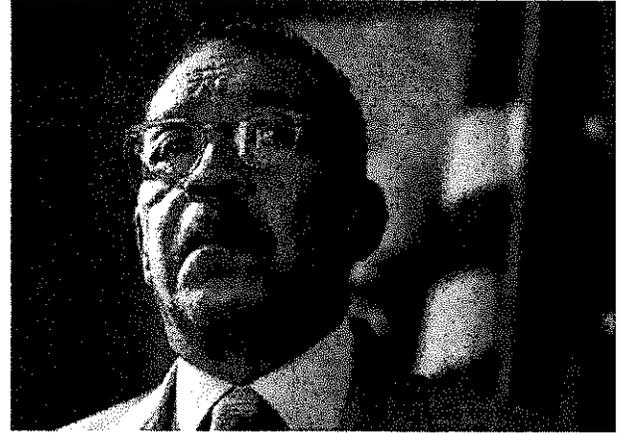


Why is LA's City Council Ignoring the Recommendations of the LA 2020 Commission? (Part 1)

09 Jan 2015 Written by Jack Humphreville



WHO WE ARE-Nine months ago, on April 9, 2014, all twelve members of the LA 2020 Commission endorsed a series of actionable recommendations designed to "enhance transparency and accountability in City Hall, put the City on a path to fiscal stability, and renew job creation in Los Angeles."

These measures were also viewed as an excellent starting point by Maria Elena Durazo, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, and Gary Toebben, the President of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

Yet, despite this widespread support from organized labor, the business community, and the political establishment, why has City Council President Herb Wesson failed to even consider these common sense recommendations?

On March 28, 2013, shortly after the voters of Los Angeles rejected Proposition A, the City Hall sponsored measure that would have increased our sales tax to 9½%, Herb Wesson announced with great fanfare that he had asked Mickey Kantor, a prominent civic leader and former Secretary of Commerce in the Clinton Administration, and Austin Beutner, a former deputy mayor and now Publisher of the Los Angeles Times, to form a commission to "review how the City of Los Angeles can help grow the economy and jobs, attract business investment and industry, and create fiscal stability for the City."

At a January 8, 2014 press conference kicked off by Herb Wesson, the LA 2020 Commission released its first report, *A Time for Truth*, a well-researched, hard hitting analysis that the Los Angeles Times called a "stark reality check" that outlined the afflictions impacting our City: "weak job growth; high poverty; bad traffic; underperforming schools; weak, inactive government; red tape that stifles economic development; crumbling infrastructure; unfunded pensions; budget gimmicks; and a dissatisfied electorate."

Herb Wesson was also center stage at the April 9, 2014 press conference when the Commission announced its unanimous recommendations that were contained in its report, *A Time for Action*.

On May 6, 2014, the full City Council listened to a 20 minute presentation by Mickey Kantor and Austin Beutner, followed by an hour of questions, comments, suggestions, and opinions by members of the City Council.

Herb Wesson also promised to vet these recommendations in a thorough and timely manner.

On September 26, 2014, the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee, chaired by Herb Wesson, discussed the LA 2020 Commission's recommendations for all of seventeen minutes, and, along with Tom LaBonge, referred the recommendations to the appropriate committees of the City Council.

To date, other than the call to have city elections coincide with state and federal elections in even years, none of the recommendations for greater transparency and accountability, fiscal stability, or job creation have been acted upon by Paul Krekorian and his Budget & Finance Committee, Felipe Fuentes and his Energy & Environment Committee, Tom LaBonge and his Trade, Commerce, and Tourism Committee, Curren Price and his Economic Development Committee, and Jose Huizar and his Planning and Land Use Management Committee.

Despite higher than projected tax revenues and fat returns on its pension assets, 2015 is shaping up to be a difficult year for the City. The City is projecting a \$165 million deficit next year. There is labor unrest as many City employees are working without a contract. There is no plan to fix our lunar cratered streets and broken sidewalks. DWP will be asking for huge rate increases for both water and power. Residents are upset with runaway development and increased traffic.

And most importantly, Angelenos do not trust or respect City Hall.

That is why the New Year's resolutions for Herb Wesson, the City Council, and Back to Basics Mayor Eric Garcetti should include a pledge to vet the recommendations of the LA 2020 Commission in an open, transparent, and timely manner. There should be a special emphasis on establishing an Office of Transparency and Accountability to oversee the City's finances and the creation of a Commission on Retirement Security to make recommendations on how to "achieve equilibrium on retirement costs by 2020.

Herb, the LA 2020 Commission was created at your request. Its members spent a year developing their findings and recommendations. Now it is your Time for Action. The voters, taxpayers, media, and the Commission expect and deserve no less.

(Jack Humphreville writes LA Watchdog for CityWatch. He is the President of the DWP Advocacy Committee, The Ratepayer Advocate for the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council, and a Neighborhood Council Budget Advocate. Humphreville is the publisher of the Recycler Classifieds -- www.recycler.com. He can be reached at: lajack@gmail.com .)

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CityWatch

Vol 13 Issue 3

Pub: Jan 9, 2015

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