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**Old Las Palmas Neighborhood Organization
Fall Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 12, 2009
5:00 – 7:00 PM
O'Donnell Golf Club**

Following a short social session, Peter Mahler started the meeting at 5:30 with a welcome to the more than 65 residents in attendance and introduced the new Advisors: Al Rollins (Security Chair), Chris Crist, Bob Elsner and Rob Kincaid. Peter then introduced the special guests: Councilmember and neighbor Rick Hutcheson, Chief of Police David Dominguez and City Manager David Ready. David Hill, GM of the Hyatt was introduced in the audience.

Neighborhood residents in the audience were then asked to introduce themselves.

Peter thanked John Williams and Bob Dickinson for their prior service on the OLPNO Board and gave special thanks to John Williams for his extended service representing OLPNO on the Palm Springs Neighborhood Involvement Committee (PSNIC). (Doug Donenfeld will become the OLPNO representative to PSNIC with Rob Kincaid as the alternate.)

Alan Cashman briefed the audience on recent changes to improve and update the OLPNO bylaws (copies were provided).

Karen Moran reviewed the Beautification Committee goals for 2010. One recent accomplishment is the new logo for OLPNO which appears on the revised website, stationery and on notepads provided to those present. An identification sticker for residents' vehicles is also being considered. Questions from the audience prompted discussion regarding street resurfacing (Is it possible for the City to coordinate this with affected residents so that the property frontage is resurfaced to match? Answer: Yes.); the cleanup of the Whitewater easements (David Ready indicated that he is prepared to help accomplish this); street sweeping (does it do more harm than good? The consensus was that it should continue); and whether Via Lola could be a candidate for a center median to slow traffic (city finances would not allow such major construction at this time but other options are under consideration for traffic control).

Rick Moran reported on Security issues, in particular the future of the Maxwell patrol service. While some residents reported that the Maxwell patrols had been noticeably reduced during the summer, several others reported frequent sightings and positive interactions with the patrols. Peter noted that Guardsmark is now apparently prepared to offer a comparable service though some in the audience expressed reluctance to change services again if Maxwell can improve. The Advisors were asked to provide Maxwell with clear expectations for their service and to carefully weigh the pros and cons of another change. The Security Committee will continue to evaluate the

situation, review issues with Maxwell and issue a recommendation before the end of the year.

Rick also noted that the Security Committee was in the process of evaluating several measures to improve security in the neighborhood including traffic calming ("speed bumps"), street closures and security cameras at primary entrances. Recommendations would, of course, be discussed with affected residents before any changes were proposed to the city.

On a question about crime rates, Chief Dominguez noted that the Community Policing program is working well; overall crime rates are down in the last 2½ years. Palm Springs had the highest rate of property crimes in the valley – this rate was reduced by 24% in his first year and another 12% this year. The Chief has been able to use a \$1.6 million Federal grant to hire more police officers, \$250K of State funds for traffic enforcement and \$156K for replacement of downtown surveillance cameras. The Chief expressed his support for OLPNO proposals of installing cameras at strategic entrances and using traffic calming and street restrictions to further reduce crime rates.

Chief Dominguez urged residents to get involved and to stay vigilant. The recent series of about eight mail box break-ins were mostly at empty vacation home; neighbors can help by monitoring and reporting such crimes promptly. The associated risk is identity theft. Neighborhood officers Patrol Lieutenant John Booth, Sergeant Marc Melanson and Officer Steven Grissom were introduced to the audience. Officer Brent Coon was not present.

John Williams noted that residents are urged to use e-mail to communicate with the police patrol officers about issues of a non-urgent nature. The officers carry laptops and monitor their e-mail all the time.

Louise Hampton provided an update on membership, noted that renewal notices will be mailed in early December and that renewal forms were available at the meeting. In response to a question, she noted that participation had grown slightly but members could help improve the total by encouraging their neighbors to also join and to sign-up with the Security Patrol service.

John Williams introduced Councilmember Rick Hutcheson who provided a comprehensive summary of the many good things that are happening in Palm Springs despite the challenges brought about by the economic downturn and the budget deficit caused by the State's raiding of the city's reserves. Rick noted that, judging by the retail sales tax, Palm Springs was doing better than other valley cities being down only 6% vs 24% in other places. The Fashion Plaza re-development plan is moving forward and other measures are underway to re-vitalize downtown and bring in new businesses.

In response to a question about a bad odor on Palm Canyon Dr, David Ready noted that specific details should be called in to City Hall; crews are available to investigate and correct drainage problems.

In closing the meeting, Peter Mahler referred to the list of “20 Great Things Happening in our Neighborhood” as indicative of the ongoing improvements in Palm Springs and reminded all present of what makes a good neighbor. He encouraged everyone to visit the newly improved website for current news and information.

Old Las Palmas Neighborhood Policing Officers:

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Officer Coon – brent.coon@palmsprings-ca.gov