

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council

Name: Darcy Harris

Phone Number: (213) 595-8350

Email: darcy.harris.epnc@gmail.com

The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(18) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 11/27/2018

Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 12/10/2018

Update to a Previous Input: Yes

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 18-0467

Agenda Date: 12/11/2018

Item Number: 1

Summary: EPNC supports the motion for NC Reforms with several recommendations, including: The "Community Interest Stakeholder" category should not be eliminated. We support a revised definition of "substantial and ongoing participation" and strongly recommend including students and parents/guardians/immediate family members of students attending schools in the NC area. The City should consider that community members are involuntarily leaving communities they have ties to due to economic pressure and should consider how to include these community members in the NC process. Individual NC's should continue to be able to decide how many seats may be filled by Community Interest Stakeholders as well as voter eligibility for various seats. We support a uniform minimum age of 16 for voting in NC elections. The minimum age for boardmembers should also be 16, and individual NC's should be able to determine through their bylaws whether the minimum age for each board seat is 18 years or younger. NC's should be allowed to accept donations; the City should clarify that donations be for direct community benefit and take additional steps to avoid ethical dilemmas. The City should negotiate a Joint Use Agreement or other high level operational agreement with LAUSD to make local school facilities available for NC use, as well as sharing city facilities. EPNC recommends that DONE staff take on the administrative duties of Secretary and Treasurer for every NC at the Department's cost. This will ensure fiscal responsibility, consistency and compliance with Department and City regulations. Secretarial duties would include proper storage of archival documents, maintenance of websites, and communication of Board actions to appropriate points of contact. One staff person could handle the duties for 10 or more neighborhood councils, and the community benefit would outweigh a slight reduction in individual NC budgets if this function were provided for by the Department.

ECHO PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

1226 Alvarado St., L.A. CA 90026



Community Impact Statement (CIS)

Council File Number: 18-0467

Recommendations re: Proposed Reforms to the
Neighborhood Council System

November 27, 2018



**CERTIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD
COUNCIL
APRIL 16, 2002**

To: Honorable City Council, Los Angeles City Hall, 200 N. Spring Street, room 395, Los Angeles, CA 90012 c/o Office of the City Clerk.

The Echo Park Neighborhood Council (EPNC) is requesting that the aforesaid Supplemental CIS be attached to Council File No. 18-0467. On November 27, 2018, with a quorum of 18, the EPNC Board of Governors held a Brown Act-noticed meeting and with a vote of 18 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions, the EPNC voted to submit this supplemental CIS.

The Echo Park Neighborhood Council supports Council File 18-0467 in principle and if amended and clarified as set forth below, and believes the proposed reforms for the Neighborhood Council system will make the system a more valuable asset for the Stakeholders of Los Angeles. We submit the following recommendations on the proposals in Councilmember Ryu's motion:

1. No recommendation re: amending City Charter to change the names of DONE, BONC and EmpowerLA.
2. EPNC opposes removing the "Community Interest Stakeholder" category. EPNC supports the proposed definition for "substantial and ongoing participation" as included in the BONC November 5, 2018 Special Meeting agenda (Item # 10) (see "BONC-Recommendation-Substantial-and-Ongoing-Community-Interest-Stakeholder.pdf" attached hereto as Ex. A) and strongly recommends including students and parents/guardians/immediate family members of students attending schools in the NC area. Further, the City Council should consider that community members are involuntarily leaving communities they have ties to due to economic pressure and should consider how to include these community members in the NC process. Individual NC's should continue to be able to decide how many seats may be filled by Community Interest Stakeholders as well as voter eligibility for various seats.

3. EPNC supports clarification of public elections being the process by which Boards be determined and seated every two years, with selection being an option for filling vacancies that arise during board terms, and that DONE be allowed to use a selection to fill vacancies in the case of lack of sufficient members to constitute a quorum and under circumstances of exhaustive efforts.
4. EPNC has no recommendation on a review of whether seats are equitably allocated.
5. EPNC supports a uniform minimum age of 16 for voting in NC elections. We further support that the minimum age for boardmembers also be 16, and that individual NC's should be able to determine through their bylaws whether the minimum age for each board seat is 18 years or younger.
6. EPNC supports developing and adopting a planning and land use training required for all Chairs and Vice-Chairs of planning and land use committees. We further recommend that all committee members of Neighborhood Council planning and land use committees be required to take such training to better understand the process and protect the needs of the communities they serve, and this training should also be made available to all boardmembers.
7. EPNC supports allowing NC's to roll-over a maximum of \$10,000 to the next fiscal year.
8. EPNC supports removing Section 5.485.h of Chapter 88 of Division 5 of the LA Municipal Code in order to remove limitations on the ability of NCs to accept in-kind or monetary donations. EPNC further recommends that the City clarify that donations be for direct community benefit and takes additional steps to avoid ethical dilemmas.
9. EPNC supports any and all ways to increase Stakeholder participation in elections, potentially including holding all Neighborhood Council elections on the same day, as well as online voting, voting by mail, and expansion of polling hours including pop-ups.
10. EPNC supports creating a process, with the assistance of GSD and the City Clerk, to assist Neighborhood Councils with accessing shared space in City facilities, as authored by the Los Angeles City Council in Council File 16-0298. Further, the City should negotiate a Joint Use Agreement or other high level operational agreement with LAUSD to make local school facilities available for NC use. (*See Motion passed by BONC Funding Equity Work Group May 17, 2018, submitted to Health, Education and Neighborhood Councils Committee on August 14, 2018, and attached hereto as Ex. B – at Section 3*).
11. EPNC supports that DONE develop an ongoing compendium of best practices generated from Neighborhood Councils and share those on a periodic basis with all Neighborhood Councils and include “how-to guides” for accomplishing those best practices in partnership with additional training through the NCD.
12. EPNC recognizes the value of consistent relationships with City Departments and believes designating a consistent single point of contact for key city departments and agencies could be useful for developing the kinds of relationships that best serve the community. However, particularly as a volunteer organization, such designation should not be used as a limitation to impede access or restrict communication between NC members and City Departments and their staff.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION:

13. EPNC recommends that DONE staff take on the administrative duties of Secretary and Treasurer for every NC at the Department's cost. This will ensure fiscal responsibility, consistency and compliance with Department and City regulations. Secretarial duties would include proper storage of archival documents, maintenance of websites, and communication of Board actions to City, County, State, and Federal points of contact. One staff person could handle the duties for 10 or more neighborhood councils, and the community benefit would outweigh a slight reduction in individual NC budgets if this function were provided for by the Department.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darcy Harris', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Darcy Harris

Vice Chair, Echo Park Neighborhood Council

The types and duration of contacts necessary to constitute “substantial and ongoing” participation for a community interest stakeholder shall be defined as follows:

A community interest stakeholder (CIS) is a person who, not less than ninety (90) days prior to the Neighborhood Council election or selection, is a member of or associated with a community based organization that has a physical address within the Neighborhood Council boundaries where the participants meet and/or the organization carries on its activities.

The organization must have been in existence within the Neighborhood Council boundaries for not less than one (1) year prior to the Neighborhood Council election or selection and must be one that confers some benefit on the community, which may include but is not limited to educational institutions, faith based institutions, community organizations or other non-profit organizations.

Membership in, association with, participation in or patronization of organizations such as, but not limited to those that deal in sales to the public or personal service organizations or businesses are not of the type of contacts that would establish substantial and ongoing participation.

EX. A

Attn:
David Ryu, Councilmember District Four
Gil Cedillo, Councilmember District One
Herb Wesson, Councilmember District Ten

August 14, 2018

Los Angeles City Council
Health, Education, and Neighborhood Councils Committee
200 Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Councilmembers:

Please accept as general public comment the attached copies of formal motions adopted by the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC)'s Funding Equity Work Group.

It was intended that these motions be specifically (and concurrently) shared with your committee as well as BONC.

A number of the sentiments and recommendations contained within are generally known, with some actually under consideration in various forms, e.g. restoring an NC's ability to rollover funds into a new fiscal year.

However, some of the recommendations are not currently under legislative consideration.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Brad S. Kane
P.I.C.O. Neighborhood Council



Mark F. Mauceri
Los Feliz Neighborhood Council

EX, B

MOTION

Recent growth in the number of certified neighborhood councils (NC's) has compelled formal public discussion on how to potentially realize an annual financial budgeting model that ensures NCs are equitably funded to fulfill their charges of being official advisory bodies, assisting in the delivery of city services and promoting public participation in city governance.

To this end, in early 2018, a "Funding Equity Work Group" comprised of current NC board members was empaneled as a sub-committee of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) to provide insight and recommendations to strengthen the system as an amalgamation of individual councils.

Los Angeles' Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils is over fifteen years old and fast approaching two decades of existence. Since its inception, much has been learned about how, currently over 97 councils, can more effectively serve their communities.

Each council is unique by dint of its boundaries, its internal organization, and its expenses to operate effectively. While there are many similarities, no two NC's are "identical." Like other entities, the individual councils and the entire NC system is continually evolving.

Based on their operational realities, necessary expenditures vary widely across NC's. In order to move closer to an equitable NC funding model, we advise the options enumerated below be pursued immediately to help "normalize" these variable NC costs.

Foremost among them are:

1. LANGUAGE TRANSLATION AND ASSOCIATED COSTS

Language translation services for NC's as mandated by California State law (Ca. Civ. Code 1632 et seq.) should be budgeted, facilitated, and remunerated by a City of Los Angeles entity such as--if not--the one currently tasked with coordinating such services for other local government meetings.

Funding could be potentially realized through the "Neighborhood Council Fund", which official reports indicate it aggregated over \$570K from individual unspent NC funds in fiscal 2016-2017. While there are no guarantees this fund will be annually replenished to this extent or one higher or lower, the funding currently exists to launch a program that would immediately relieve the uneven burden of NC translation costs, while allowing a costing trend to be measured across future years, enabling more accurate budget forecasting for these mandated expenses.

These costs were previously budgeted and allocated by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), as was facilitating the actual services themselves, until sometime around 2012, when NC's were informed they would be responsible for providing and paying for them going forward. The reality of where one NC can have onerously high annual translation costs, yet another can incur none, creates a funding equity disparity in

and of itself. Further, any council can incur unanticipated translation costs at any time, as these services must be provided nearly on demand.

2. AVAILABILITY OF CITY "SHARED SPACE" FACILITIES

Accelerate any previous plans (e.g., Council File 12-0298) or initiate new discussions to make municipally owned property viable for regular use as NC meeting space.

Further, if employing a "Memorandum of Understanding" or similar agreement, a high-level understanding of the specific issues and a formal agreement that ensures the conditioned use of these spaces must be disseminated to all personnel tasked with facilitating them. A neighborhood council that has previously posted and otherwise made known the occurrence of a public meeting, as per the Ralph M. Brown Act, should not have to cancel, reschedule or otherwise juggle a meeting because space was not made accessible as agreed.

Crises or unavoidable situations notwithstanding, NC's must have assurances these spaces will be available for agreed dates and times, and the space shall be outfitted appropriately (e.g., electricity, HVAC, etc.) for public meeting use.

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) should spearhead this initiative with renewed vigor and urgency by, 1) Seeing a plan and formal agreement made operational and, 2) creating an continually updated resource for NC's to see what options are available to them, and how to easily facilitate such usage.

3. AVAILABILITY OF LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (LAUSD) FACILITIES

Accelerate any previous plans or initiate new discussions to make LAUSD-owned property viable for regular use as NC meeting space.

The State of California Civic Center Act (Cal. Civ. Code Section 38130 et seq.) guarantees general public use of tax-funded school spaces for civic activities. However the process for securing such LAUSD use is often convoluted, unnecessarily restrictive, and viewed as generally unreliable or unnecessarily restrictive.

Further, if employing a "Memorandum of Understanding", "Joint Use Agreement" or similar covenant such as what is being contemplated under Council File 16-0841 a high-level operational agreement should be codified by the Mayor, LAUSD Superintendent and the LAUSD Board of Education ensuring all LAUSD locations and site officials (i.e., Principals & Vice Principals) are well versed in, and completely supportive, of this initiative.

Similar to the aforementioned use of municipally owned properties, a NC council should be able to rely on these spaces being reliably accessible, with a cohesive operational plan outlining the roles and responsibilities of dedicated personnel to ensure success, potentially with a dedicated "Ombudsman" or similar position created to act as a liaison between the two municipal entities to troubleshoot and streamline operations.

Further, it should be duly noted that since their inception, the citywide system of neighborhood councils have provided an estimated \$ (DONE/ City Clerk to verify) in financial assistance directly to LAUSD schools, or indirectly through "Friends of" or other

501 (c) (3) organizations dedicated to assisting Los Angeles public schools. In fact, only two funding grant options are available to NC's: Public schools and 501 (c)(3) non-profit organizations as directed by Los Angeles Administrative Code (LAAC) Sec. 22.817.

In helping NC's lower necessary operational costs, LAUSD would essentially be assisting in creating optional grant funding that they have in the past, benefitted from.

4. REINSTATEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL NC FISCAL YEAR ROLLOVER FUNDING

In 2010, during the City's "financial crisis," the ability for a neighborhood council to "roll over" unspent funds into a new fiscal year was eliminated, arguably because many neighborhood councils had accrued large budget balances and a, "Use-It-or-Lose-It" policy would compel them to utilize their funding in a timely manner.

The unintended consequence of this policy is it creates an environment where end-of-year NC "panic spending" occurs to allocate funding, rather than having it "swept," which is sometimes considered a dereliction of a civic duty.

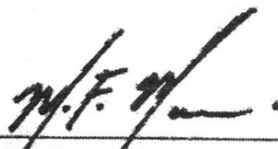
Administrating this "hard cutoff" is problematic because spending approval deadlines are accelerated, access to information systems get shut down, and some councils have encountered gray policy areas where vendor refunds processed after the deadline are deemed irreconcilable and also swept.

A fixed percentage of an NC's preceding year's annual budget should be eligible for rollover into the next fiscal year with a cap placed on the total funding balance an NC can accrue, before seeing any additional funds rolled over.

By moving with alacrity and all due haste to mitigate two distinct NC cost centers: eliminating NC-borne language translation and space use costs, and retaining a percentage of unspent funds, BONC, the City Council and Mayor can create an immediate benefit to all neighborhood councils, and move the system closer to a model of funding equity.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Funding Equity Working Group incorporates the recommendations provided here into its final findings to be formally transmitted to BONC, the City Council's Health, Education and Neighborhood Councils Committee, and other interested parties as a formal "Report Back" recommendation.

Presented by: _____

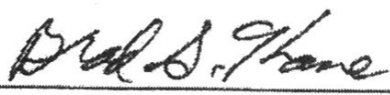

MARK F. MAUCERI

Los Feliz Neighborhood Council

MAY 17, 2018

ADOPTED 14-0-0

Seconded by: _____


BRAD S. KANE

P.I.C.O. Neighborhood Council