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CALIFORNIA

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Department of
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GENERAL MANAGER

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Commission@EmpowerLA.org

TELEPHONE: (213) 978-1551

August 13, 2015

CF Nos: 15-0524 and 15-0389

Honorable Members of the
Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Members:

We are writing in response to General Manager Grayce Liu's report pursuant to Council Files 15-0524 and 15-0389. We are appreciative of her thoughtful and detailed work in reviewing the implications related to issues on which you requested input. We wanted to add our input on several of the issues.

First, we support giving Neighborhood Councils at least five minutes of presentation time at all City Council meetings outside of public comment. We'd also like to comment on the inclusion of Alliances as groups within this category. We support NC Alliances having a place at the table, but want to be very clear about the definition of what constitutes Alliances that are part of this special group. We believe there should be clarity as to the process whereby Alliances arrive at their positions through a one-time submission of that process in writing. We feel that doing this will ensure balanced consideration of voices so that views of Neighborhood Councils with a significant stake in a policy decision are not discounted in deference to the coalition power of an Alliance.

Second, with regard to NC Funding to City Departments, we would like to emphasize the language in the original motion providing a high degree of transparency in the decision making process. Ultimately, we want to make sure that the benefit of any contribution inures to the community. There needs to be clarity whether the contribution is made to the department directly, or given to a participating nonprofit or Council Office for example. An MOU agreement or other documentation of this funding relationship, i.e., a form similar to a Neighborhood Purposes Grant, should provide this information as well outlining the need for such support. One great solution would be to ensure NCs are acknowledged directly on the purchase so that everyone is clear where the funding came from.

Lastly, we support the concept of rollover of funds for Neighborhood Councils with the details to worked out, while keeping in mind the staffing constraints at the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. You will note in the NC Funding Program Efficiencies section of GM Liu's report, the Department outlined the significant work done in processing NC funding. This was not done by DONE staff alone; they were supported in this work by volunteers who helped make up for the continued personnel shortages.

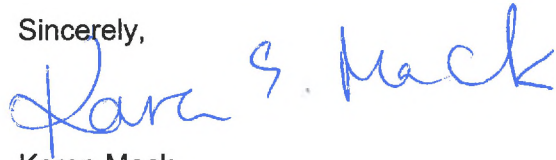
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It is great to be working with you to implement the recommendations of the working group so that our Neighborhood Council system will continue to make strides towards greater efficiency and effectiveness. We look forward to participating in the process of working out the details through a healthy dialogue on each of the key issues. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen S. Mack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Karen Mack

President

Board of Neighborhood Commissioners