

Minutes

LPCA Executive Committee Meeting, February 24, 2008

Marina Village Conference Center
1936 Quivira Way
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<http://www.marinavillage.net/>

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Call to Order

Chair Takenaga called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

Attending

Officers

Chair Kevin Takenaga
Northern Vice Chair Richard Newell
Southern Vice Chair Zander Collier
Treasurer Don Cowles
Secretary Beau Cain

At-large Representatives

Matthew Barnes
Eric Bresson
Ted Brown
T. J. Campbell
Brian Holtz
Mike McMahon
Rob Power
Lawrence Samuels
Jesse Thomas

Alternates

Donna Orlando

Guests

Gene Berkman, Riverside County

Allen Hacker, fundraising consultant

Comments

No public comments.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was amended to add a resolution thanking outgoing Executive Committee members and passed without objection.

Officers Reports

Chair's Report

Chair Takenaga reported the need to formally sunset all working committees and retain the Convention Committee and the Membership Committee.

MOTION: A motion to accept the Chair's recommendation to sunset working committees except for Membership and Convention Committees was seconded.

VOTE: The motion to accept the Chair's recommendation passed without objection.

Chair Takenaga reported progress on the Sacramento Rally. The Operations Committee voted to spend \$1,500 if necessary to facilitate rally.

Chair Takenaga spoke briefly about the need to begin planning the 2009 Convention:

Chair Takenaga reported the fundraising contract with Allan Hacker.

Northern Vice Chair's Report

MOTION: Newell moved to thank outgoing members, Bruce Dovner, Mark Johnson, Dan Minkoff, and Chuck Moulton.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

ACTION: Southern Vice Chair Collier volunteered to mail thank-you letters.

Southern Vice Chair's Report

Southern Vice Chair Collier reported initial plans for election night parties for the June 3rd Primary.

The Facebook project produced a new paid member. Collier publicized the convention through Facebook, and one came and joined.

Collier requested help with the Facebook project. Eric Bresson volunteered to help.

ACTION: Bresson to help Collier with Facebook

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report was covered in the discussion about the Budget under Old Business.

Committee Reports

Operations Committee

The Operations Committee reported approving a contract between LPCA and Allen Hacker authorizing Hacker to solicit donations for LPCA.

Fundraising Consultant

Hacker addressed the Executive Committee about his agreement to raise funds for the LPCA. He and Treasurer Cowles refined Hacker's draft proposal with input from Chair Takenaga to ensure that both Hacker and LPCA benefit fairly from donations that Hacker solicits. The agreement is to pay Hacker 15% of the amount of the donations that he generates. The agreement was signed on Wednesday, February 20, 2008.

However, recognizing that the Party already loses money on annual memberships and one-year newsletter subscriptions, Hacker agreed to not take a percentage on donations for membership and for newsletter subscriptions. His percentage would come from donations in excess of \$25 membership dues and of \$30 subscription fees. In his words, if his efforts convince someone to do nothing more than join the LPCA, then we all celebrate even though there's not enough money in that donation to pay his commission.

As well, his percentage would not be paid up front for pledges, but would be paid as the pledge is paid. This will prevent the LPCA from in effect paying a greater percentage of a donation than what might actually be received.

Further, transactional income would exclude the cost of acquiring or distributing premiums that the LPCA decides to give as a reward for donations.

Additionally, there is a 25% set-aside from the gross receipts. This set-aside is for the e-Flyer that was composed and sent out before the convention, intended more to motivate recipients to register and participate in the convention, even at a late date.

Hacker observed that donors like being thanked and like being asked to donate again, and mentioned that each thank-you should include a mechanism for either donating more or for enabling a friend to donate.

Some early results are that the initial e-Flyer didn't return many donations, but it was expected instead to generate interest in the convention. It did generate a new \$10 monthly pledger, plus a few convention registrations.

Hacker also reported negotiating a donation from Presidential candidate Daniel Imperato, who was deeply interested in improving his standing in the LP's "Liberty Decides" survey. Hacker convinced Imperato to donate enough to cover the cost of the convention's binders, which would include his ad on the back cover of the binder. Imperato donated right away through Click and Pledge.

Membership Committee

Dovner addressed the Executive Committee about the results of the data-driven study that the committee is charged with producing. He demonstrated his elaborate and exacting spreadsheet that calculates break-even amounts based on gift amounts and expenses.

Dovner executed a few scenarios, demonstrating how to change such variables as dues, subscriptions, and expenses. He demonstrated that at our current membership rates, subscription fees, and operating expenses, LPCA needs 2,210 subscribing members and 300 basic members in order to break even.

Collier asked whether elasticity of demand is built into the spreadsheet, and Dovner admitted that the spreadsheet doesn't reflect price demand or price sales function. However, Dovner observed that our membership sales may have a lot more to do with our sales efforts than it does with the price we charge, ergo he didn't attempt to include revenue or profit maximization in the spreadsheet.

Barnes thanked Dovner for the spreadsheet calculation tool. The URLs where the spreadsheets can be found are:

http://lp-ca.org/LPC/membership_3475tf49856fyn984/membership_options.xls

(Dues vs. Number of Members at Break Even Point for Various Membership Options with Different Cost Assumptions)

http://lp-ca.org/LPC/membership_3475tf49856fyn984/cost_of_membership_a.xls

(Cost, Revenue, and Profit/Loss with Calculator)

Dovner also reported that the Membership Committee had decided that frequently altering membership dues rules makes it less easy to sell memberships. The more favorable alternative to changing membership rates in order to cover operating expenses is to increase memberships.

Old Business

Budget

Treasurer Cowles presented a proposed budget and explained that with its optimistic income projection and known expenses, the LPCA should expect to very nearly break even for 2008. However, he emphasized that the income shown was very optimistic.

MOTION: Cowles moved to ratify the budget as presented.

VOTE: The motion to ratify the budget as presented passed without objection.

Newsletter Subscription

MOTION: Secretary Cain moved to rescind that part of the December 2006 resolution to give away free newsletter subscriptions to new members.

Thomas asked how many extra newsletters we print that we don't mail out. Cain said that we usually get 60 to 90 extra newsletters per run. He noted that we shouldn't need more than 50 extra copies per month to send to people who ask for information about the Party. Treasurer Cowles added that the print costs for the extra newsletters was almost negligible, and there was only one shipping charge involved in delivering them, instead of postage for each copy.

Brown asked if it's possible for members to choose to receive only an electronic copy of the newsletter, which Cain affirmed would not be difficult administratively. Brown, Holtz, Newell, Cain, and Thomas also suggested adding a newsletter delivery option to donate a newsletter subscription to a new member, a school, a public library, or coffee shop.

Southern Vice Chair Collier asked what it would take for a volunteer to monthly follow up on mailings that go out. Cain replied that he is prepared to run a monthly report to go to each counties' Party officers.

VOTE: The motion to rescind that part of the resolution that gives free newsletter subscriptions to new members passed with one objection.

New Business

Operation Committee Election

Chair Takenaga reported recent Operation Committee activity. He instructed the Executive Committee members present to read the new bylaws when they're published.

MOTION: Northern Vice Chair Newell moved to appoint the Executive Committee's officers as the Operation Committee.

VOTE: The motion to appoint the officers as the Operation Committee carried.

Additional National Convention Delegates

The Executive Committee approved Steve Kubby and Dave Hollist as additional National Convention delegates without objection.

Secretary Cain reported that he's obligated to submit California's list of delegates to the LNC by April 23rd.

June 2008 Election

Gene Berkman addressed the Executive Committee regarding Proposition 98, opposing the abuse of eminent domain. He mentioned that 30% of the City of Riverside is in redevelopment. Collier added that lawyers now approach city councils to offer their services to draft language that enable city councils to abuse eminent domain.

The June Primary will have two initiatives about eminent domain. Proposition 99 was added to the June Primary ballot to confuse voters on the issue of eminent domain abuse. It was added to the ballot by the League of Cities to enable them to misapply eminent domain for the sake of increasing city tax revenues. Homes, rental property, business property, and farmland can and has been taken by eminent domain abuse. Prop 99 misleadingly states that local governments will not be allowed to take property on which the owner has lived for at least one year. It offers no other protections, but instead nullifies that protection by adding that if necessary, government can take such owner-occupied property.

Proposition 98 is qualified by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, and offers sweeping property protections. It says that government cannot use the power of eminent domain to take occupied property to transfer that property to another private party, period. In cases where governments use eminent domain to legitimately take property to build public works, the person whose property is being taken is guaranteed a jury trial to determine compensation, and guaranteed the right to compensation for loss of business.

It also says that if private property is taken for legitimate purpose, but then the government decides not to use that property for that purpose, the previous owner has the first right to repurchase the property from the government at the price the government paid for it, and that the assessment on that property will be the same as it was before the property was taken, so that the previous owner will not be subject to higher property tax assessments.

A perceived difficulty in passing Prop 98 and defeating Prop 99 is that many people will not be aware that there is a June 3rd Primary, now that the February Presidential Primary is over. LPCA can contribute to the defeat of Prop 99 and the success of Prop 98—along with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Farmers Bureau, property rental associations and homeowners' associations—is to “get out the vote” by encouraging registered Libertarians to go to the polls and vote for Prop 98 and against Prop 99.

Chair Takenaga interjected that county Parties can get the database of registered Libertarians free from Greg Perry.

Berkman suggested sending postcards for two reasons: 1) they're less expensive to produce and mail than letters, and 2) recipients are much more likely to read a postcard than a letter because postcards' information are exposed and ready to read without opening a letter.

He welcomes any queries about these propositions, and offered his contact information at Renaissance Books. He also asked that present members contact the campaign in favor of Proposition 98, YesOnPropertyRights.com. LP of Riverside County can give its literature to other county LPs who request it.

Holtz affirmed that this is a great cause to support, and suggested that this be a major component of our April rally in Sacramento. Chair Takenaga confirmed that there are already property rights groups who will staff tables at the event.

Barnes thanked Berkman for the presentation and mentioned that Thomas found Berkman's PDF file of the Redevelopment and Eminent Domain, and had printed them himself. Berkman affirmed that this was OK.

Thomas asked how we know if a developer is giving a presentation to convince a community development forum by applying eminent domain. Berkman said that sometimes journalists sometimes expose such proceedings. For instance, one of Inland Empire's free weekly newspapers published an exposé of such development efforts, which in particular exposed Riverside's worst eminent domain offender, Councilman Dom Betro. Berkman noted that Betro is now a former Councilman.

Berkman closed by noting that the June Primary currently has only these two initiatives, and that voting in this Primary doesn't entail the “wasted vote” syndrome, so it should be easy to get registered Libertarians to vote in favor of Prop 98 and against Prop 99.

Adjournment

Next Meeting

Chair Takenaga gratefully acknowledged Holtz's mother-in-law who volunteered telemarketing effort in LPCA's behalf.

Next ExCom Meeting is Sunday, April 13, in conjunction with the rally in Sacramento. Chair Takenaga adjourned the meeting without objection at 7:15 p.m.

Action Items

All

Review, revise, and approve Executive Committee meeting minutes by Wednesday, March 6, 2008.

Secretary

Prepare meeting minutes and submit to Executive Committee for approval before Wednesday, March 6, 2008.

Notify Wayne Root of invitation to present at Sacramento rally.

Chair

Appoint Style Committee.

Southern Vice Chair

Mail thank-you letters to outgoing Executive Committee members Dovner, Johnson, Minkoff, and Moulton.

Bresson

Help Collier with Facebook.

Respectfully submitted, April 29, 2008

Beau Cain, Secretary