

Date: 9/28/12

Submitted in ETN Committee

Council File No: 10-1797-57

Item No.: 1

Report: Communication from the LA Neighborhood Council Coalition.



**Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition**

President: Bob Gelfand  
Vice President: Leonard Shaffer  
Secretary: Daniel Wiseman  
Treasurer: Glenn Bailey

WEBSITE (Minutes, Documents, etc.): [www.lanccoalition.org](http://www.lanccoalition.org)  
WEB-BLOG (Notices, etc.): [lanccreports.blogspot.com](http://lanccreports.blogspot.com)  
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**MINUTES of JUNE 2, 2012 MEETING**

Hollywood Constituent Center  
6501 Fountain Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90028

**Preamble to the LANC COALITION BYLAWS (Revised February 8, 2008):**

The Neighborhood Councils of the City of Los Angeles do hereby create this Charter

- to provide a more effective voice for the residents of Los Angeles,
- to create a more effective system of Neighborhood Councils
- to communicate with each other, and
- to fulfill our responsibilities under the Los Angeles City Charter.

1. The **MEETING was CALLED TO ORDER**

Whereas: LANCC tries to gather and refer information necessary for NC Actions to the NCs but LANCC does not speak for specific NCs.

Therefore: LANCC wants to have representatives from all 95 NCs.

LANCC Representatives are responsible for communicating issues to their NCs.

It is not necessary for a NC Representative to be a NC Board Member.

Only one LANCC Representative from any single NC may vote on any single issue

LANCC assumes that these Representatives act in the best interest of their NC

(with or without specific approval of their NC)

(sections omitted)

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## 7. TOPIC: Response to Mr. Park's MOTION Re: NC OUTREACH

BACKGROUND: Recently, Mr. Parks/Ms Perry drafted CF #10-1797-S7.

Its first sentence is pregnant with meaning: "There are several major issues pending before the City Council and there is legitimate concern that our neighborhood councils are either not informed, or then have not discussed them and taken positiona, or they do not realize the extent of impact to their communities these issues would have, or they have not communicated their views to the City Council. For example, ...the waste-shed facilities proposal..." In response, a LANCC MOTION (see Appendix #1) was put before the LANCC.

- a. Daniel Wiseman noted that this could be taken to indicate that Mr. Parks and Ms. Perry want to be sure that the NCs fulfill their obligation to "...advise the City ..." That, however, will require that:
- #1 – The "major issues" are defined and itemized by the Mayor and City Council
  - #2 – The background and importance of all "major issues" be systematically provided to the NCs with enough time allowed (minimum 90 days) for information gathering, processing, presentation, deliberation and decision-making by the NCs.
  - #3 – The NCs will be given ample opportunity to present their views to the Mayor and City Council. (not just "2-minute Public Comments")
  - #4 - That a "feed-back loop" be established for each "major issue" that will be used to evaluate the decision-makers recommendations and
  - #5 - that the NCs be afforded the opportunity to regularly report back to the Mayor and City Council on the status, implementation and impact of the "major issue."
- b. Jay Handal added that the Regional Alliances should be able to participate. The WRAC process takes 90 days. So far, NCs do not get the necessary information in time to react. They are expected to find, define and process the "major issues" without help from the Mayor, City Council or Departments.

Mr. Handal and Ivan Speigel have drafted background material, see Appendix #1, and proposed the following MOTION as a RESPONSE MOTION to the Parks proposal (CF #10-1797-S7):

This is the full text of background material and the response motion to CF #10-1797-S7 (the Parks/Perry proposal for NCs to report on specific issues) is included on the following pages:

WHEREAS COUNCIL MEMBER PARKS HAS MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER PERRY, REQUIRING NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS TO REPORT BACK TO E & N ON HOW NC'S PERFORM OUTREACH WITH REGARDS TO CITY ISSUES.

Be it resolved that LANCC, in its regular meeting dated 6/2/2012, moves to approve the following response to the motion:

Neighborhood Councils, by charter and ordinance, are mandated to be the link between the City government and the citizens of Los Angeles. Neighborhood councils recognize their responsibility in this matter. In an effort to do so, many NC's have created newsletters, blast e-mails, events, town halls and other forms of outreach.

BUT, the City of Los Angeles has not, for the most part, established any kind of procedures that would allow Neighborhood Councils to fulfill this duty. In fact, many of the current procedures are set up to work against any input from stakeholders and their elected Neighborhood Councils. What follows are only a few examples:

A- Neighborhood Councils are NOT advised in advance of issues. In many cases, Neighborhood Councils are never apprised of issues, thereby making it impossible for the NC's to get the word out, get feedback, and deliver said feedback to the elected officials. Many issues only come to the attention of the NC's within 72 hours of the issue being heard by the City Council. As the elected officials must realize, NC's are bound by the Brown Act and do not have the ability to respond officially within such a short period of time. There isn't even enough time to file a Community Impact Statement.

B- The current DONE contact list is several years out of date. It is virtually impossible to get any kind of timely notice to the entire Neighborhood Council system. The present policy only allows each individual board member to update their personal information. The Secretary of each NC should be given a password and allowed to provide this information for their entire Board. Failure to do so should result in DONE hiring temp staff to do it for them with the salaries being deducted from the NC's yearly funding assessment.

C- When Neighborhood Council members, many of whom have to take time from their work, appear before a Committee or the whole Council, they are routinely given two minutes to report or give public comment on an issue. It is extremely difficult to give any kind of reasoned response in this short time allotment. If the City Council really wanted input from official NC representatives they should allow a reasonable time period for official input. Only last year, a Committee Chair combined four agenda items into one public comment period. Speakers were given two minutes to speak on four very different items. Not only did this negate any kind of meaningful input, but it was disrespectful of the NC representatives who took the time to travel downtown with the hope of real participation.

D- The relationship between Neighborhood Councils and their respective Council offices is a mixed bag. Some Council offices work closely with their NC's and actually request their input on certain issues. There are other Council offices that could care less about NC's and would actually like them to go away. Some don't even have the courtesy to return phone calls. If the goal of your motion is to explore ways for better citizen input - it has to start at the top.

E- There has been a systemic demolition of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment caused by the City's inability to generate revenue and cut expenses in a more prudent way, but there has been no reduction in the amount of services that they are required to provide. There is no question that this lack of a proper staffing level has caused the Department and the NC system to falter in their ability to stay fully informed. The staff at DONE has been reduced from a 2008 level of 49 employees with 18 field reps, to the current level of 15 employees with 7 field reps. During the same time period, the number of Neighborhood Councils has risen from 89 to 95. DONE is the NC's direct conduit to the City government and is in the best position to notify the Neighborhood Councils about upcoming legislation. Someone should be assigned to keep track of upcoming hearings and meetings but each current staff person is already trying to handle the work load of three previous workers.

F- City Council members are busy people, but if they really wanted Neighborhood Council input they would show up at meetings to hear it. Public testimony at full Council meetings is a farce. The members are talking on cell phones, meeting with constituents, or leaving the chamber for large periods of time. How can Neighborhood Councils take their role seriously if the decision makers don't or if, as in some cases, they have already decided how to vote and could care less about what we have to say or the amount of time it took us to formulate our recommendations.

THEREFORE, we request that Council member Parks submit a motion to the full City Council mandating the following:

- ✓ 1- All "important" issues should be sent to the Neighborhood Councils 60 days prior to their first hearing so that they may have time to reach out to their stakeholders and take a position. A good example of this is the weekly notice from the Planning Department which alerts NC's to the permits pulled for their district. Each City Department head should be responsible to work with the NC system as a partner, not an adversary.  
*applications filed*
- 2- The Department Of Neighborhood Empowerment shall compile and regularly update a contact list of all Neighborhood Council Board members.
- 3- The City Council and all of its committees shall allow a five minute public comment period to all speakers that are officially representing their Neighborhood Councils.
- 4- All Council District offices shall meet regularly with their Neighborhood Councils and work with them to develop plans allowing for greater NC input in the decision making process.

5- The Education and Neighborhoods Committee shall look into the funding of the Department Of Neighborhood Empowerment pertaining to its capacity to fulfill its mission. (An additional staff position shall be funded with part of the job description being to track all impending legislation and department hearings and to notify the Neighborhood Council system in a timely manner.)

6- Neighborhood Councils should be allowed to request a postponement of all upcoming legislation so that they may properly notify their stakeholders and have time to meet and take a position.

This body asks the Chairman to consider the above information when reviewing how NC's interact with their stakeholders and the City government.

Submitted by:

Jay Handal, Chair, West LA Neighborhood Council

Ivan Spiegel, Parliamentarian, Venice Neighborhood Council

c. After further discussion there was a restatement of the essential parts of the **RESPONSE MOTION** (Handal/Seigel) to the Parks proposal (**CF #10-1797-S7**):

- (1) All "important" issues should be sent to the NCs 60 days prior to their first hearing so that the NCs may have time to reach out to their stakeholders and take a position. A good example of this is the weekly notice from the Planning Department which alerts NCs to the applications filed for their District.

Each City Department head should be responsible to work with the NC system as a partner, not an adversary.

- (2) DONE shall compile and regularly update a contact list of all NC Board members.
- (3) The City Council and all of its Committees shall allow a five minute public comment period to all speakers that are officially representing their NCs.
- (4) All Council District offices shall meet regularly with their NCs and work with them to develop plans allowing for greater NC input in the decision making process.
- (5) The E&N Committee shall look into the funding of DONE pertaining to the capacity to fulfill its mission. An additional staff position shall be funded with part of its job description being to track all impending legislation and department hearings and to notify the NC system in a timely manner.

- (6) NCs should be allowed to request a postponement of all upcoming legislation so that they may properly notify their stakeholders and have time to meet and take a position.

This proposal in its six original parts was PASSED: 19 Ayes, 1 Nays, 1 Abstention.

The Chairman promised to get this action out to everyone and said the Executive Committee will assign specific people to deliver our recommendations, formally, to the E&N, to BONC and elsewhere.

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**10-1797-S7 MOTION (Parks – Perry) relative to a request to the Neighborhood Councils to report on their process for community outreach efforts as well as on the status of their understanding and awareness of major, key issues pending before the City Council, such as proposals to establish eleven waste-sheds in their neighborhoods to serve as temporary repositories for waste separation of recyclable materials.**

**“There are several major issues pending before the City Council and there is legitimate concern that our neighborhood councils are either not informed, or they have not discussed them and taken positions, or they do not realize the extent of impact to their communities these issues would have, or they have not communicated their views to the City Council. For example, the Board of Public Works has recommended adoption of an Exclusive Franchise agreement for the collection of solid waste within the City of Los Angeles. The Exclusive Franchise Agreement would apply to waste collection for all commercial property owners and tenants and multifamily properties, including rental units covered by the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. This action is intended to generate a higher waste diversion rate by requiring mandatory commercial recycling.**

**The major issue related to residential neighborhoods is the location of the waste-sheds that are to be located throughout the City. The waste-sheds serve as the temporary repository for waste separation of recyclable materials. These facilities will produce environmental issues which will be of concern to the residents in adjacent and nearby neighborhoods. It is also likely that the waste-sheds will produce odors, attract vermin, and possibly lead to ground contamination. Any and all of these conditions may affect the quality of life for adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods. These issues should be fully investigated and findings shared with residents in affected neighborhoods.**

**It is critical that single-family property owners, tenants and small multifamily property owners in the neighborhoods located within the affected radius of the eleven proposed waste-sheds are provided with an opportunity to hear the arguments for and against the proposed Exclusive and Non-Exclusive Franchise agreements. This is an example of a major issue which requires open and well publicized meetings to allow testimony by all concerned parties and to disclose findings from studies and reports related to the proposed Exclusive Franchise Waste Collection Agreement. We also need to know the extent of outreach conducted by our City departments to neighborhood councils on these major issues.**

**I THEREFORE MOVE that the Neighborhood Councils be requested to report to the Education and Neighborhoods Committee on their process for community outreach efforts as well as on the status of their understanding and awareness of major, key issues pending before the City Council, including, for example, the proposals to establish eleven waste-sheds in their neighborhoods to serve as the temporary repository for waste separation of recyclable materials, as well as other key issues.”**

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**Here is the Mar Vista CC COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT:**

**Re: City issues and NCs**

**WHEREAS: Council Member Parks has made a motion, seconded by Council Member Perry, requiring Neighborhood Councils to report to the Education And Neighborhoods Committee on how NC's perform with regard to city issues, Be it resolved that the Mar Vista Community Council, in its regular meeting of July LO, 20t2, moves to approve the following response to the motion:**

**Neighborhood Councils, by charter and ordinance, are mandated to be the link between the City government and the citizens of Los Angeles.**

**The Mar Vista Community Council recognizes its responsibility in this matter. In an effort to comply with the mandate, MVCC has inserted notices in its newsletter; created blast e-mails; organized events, town halls and other forms of outreach and has sent representatives to speak before the City**

**Council and its committees. MVCC works cooperatively with Council Members Rosendahl and Koretz on issues of importance to MVCC stakeholders.**

**HOWEVER, the City of Los Angeles has not, for the most part, established any kind of procedures that would facilitate Neighborhood Councils in fulfilling this duty.**

**THEREFORE, the Mar Vista Community Council requests that Council Member Parks submit a motion to the full City Council mandating the following:**

**All significant issues should be sent to the Neighborhood Councils at least 60 days prior to their first hearing so the NCs have adequate time to reach out to their stakeholders and take a position.**

**The City Council and all of its committees shall allow a five minute comment period to all speakers that are officially representing their Neighborhood Councils.**

**All Council District Offices shall meet regularly with the Neighborhood Councils and work with them to develop plans allowing for greater NC input in the decision making process.**

**The Education and Neighborhoods Committee shall investigate the funding of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment pertaining to its capacity to fulfill its mission. An additional staff position shall be funded with part of the job description being to track all impending legislation and department hearings and to notify the Neighborhood Council system in a timely manner. Neighborhood Councils should be allowed to request a postponement of all upcoming legislation so that they may properly notify their stakeholders and have time to take a position.**