

February 8, 2010

Los Angeles City Council Members
200 Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Sent by Email

Re: City Council Agenda February 9, 2010
Agenda Item #11

Honorable City Council Members:

We request your consideration of the issues below before you vote on the funding for the Neighborhood Council system. All of the information below is related to Item number 11 on the February 9, 2010 Agenda.

Point (18) – The “rollover” policy should not be changed and the rollover funds should not be transferred to the Reserve Fund as many neighborhood councils have already committed those funds under contracts or have agreements already in place. Since a demand warrant cannot be submitted until the project is completed, numerous projects will have to be halted or the agreed upon contract will not be fulfilled. This may cause lawsuits against the city that can run up legal expenses far in excess of the \$1.61 million currently designated as “rollover” funds. The SCNC has committed a significant amount of its rollover funds to community organizations with projects that are currently underway.

Point (19) – Eliminating the bank card system, when only a hand full of the 90 Neighborhood Councils have abused it, will be burdensome to many Neighborhood Council areas. Neighborhood Council board members will have to expend their own funds and wait up to six months to be reimbursed. The bank card system works and should be retained.

Point (20) – Neighborhood Council allowable expenditure categories were set by the City Council and reevaluating and redefining is not necessary and will cost more than what it will save. The City Council set forth exactly what the Neighborhood Councils can do with their funding.

Point (21) – Neighborhood Council funding was already reduced by \$5,000 this year. A reduction of an additional 50% is a far greater reduction than many city departments are being requested to make. More and more expenses are required to be paid for by the Neighborhood Councils i.e. election outreach, which was expected to be paid for by the City Clerk’s Office. The value received from the Neighborhood Council system far exceeds the cost of its allotted budget. The Neighborhood Councils utilize thousands of volunteers to assist the council members by providing information and outreach to the local communities and serving as a conduit for stakeholder input. They have also undertaken the funding of many community based projects that would have otherwise been unattainable.

The SCNC has helped to fund the following projects and purchases over the last two years:

1. Ventura Blvd. median construction projects.
2. Moorpark Street median construction projects.
3. Books for our area schools – Rio Vista Elementary, Carpenter Street Elementary and Walter Reed Middle School.
4. Carpenter Street Elementary garden.
5. Studio City Beautification Association projects.
6. Beautification of the LARIO and Lilliard Outdoor School Room.
7. Beautification of the Studio City Library.
8. Purchase of musical instruments for Walter Reed Middle School.

Thank you for giving consideration to these facts as you grapple with the difficult choices required due to the projected budget deficit. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Sarkin.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Monahan Burke
Lisa Sarkin and
Rita Villa