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4024 Radford Ave.
Edit. Bldg. 2, Suite 6
Studio City, CA 91604
(818) 655-5400

www.StudioCityNC.org

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April 17, 2016

Dear Honorable President Wesson,

Sent by Email

John Walker, past president of the Studio City Neighborhood Council (SCNC) suggested I contact you because of the numerous problems surrounding the Studio City Neighborhood Council. Please know that I was a candidate and at this point was not re-elected. There are at least 6 challenges filed by stakeholders against the election. I personally received more than 80 emails from stakeholders complaining about the process. I respect the Neighborhood Council system, so I want you to know what occurred during our election period, so that this does not continue in other NCs elections.

Our board voted for online balloting. From the beginning we were given mixed signals about how the process was going to work. Grace Lin, Amber Mesback and Jay Handal from DONE visited the board several times. The reason for so many visits was because their information and instructions were not consistent. We were told that all online voting must be documentation, but half of the NCs who are on online voting, did not use documentation but affirmation.

We were assured that our bylaws would be enforced as to the seating of the board and what documentation is allowed, but that was not enforced either. We were told to push the online voting but the system was broken from the beginning and then the stakeholders' personal information was sent out by email by the City Clerk online for more than 13 hours. Nobody wanted to vote online and that was revealed. Also, more than 1/3 of the certified online voters, never received codes to vote before the election and 99 of the 263 possible online voters were never certified at all.

The SCNC bylaws for the 15 board seats were originally approved in 2008 and there have been a few changes since then. The last approval by DONE of the bylaws was September, 2015, so everyone should have known how our election should be handled. President John Walker, Secretary Rita Villa and me, Vice President/President Lisa Sarkin were in constant contact with DONE staff by phone calls and emails about the inconsistencies of the documentation on the EmpowerLA website and our bylaws. As the DONE election materials were distributed, we saw that the forms were all generalized and we immediately asked for them to conform to the SCNC. We were told that the City Clerk gave DONE the list of acceptable documentation and it would not be changed. We went back and forth for weeks until John Walker finally was told that our complaints would be rectified. I asked Holly Wolcott a few days ago, exactly what the city clerk produced for DONE. This is her reply "The City Clerk was responsible for the candidate filing piece of the election as well as providing supplies, paper ballots, signage etc." The biggest problem was the choice of documents allowed for identification. Our bylaws are clear that employees, business owners

and business property owners must give goods and services in Studio City, but that was not enforced.

The instructional meetings where volunteers were to learn how to assist in the voting, was not how the voting was conducted. It appeared that nobody from the paid DONE staff, the city clerk staff or the SCNC volunteers knew anything about the way the voting was to be conducted on April 7, 2016 until Stephen Box started instructing them about 2:30 PM with the voting to begin at 4:00 PM. It was total pandemonium inside the polling place from the minute the polls opened. I was outside 100 feet away, but stakeholders came to me to complain about what was going on inside.

The election day was still filled with up to the minute changes in procedures. The staff was not brought up to speed until an hour before the start of voting at 4:00 PM. Some stakeholders were unable to use documentation that was listed on the Empowerment website. A husband and wife, voting for the first time, each brought a utility bill to show they owned their home. This, believe it or not, was on the accepted list for a homeowner to use. The husband was not allowed to vote and the wife was. When stakeholders complained about the documentation requirements, the DONE staff told them it was the SCNC's fault that these issues were causing them problems. This was going on in the rooms where stakeholders were voting. Stakeholders list confusion with the staff and they were subjected to candidates being allowed to invade the 100 foot radius zone around the polling place. These are issues causing the challenges.

Eric Preven, Patrice Berlin and other candidates were inside the polling place and were told several times to leave. Preven was yelling inside the online voting room, accusing me and using my name, "I see people in these rooms so they could doctor the ballots." They were talking to voters within the prohibited space, but were not disqualified. This is one of the many issues causing the challenges.

DONE had no supervision outside the polling place, where numerous violations of electioneering took place. Candidates blocking the sidewalk and making voters feel uncomfortable. Several stakeholders sent in complaints about the violation. I asked for some supervision, when Stephen Box came inside and told me he did not have the staff to man the outside of the building. This is another issue causing the challenges.

As I understand the process for the hearing of the challenges on Monday night, DONE has appointed three Independent Election Administrators (IEA) to hear the issues and determine what remedy will go forward. My issue with these IEAs is that they are hearing issues brought against DONE who pay them. We have been told, although it is not included in the 2016 Election Manual that the challenges will be heard by our peers, but IEAs are not peers to NC board members.

In the end, even the vote count for online voters does not reconcile with the list of names we were given after the election. Many provisional ballots were not counted with documentation that was allowed for candidate and voter certification before the election day.

The entire voting season, from the misinformation about online voting to the election day itself, was a total bust. The money spent on this election was obscene. The SCNC spent close to \$9,000 pushing online voting, but most of the stakeholders who tried to vote online were turned away because they did not receive their voting codes or they did not produce the correct documentation or they were just not contacted at all by DONE.

I can probably go on much more, but I have tried to give you the worst of the worst. I am open to attending a committee or city council meeting to discuss this entire process in

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public or with you personally. I feel the reputation of DONE and the SCNC is at stake and that would be the most profound injustice I can imagine.

Sincerely yours,

Lisa Sarkin

Lisa Sarkin, President
Studio City Neighborhood Council

Cc: Councilmember Krekorian, Areen Ibranossian, John Walker

