



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS  
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS  
HOLLY J. MITCHELL  
LINDSEY P. HORVATH  
JANICE HAHN  
KATHRYN BARGER

**Correspondence Received**

			The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:	
Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
10.		Favor	Boarder WNEC	<p>Concerned our rent will be raised. Item #3 3. Align the boarding fee charges at all Equestrian Centers and standardize fees throughout the County to effectively address the increases in the costs ....</p> <p>No Rent Increase!!! WNEC is full and if managed properly it will be profitable.</p>
			Boarder WNEC	<p>I am a long time boarder at Whittier Narrows and first of all, I am surprised at this turn of events but am glad the County is proactive to keep the stables up and running. However, I as well as my fellow boarders are very concerned about the board being increased both under old or new management. The prior increase of \$70.00 was an excessive amount and we were advised it was only going to be implemented while hay prices were high. Since that time hay prices have come back down and if money weren't mishandled then that prior increase should still be in effect for some time to come. This facility is located in a community of blue collar workers who can not afford excessive board rates. I truly hope The Board of Supervisors hears the pleas of their constituents the boarders of Whittier Narrows Equestrian Center. Thank you.</p>
			Carla Melgar	
			Christa Sears	<p>The equestrian facilities in LA County are a long tradition and are essential for equine education and outdoor activity, therefore we need to implement strong management, safety within our trails, and the cleaning up of trash and any potential homeless encampments that pose any DANGER to us residents and citizens that chose to enjoy these opportunities.</p>
			Concerned Boarder	<p>This news is very upsetting to me and my fellow boarders. Shame on the current manager for taking our money and not paying her fair share. She has placed all of us in a very bad spot. This explains why she hasn't followed up with anything she has said she will do. She put out an email last year about adding speed bumps and that never happened. I can now see why. This is one of many things. Thank you for being proactive in bringing in a new person who is a professional. Please allow the boarders some transition time prior to any price increases.</p>
			Concerned Paying boarder	<p>Stephens must be put immediately over Whittier Narrows. Current operator is angry and holding back on feed. I pay for 20 lbs a day i might be getting 10 per day if i am lucky. Non of us want her here any longer. It is not the renters fault she is in this mess. Please put new management in now! Our horses well being depends on it. Thank you</p>



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10.		<b>Favor</b>	Equestrian Boarder	New Management needs to be aware of the homeless problem on the riverbed. Current Operator says she will shut the back gate that is on the riverbed to stop theft and restroom use. To date, gate is still wide open. There are children here and the homeless just walk over to the trainer's area. I guess something really bad has to happen before someone takes action. This gate should be shut until the homeless problem has been solved. Current operator is NOT watching out for the interest of the current trainers, the community or boarders. We need an operator that lives close. Hemet is too far to address issues. There has been at least 5 fires to date on the riverbed and the operator does not care. We are very concerned because there are piles of dry brush all over the ranch that could ignite a fire. No one is at the ranch after 9pm. I feel it is very important to have night staff or at minimum a security guard. The ranch sits in a pretty rough area with high crime. It is very scary at night when opening the gate to enter or leave. No rent increase please, we took a large hit last April. Thank you for allowing us to voice our voice.
			Equestrian Center Whittier Narrows	In favor accept for #3 board increase. A night guy would be a huge benefit. 9 pm to 6 am to watch for fires, theft or homeless activity and handle horse waters that have broken in the night and cause the horses house to flood. Due to the serious homeless encampments we cannot enjoy our trails. Hilda solis rebuilt our barn so the community and horse boarders can enjoy the public trails. Because of drug activity, sex offenders and tents right outside the gate, unsafe. Operator should have handled this months ago instead of ignoring the concerns. All for new management the sooner the better. No on rent hike!!!!
			H Ricotta	My concern is a board increase. There was a large increase April of 2023. We are in a low income area and prices do not to be raised if the money is being handled correctly. NO RENT INCREASE!
			Kristina Lopez	Stephens Inc should start immediately. We are seeing our horses getting very little feed since we all know of the coming changes.  It would be best to have DeDe Stephens start today due to all the on going problems and money issues.
			Lisa Miller	The current Operator should be ashamed for not paying her bills and letting a beautiful equestrian center which was a million dollar Hilda Solis project go to hell. When will Stephens take over? Feb 1 st? No rent increase please the paying boarders have been taken advantage of enough under this operator.



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10.		<b>Favor</b>	Whittier Narrows Boarder	WNEC desperately needs a manager who cares about the facility and horses. D. Joy Gould is not that person.
			William Mulrooney	This is an opportunity for all four equestrian facilities to run efficiently and serve and represent their respective communities. With competent management, the costs should be kept down. Whittier Narrows in particular, located in a lower to middle income area, serves a multi cultural, diverse population. The community at large should have access to horses for pleasure, training, and therapy. Veterans, foster youth, and similar cohorts would especially benefit. Services for these underrepresented groups can be funded through federal, state, NGO, and private grants. The potential for these equestrian centers, especially Whittier Narrows, to achieve the gold standard for public equine centers is there, if we all work together.
			Wn Boarder	Remove current operator now! No good. No reason to have her around another month embezzling our money. Please no rent increase!!!!
			WN Paying customer	Please let us know today what date the new management will take over. We need to plan to pay our board to the correct person. Hoping it will take effect Feb 1st since Ms Stevens is already handling other county equestrian centers. There is no need for the current operator to stay past Jan. We the boarders would like to move on with new management.



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10.		<b>Favor</b>	WN boarder Attn Hilda Solis	<p>Hilda Solis, This was your wonderful project that has gone to hell fast. Can you please help us do what is needed to bring it back up to standard. Current operator has never addressed our concerns. We need your help please and fast!!! I know the resources are available to expedite these much needed urgent items.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add dirt and gravel (original materiel) to the entire facility</li> <li>2. Gutters for pipe corrals stalls</li> <li>3. Fix leaky roofs on all pipe stalls (causing horses to have skin conditions) due to condensation drip</li> <li>4. Remove all wood stashed behind tack lockers</li> <li>5. Speed bumps</li> <li>6. Approve a live on premise worker for security, fire &amp; emergencies (9 pm to 6 am)</li> <li>7. Help us clean the homeless encampments from the Riverbed so we can ride our trails and keep our children and community safe.</li> <li>8. Professional rodent service</li> <li>9. Fix our hot water tank on the wash rack that the current operator NEVER addresses</li> <li>10. New paint touch up</li> </ol> <p>No rent increase! Whittier Narrows got a huge hit last April \$70 all centers do not have to be on the same rate chart. We struggle to afford our horses please help us!!! Last , please remove current operator and allow new operator to take over immediately. We need to make sure our horses are feed, cleaned and our staff is paid. We do not want to pay the current operator rent another month knowing the \$\$ theft non payment issues.</p>



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10.		<b>Favor</b>	WN Equestrian Center Resident	<p>New operator-yes! Board increase a hard NO! Hopefully the new operator can better assist us with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watering our beautiful trees</li> <li>Maintaining our trees</li> <li>Provide D/G for horses stall to level when needed instead of free dirt that contains rocks, glass and asphalt</li> <li>Fix large pot holes caused by rodents</li> <li>Hire a professional to terminate rodents instead of throwing poison around putting our animals at risk of death</li> <li>Provide a grave yard employee</li> <li>Fix our horse stall roofs from condensation leaks</li> <li>Provide top quality hay</li> <li>Fix slippery wash rack area</li> <li>Fix leaky hoses</li> <li>Provide rakes so boarders can clean up manure from round pens/wash rack</li> <li>Secure the stallion barns</li> <li>Remove current rocks at hitch rails and riding path</li> <li>Be sure gates are locked upon enter/leaving facility</li> <li>Add speed bumps to slow fast drivers</li> <li>Add gutters to pipe corrals for those who do not have them</li> <li>Add better lighting for night time riding</li> <li>Be sure feed times are adequately spread apart</li> <li>Current dry brush (fire hazard) to be removed</li> <li>Bring fire extinguishers up to date</li> <li>Level ground with original DG material for level ground ( dirt will make it slick and dangerous)</li> </ul>
			WNEC Boarder	I am a boarder at WNEC. I have 2 jobs trying to take care of my horse & pay boarding. Please do not increase our boarding fees. I barely can pay what we pay now. I'm a minor and my parents can't help so I'm on my own.
			WNEC Boarder	The potential for another rent increase at WNEC is very troubling. The last increase in April 2023 was quite substantial. It's a shame the landscaping that was put in by the county for the Refurbishment Project has not been kept up. The once pretty and green plants are now dry and covered in dead leaves and dirt. Please reconsider any plans to raise our boarding fees.
			WNEC Boarder	We welcome new management! If our boarding fees were handled properly we most likely wouldn't be in this position. Please do not increase our boarding fees due to no fault of ours. Thank you.



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10.		Favor	WNEC Boarder	Dear new management. Please do not increase our boarding fees. With the economy being high - I can barely pay what it is now. Plus the environment isn't safe. The public arena always has people drinking and partying at night along with non-boarders using our restrooms. I shouldn't have to pay more for an unsafe environment.
			WNEC Boarder	Welcome new management. I am requesting that when new management takes over there is not a price increase. The boarders took a hard hit in 2023. Hay and goods prices have gone back down but our board has not. We also need better quality hay. The boarders should not have a rate increase because the operator is not handling the funds in the best interest of the people and horses.
			WNEC Boarder	I am deeply concerned about the possibility of another board increase at WNEC. My horses get fed less here (usually 1.5 flakes) than they did at the facility I was at previously (2 flakes/10 lbs). I also have to clean my stalls regularly (as do all other boarders here). For what I pay monthly, I should be able to just come down and enjoy my horses as opposed to constantly maintaining my stalls which is supposed to be part of what I pay for. At my previous boarding facility, which was not a high-end facility, my stalls were kept impeccable. I should not have to pay more when I'm receiving less. We need better management and improved conditions at the facility, not higher fees.
			WNEC Boarder	Welcome new management. We are hoping we don't have a board increase!!! Especially having to deal with the safety factors that surround our stable with young riders etc. Thank you
			WNEC Boarder	I'm in favor if it brings improvements. Our board fees include cleaning, yet we have to clean ourselves in order to keep the stalls properly cleaned. Most of us spend an additional \$150-\$200 a month on shavings. I am not in favor of an increase in board fees as we recently has a large increase.
			WNEC Renter	Remove current operator today!!! Since all the boarders are aware of the truth our horses are getting VERY little hay. Horses should get 10 lb am/pm feeding. Horses are getting 5-6 lbs. UNACCEPTABLE!! Since the current operator knows her days are numbered she sure does not want to spend money on hay. REMOVE Current operator TODAY!!? We need a emergency order for new management to start tomorrow.



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10.		<b>Favor</b>	WNEC Renter	<p>Dear Board of Supervisors, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, LET US KNOW WHEN THE NEW OPERATOR WILL TAKE EFFECT. OUR BOARD IS DUE BY THE 7TH OF EACH MONTH AND NONE OF US ARE PAYING THE CURRENT OPERATOR UNTIL WE HEAR FROM YOU. THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER. MOST US OF KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON, BUT WE HAVE SPANISH SPEAKING BOARDERS WHO HAVE NO CLUE. IF THEY PAY HER VIA ZELLE OR CASH AND NEW MANAGMENT TAKES OVER, MORE MONEY HAS JUST GONE INTO THE CURRENT OPERATORS POCKET.</p> <p>I FEEL IT WOULD BE BEST IF THE NEW OPERATOR STARTS FEB 1ST. BOARDERS ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF HAY. OUR HORSES SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN 1/2 THE AMOUNT BECAUSE THERE IS NO MONEY. WE NEED THE COUNTY TO MAKE SURE OUR STABLE HAS HAY ON HAND DURING THIS TRANSACTION.</p>
		<b>Oppose</b>	Anonymous Please	<p>Giving all four equestrian centers to one person is monopoly. Dede Stevens is using one manager for all three facilities that she currently runs so that she doesnt have to pay for a manager for each one. She allows the workers a very short period of time to clean the stalls in order not to pay for all day schedule or for more than one worker. The result is the boarders are forced to clean their stalls themselves even though there is no understanding that doing so keeps the boarding prices down. In addition, the worker does not clean aisles and again, falls to the the boarders to keep things tidy. Ms. Stevens refuses to prepare or repair stalls that have safety hazards for the horses. She instructs boarders to PAY her worker do to the repairs, including new boarders moving a horse in. Also, the remark in Norma Garcia's letter to you regarding the price of hay is not true. During Covid prices on everything went up. The price of hay is no longer high. Please do not pass this request. Ask yourself if running an equestrian facility is so hard to make ends meet, then why would one person want all four? Because its a lie. At WNEC, there are about 200 horses and I guarantee if she gets it she will fire workers to put more money in her pocket. There have been times when something goes wrong at one of the barns and boarders call for help, there is NO response from either Ms. Stevens or her manager.</p> <p>There are people that would be interested in running one of them. You would need to make it more publicly known when an opportunity comes up. No boarder can afford a board increase with our current economy. Everyone struggles just to make ends meet.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
			Cindy White	<p>Rent increases! The board was raised last time \$70! We keep our horses at a public facility because of the cheaper rent! I can't afford another rent increase! I'm a retired waitress please don't increase the board! I will have to get rid of my horse!</p>



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10.		<b>Oppose</b>	Joan E Hemrick	I'm opposed to a rent increase for my horse. The grounds and the trails need maintenance and removal of homeless people and trash. There has been drug selling and manufacturing on our trails and trash being dumped.
			Kimberlee Baker	I do not support the reason for having one manager in a Sole Source Agreement for all four Equestrian Centers. Especially since one of the main reasons is because no viable proposals were obtained for the Peter F. Schabarum Equestrian Center (SEC) back on August 3, 2023. The SEC is a very small but important Equestrian Center. However, based on the numbers alone, the SEC is very difficult to have as a stand-alone operator and be financially viable. However, WNEC is not in the same classification as SEC meaning WNEC could operate with a stand-alone operator and be financially viable. Unfortunately, as it stands now, WNEC has been financially mis-managed owing approximately \$70,000 in back rent to DPR (not including any late fees). To lump WNEC in with the other three existing Equestrian Centers would do it a disservice. I do not believe that WNEC should be run as a passive activity, but rather benefit greatly from having a local, on-site daily manager to oversee operations. I believe it is imperative that for an Equestrian Center the size of WNEC (Approximately 22 acres) that having a person that is local and able to come to the stables at least 5 days a week to oversee the operations would vastly improve the overall functioning of this Equestrian Center both for the boarders and also the community. Also, in a non-scientific study, a recent poll was conducted at WNEC, and many individuals expressed a high degree of interest in being the manager for WNEC and were waiting for a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be issued. Therefore, I respectfully request that an RFP be issued for WNEC. In the interim, if while this RFP is issued for WNEC, if DPR wants to have Stephens Equestrian Center, Inc. run WNEC on a temporary basis for no longer than 6 months then I believe an efficient, financially stable, equestrian knowledgeable person would be forthcoming. Thank you for your attention to this matter.
		<b>Other</b>	ashley morrison	THE CONDITION OF THE CENTER IS APPALLING. WE NEED SECURITY AT NIGHT, SECURE ENTRY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF HOMELESS AND THEFTS. DECENT HAY, AND IN PROPER AMOUNTS FOR EACH HORSE, THEY ARE FED LITE DUE TO HAY SUPPLY BEING CONTINUALLY LOW. WEEKLY MANURE DISPOSAL...WEEKLY TRASH DISPOSAL...BOTH OF WHICH ARE ALWAYS LACKING. BUT FIRST AND FORMOST WE NEED MANAGEMENT.....THERE HAS BEEN A RENT COLLECTOR, BUT ABSOLUTLELY NO MANAGEMENT. THE LIST OF MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS AND NEGLECT IS TOO LONG TO LIST! IT IS A VERY SAD SITUATION THAT THIS CHANGE HAS TAKEN FAR TOOOO LONG!!



			The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:	
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10.		Other	Susan Cermak	The upkeep of plants and landscape needs a little tlc. Manure dump schedule to keep it cleaner. Horse feed to be upgraded. Raking and cleaning as the borders are doing the cleanup. All night guards to keep our animals safe at night and when attending a horse show when we come back at night to be able to put our horses away after hours as we have to pay the guys to come open the gate if we are lucky enough to get them on the phone. Maintenance on stalls that does not cost for horse owner. Remove the pile of scrub of dead cut bushes. A concessionier that is not pscho, having a switch that goes off the wall and understands our horses. Water the vegetations.. allow access to give meds at all times. Also in a emergency provide transportation to the vet hospital. Water the grounds to keep the dust down. Friendly attitude and patience. Hay is down in cost so upgrade have BBQ gatherings poker rides.
			Theresa Rivas	I concerned there will be an increase in the monthly boarding fees. In April 2023 the boarders at Whittier Narrows Equestrian Center were given approximately a 20% increase in the board. The reason given was the increase in alfalfa hay prices during and coming out of the pandemic. Alfalfa hay prices have dropped approximately 22% since the monthly board fee increase. The monthly boarding fees have not gone down since the increase. Managed correctly the monthly boarding fees have the capacity to cover all fees and costs associated with managing the Whittier Narrows Equestrian Center.
		<b>Item Total</b>	<b>34</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>34</b>	

## **Board of Supervisors**

Los Angeles County

383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

500 West Temple Street

Los Angeles, California 90012

**Subject:** Support for Strengthening Equestrian Centers and Community Programming

Dear Supervisors,

As a Whittier resident, equestrian, and active Whittier commissioner, I am writing to express my thoughts on the proposed consolidation of equestrian centers, as outlined in the recent memo. This issue is deeply personal to me, as I have been part of the Whittier Narrows Equestrian Center (WNEC) community throughout my life and left only due to a move to Texas. Upon returning to California, I chose to board my horse, Valentino, at WNEC once again, drawn by the enduring sense of community this center has cultivated over the past 20 years.

Having reviewed the memo, I understand the challenges the Department of Parks and Recreation faces in maintaining equestrian centers, including increasing operational costs and difficulties in attracting qualified operators. While I am unsure if the proposed consolidation is the perfect solution, I recognize it as a necessary step to ensure the continued operation of these vital facilities.

### **Importance of Equestrian Centers**

Equestrian centers like WNEC are critical for fostering community engagement, preserving open spaces, and providing affordable access to equestrian activities. They contribute to social equity by making these unique recreational opportunities available to a diverse population. Moreover, they play a role in maintaining clean, active spaces that would otherwise risk becoming neglected or misused.

As a member of the equestrian community, I understand firsthand the financial challenges of pursuing this passion. Affordable access to well-maintained facilities not only supports individuals like me but also ensures these centers remain vibrant hubs of activity.

### **Recommendations and Encouragement**

I encourage the Board to proceed with the proposed consolidation under Stephens Equestrian Center, Inc., as it aligns with the strategic goals outlined in the memo. Bundling agreements across multiple centers could achieve operational efficiencies, reduce costs, and standardize services, ultimately benefiting the entire community.

Additionally, I urge the Board to continue prioritizing solutions that promote equitable and inclusive equestrian programming. By partnering with community-based organizations and maintaining affordable fees, the County can ensure these centers remain accessible to all.

### **Appreciation**

I would like to thank the Board for its commitment to supporting equestrian centers and exploring innovative solutions to sustain their operations. The improvements I have witnessed since my return to WNEC are a testament to your dedication. I am confident that, with thoughtful planning and community input, these facilities will continue to thrive and enrich our communities for years to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
  
Carla Melgar