

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: NC Valley Village

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(13) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 02/22/2017

Type of NC Board Action: Against

Impact Information

Date: 03/08/2017

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 15-1022-S2

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Board of Neighborhood Council Valley Village has taken the following positions related to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Election Report Summary, CF 15-1022-S2, specifically as follows: 1. Voters may use any form of identification and may self affirm (oppose 13-0-0). 2. Voter age be lowered to 16 years (oppose 13-0-0). 3. There should be a maximum of 3 ballot types (approve 13-0-0). 4. EmpowerLA will seek funds to expand election outreach (approve 13-0-0). 5. Set aside 20% of NC funding for election outreach (oppose 13-0-0). In addition NCVV's Board voted (approve 11-2-0) to hold elections as scheduled in 2018. Further, our Board voted (approve 13-0-0) to formally request that our region be scheduled later this year.

A letter providing detailed information on each item has been sent to President Shaffer, President Wesson and Councilman Krekorian, and also to General Manager Grayce Liu.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
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March 3, 2017

The Honorable Leonard Shaffer, President
Board of Neighborhood Commissioners
The Honorable Herb J. Wesson
President, Los Angeles City Council
The Honorable Paul Krekorian
Los Angeles City Councilmember District 2

RE: Neighborhood Council Elections, CF 15-1022-S2

Dear President Shaffer, President Wesson and Councilman Krekorian:

At the February 22 meeting of Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV), our Board held a robust and lengthy discussion about proposed changes to the NC election process, detailed in the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Election Report Summary and referenced in Council File 15-1022-S2.

Our Board members thoroughly reviewed each recommendation, and engaged input from stakeholders who were present at Board and committee meetings. A separate vote was taken on each recommendation, and the Board added a sixth two-part recommendation that is unique to Valley Village and to our election "region".

The BONC recommendations and our Board's position on each are:

1. Voters may use any form of identification and may self-affirm their affiliation without any further documentation.

Our Board voted unanimously against this recommendation (13-0-0). We feel strongly that identification and proof of stakeholder status is important to the integrity of the election, and it has served our stakeholders well without creating any barrier to voter participation. The Board also strongly held the opinion (13-0-0) that online voting should not be mandatory but left up to each individual NC as they best know the successful methods of community engagement among their stakeholders.

2. Voter age be lowered to 16 years old where applicable.

Our Board voted unanimously against this recommendation (13-0-0). The discussion on this matter was led by our Student Board member, Cole Walker. Our bylaws allow for up to 2 student Board members who participate in all aspects of our Board's work. While their votes do not count toward a quorum, they are noted in our minutes. We provide a great "laboratory" for students to participate in every aspect of local government, and have successfully had 5 student Board members in our Board history, each serving a two-year term. We feel strongly that allowing the voting age to revert to 16, without

eligibility for a Board seat, is not appropriate. Board service for a student would be difficult. Our Board members are required to attend 11 Board meetings per year, serve on at least one Board committee, participate in one all-day retreat, and physically support our 3 annual signature events. The monthly time demands on our Board members are easily 10+ hours, most on week nights.

Board service would be particularly challenging for a student, as Juniors and Seniors do not typically have time to participate at levels required in our bylaws. What we provide in our NCVV student seat is a valuable learning experience that could/should be a template for other NCs. We feel very strongly that the voting age should remain at 18 years of age, and that a well-managed student Board seat can help integrate young people into the civics of city and neighborhood governance, and serve the dual purpose of grooming future Board members.

3. There should be a maximum of 3 ballot types for every Neighborhood Council election.

NCVV's Board of Directors voted unanimously to support this (13-0-0), and further encourages BONC and DONE to find a way to develop a balloting system that can incorporate small NCs such as Valley Village, which has one ballot allowing stakeholders to vote in all categories listed, as well as the larger NCs which ascribe to multiple district voting within their boundaries. The latter approach tends to be confusing to stakeholders and much more difficult to administer.

4. EmpowerLA will ask for funds to expand election outreach so that existing Board members aren't expected to do extensive outreach to find people to run against them.

NCVV's Board of Directors voted unanimously to support this (13-0-0). We wholeheartedly support this proposal and it has been recommended several times over various election cycles. Empower LA can play a positive role in promoting outreach at the Regional level; developing a full scale PR campaign to educate voters at each step of the process; i.e., announcing each regional election, the call for candidates, candidate forums, and election day information. The NCs could then concentrate on engaging voters and providing the detailed information relevant to each NC.

5. In an election year NCs should set aside 20% of their funding for election outreach notification and costs.

NCVV's Board of Directors voted unanimously against this recommendation (13-0-0). While our own NC does spend approximately 20% of our funding in election years on the election process, we are not in favor of establishing a 20% mandatory allocation. We feel this should be a decision left to each individual NC. We are a smaller NC and know what works best for engaging our stakeholders. Larger NCs face a greater challenge in reaching out to their stakeholders. Perhaps consideration should be given to establishing minimum requirements for all NCs related to tasks they need to accomplish before their election process could be approved; a checklist of sorts which outlines the tasks that must be completed in order to carry out a successful election. NCs could then allocate funds to complete each task according to what best works in their communities. EmpowerLA would be responsible for monitoring each task before moving on to the next. This approach provides continuity to the overall system but still gives the NCs the ability to tailor their outreach to the needs of their community.

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In addition to these five items put forward by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Election Report, Neighborhood Council Valley Village held two additional discussions and voted on two other matters:

Should the elections currently scheduled be held as planned in 2018, or postponed until 2019? *Although there was some disagreement among the Board, the majority felt (11-2-0) that the election should be held in 2018 as planned.*

The Board of Neighborhood Council Valley Village also voted unanimously (13-0-0) to request that the Southeast San Fernando Valley (Region 4) be allowed to move later into the election schedule, rather than having to go first or second as we have in the past several years.

We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Election Report Summary, and look forward to working with DONE and BONC to make the next elections the best yet.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Braswell
President, NCVV

Virginia M. Hatfield
Vice President, NCVV
Chair, Elections & Bylaws Committee

cc: Grayce Liu, General Manager Department of Neighborhood Empowerment
NCVV Board