

October 15, 2013

To the Honorable Bernard Parks, Chair of the Education and Neighborhood Committee and Committee Members,

I am unable to attend today's meeting as a result of health issues but I did want my voice to be heard on the issues before you relating to Harassment, Bullying, and Sexism.

I am one of the 5 North Hills West Neighborhood Council board members who resigned on September 19, 2013 because of the intolerable conditions under which I was volunteering.

Being of service to my community was a goal I had and participating in Neighborhood Council was a wonderful avenue to do so. I took an oath to be honest, operate with transparency and integrity, and abide by the By Laws of the Neighborhood Council and the City of Los Angeles. It also was vital to be involved, cooperative, and committed to the aim of Neighborhood Councils. I was!

But, at the present time the North Hills West Neighborhood Council is not abiding by or complying with By Laws, rules of civility, ethics, respect or common courtesy. This board has shown patterns of discrimination, bullying, and taunting. The executive has not heeded the advice and instructions from DONE or the Office of the City Attorney.

Added to this is my disillusion relating to the policies DONE preaches but does nothing about. They have been aware for several months, via e-mails, phone calls and observers that these issues were simmering and there was no action taken. The words were "We Are Working On It."

So I heartily endorse your proposal to mandate training for Neighborhood Council leaders and volunteers and not allow them to evade this very important issue of harassment, discrimination, and written and or verbal bullying training. When these actions are observed and documented there should be consequences for this behavior that should be part of the general By Laws of all Neighborhood Councils with no exceptions.

Thank you for hearing my voice,

Anita Goldbaum
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Submitted in EFN Committee
Council File No: 11-1017-51
Item No.: 7
Deputy: Ruben

11-1017-51

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EDUCATION & NEIGHBORHOODS

MOTION

In 2012 the City Council adopted an Arts Parks and Neighborhoods Committee report instructing the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) with the assistance of the City Attorney to report back to Council with a plan that would implement mandated training for neighborhood council leaders in areas that could impact liability to the city.

The recent resignations of six North Hills West Neighborhood Council leaders due to allegations of sexism and unprofessional behavior call into question once again, why our neighborhood council leaders are not undergoing specific training as all city employees are required to better equip them with the tools to professionally lead a community organization.

While DONE has already stated that they were working to mediate a solution prior to the resignations, we as a city can not ignore these allegations and must endeavor to ensure that our neighborhood councils are not hostile environments for community members. Hostile environments deter stakeholders from participating in the neighborhood council process. DONE should take every step to investigate the claims of harassment and misconduct that have been alleged by the former members of the North Hills West Neighborhood Council.

I THEREFORE MOVE that DONE be instructed to report to Education and Neighborhoods Committee in 30 days on what actions have been taken to investigate the allegations of discrimination and harassment made by the resigning members of the North Hills West Neighborhood Council.

I FURTHER MOVE that this report include a status update on what progress has been made on implementing a training program for neighborhood council members as requested in CF# 11-1017.

I FURTHER MOVE that any plan for training programs for neighborhood council leaders be mandated for all board members.

PRESENTED BY:

Nury Martinez & M. Engle
NURY MARTINEZ
Councilwoman, 6th District

SECONDED BY:

Bernard C. Parker

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