsor a special speaker in the village each semester. In September, Ivor Emmanuel, Director of Services for International Students, will be speaking on the special problems confronting international students with families

Dr. Emmanuel will be speaking from 7-9pm in the Village Community Center on **September 19, 2005**. He will give a short talk and then engage in a dialogue with all those attending. Light refreshments and child care will be provided.

C. Residential Programming – Pepper Black

Last year community coordinators helped keep courtyards clean and organize a social function each semester for their courtyard. It was hoped that they could help build bridges between neighbors and develop phone trees. This month Pepper and the community coordinators will meet to try rethink and rebuild the program. Coordinators will now be focus on programs instead of courtyards because of budgetary cutbacks. The residential advisors will try to identify what programs have the strongest demand. We should have a better sense of the new shape of the program by the next VRA meeting.

Residential Advisor Program

We currently have three resident advisors (one will be leaving at the end of August) and three new staff members will be hired within the next month. Interviews for applicants will begin next week.

Upcoming Events

- The Fall Festival will be on Saturday, September 17th, from 12-3pm. The Festival will have refreshments, live music, and activities and games for children.
- Sing-a-longs Monday mornings for toddlers and very young children
- Family Fridays – Families movies are shown with pizza available for purchase. Popcorn and light refreshments are free. Some family Fridays will be theme-oriented with games such as bingo and arts and crafts activities.
- The Residential staff is developing the new baby welcome program to help keep new mothers from feeling isolated and overwhelmed.

Anyone interested in the Health Worker Program can contact the Tang Center and apply. Anyone can apply as long as they are resident (and the position might provide some academic credit for students). It is a wonderful program and transforms you into a resource for your neighbors and community. Annie mentioned that health workers had a very informative newsletter and would post valuable information in the laundry mats during flu and cold season.

The Village Garden is located towards the very back of Section B provides residents with the opportunity to cultivate their own crops and fauna. Residents can rent plots for \$15/year. Pepper hopes to meet with the village garden committee next week to talk about the garden's future and the access to the garden next year.

There are still openings listed for the position of the Computer Center Consultant. Pepper apologized that the Computer Center is closed and that the two public computers in the office have no internet access. If you are in dire need of internet access, you can come request to use the spare computer in the Village Office. The Computer Center should be open once the background check for applicants have been cleared.

The VRA receives a budget from UC Housing and Dining Services of approximately \$788.00/month. This money is disbursed to the VRA at the beginning of each semester. The VRA provides funding for a wide

variety of events in the village including: Parents Night Out, the Village Festival, bi-annual art exhibition, Thanksgiving potluck dinner, and scholarships for summer camps. The VRA's involvement in these events depends on the interest of individual board members in the proposed activity. Residents interested in organizing events may apply to the VRA for funding (requests considered on a monthly/emergency basis) and should be prepared to assist in coordinating and implementing the event.

The VRA is currently seeking a Village Resident to assume the position of Secretary/Treasurer beginning in September 2005. The position pays \$15/hr and should occupy 15-20 hours a month. Applicants should be a US citizen or have a valid working permit. The VRA would like to hire a resident who is well-organized, articulate, and interested in community building.

Ron Bialkowski opened the discussion by outlining the case of a resident who felt uncomfortable with the play activities of nearby children. He asked what are appropriate circumstance in which a resident can intervene in incidents involving other residents and their children. Those attending the meeting generally agreed that health and safety issues provide some basis for intervention. In cases of when children repeatedly jeopardize others' safety it was felt that once should speak with the child's parents. Residential advisors and the Village Office should be involved in those cases where a resolution cannot be reached.

The problem of noise complaints was also raised in the course of discussion. The Residential Staff receive numerous noise complaints each year. Pepper felt that noise issues could be best resolved when residents spoke with one another. She added that residents should be cognizant of quiet hours and should first attempt to negotiate with one another before escalating a dispute. Residents deftly balance their own schedules and should be prepared to do so likewise with the noise they may produce.

Another problem cited by one resident was the inadequate information available to those moving in. Residents do not receive a welcome packet until the day their tenancy begins and are therefore woefully ill informed of Village policies. Many are not cognizant of existing parking restrictions and of the fact that large moving vans/trucks must provide the Village Office with advance notice in order for space to be reserved for them. The most essential contents of the welcome package should be placed on-line. It also might help to set aside special parking for residents just arriving with moving van in tow. It also might help if the Village web site were updated and a message board maintained for the use of all existing residents.

The topic of rodents in Section A inspired several interesting exchanges. Pepper requested help for a resident relocating to Smythe-Fernwald because they had been moved twice in Section A on account of rodents. This resident was particularly concerned with the risks by rodents' feces, which could transmit LSMV. Although LSMV is not contracted easily, it could result in neurological disorders for new-born children. Exterminators may employ only non-toxic means of removal in Family Housing, so it is likely that the rodent problem will persist until the demolition of Section A.

Acting Secretary,

Ron Bialkowski
August 16, 2005
August 26, 2005 (updated)

THE NEXT VRA MEETING WILL BE A POTLUCK DINNER. MAKE YOUR FAVORITE DISH AND SHARE IT WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS!!!!!!