

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(16) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 12/01/2016

Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 12/05/2016

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 16-1060

Agenda Date:

Item Number: 15

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council calls on the City Council and the relevant committees to immediately expedite the establishment of the Citizens Oversight Committee pursuant to the terms of Measure HHH, and to give the Committee the tools and authority necessary to effectively control the actions of the City departments, developers, stakeholders and neighborhoods it oversees on behalf of the tens of thousands of homeless City residents.

This needs to come BEFORE any other determinations about the HHH monies so we the people have input on all aspects of the funding.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

December 1, 2016

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Members of the Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Request to expedite the creation of the Citizens' Oversight Committee to ensure public accountability of resources for the homeless (CF 16-1060)

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council (HHPNC) which represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood strongly supports the immediate creation of the seven-member Citizens Oversight Committee ('COC' or 'the Committee') to effectively supervise the allocation of funds generated under from the recently passed the Homelessness Reduction and Prevention, Housing and Facilities Bond (aka Measure HHH) for affordable and supportive housing as well as requisite services for our homeless neighbors.

The HHPNC appreciates the passing of Measure HHH which will give the City of Los Angeles more funding to address the homelessness crisis in our neighborhoods and expand on programs addressing affordable and supportive housing and other quality of life issues for the economically challenged.

However, to ensure these funds are used wisely to assist the intended beneficiaries, and not to build up bureaucracies and fiefdoms in the enterprises supposed to be providing services to the homeless, we call on the City Council to move forward immediately on the establishment of the COC as set forth as a condition of Measure HHH.

HHPNC – Citizens’ Oversight Committee to ensure public accountability of resources for the homeless

The authors of Measure HHH wisely called for the creation of such a committee over six months ago but its creation has stalled, and we understand it is stuck in discussion at City Hall. The measure’s authors acknowledged the need for an independent monitor, the purpose of which would be to “strengthen the evaluation and efficiency of the funding process and the financial commitments made to supportive and affordable housing units,” to provide oversight of and public accountability for resources intended for supportive housing and homelessness prevention, and to prioritize strategies that make the most effective use of taxpayer money.

Permanent supportive housing projects have already been designed for homeless residents and are awaiting City approval. In order for the City to consider these projects expeditiously and give appropriate approval, we need the COC in place. Its formation should NOT be stalled or delayed by the City Council or other agency.

It is in the City’s best interest to make the most efficient use of the funding to be raised under Measure HHH to resolve homelessness concerns without placing too great a burden on the taxpayers of Los Angeles. We need to ensure a transparent and competitive process under strong oversight for the awarding of public resources.

We need the COC:

- To push the City to move expeditiously and obtain commitment in writing from the County’s health department officials on the promised provision of the wraparound therapeutic services that are an essential part of permanent supportive housing.
- To be on the ground vetting bids and vetting the approval process for supportive housing to ensure that such housing is for those who are on the streets, not for the convenience of the middle class or the profit of developers, and to ensure that projects are appropriate to the neighborhoods in which they will be built.
- To address other concerns almost immediately in response to those who opposed Measure HHH including such questions as WHY the units being discussed are costing more than a house in some areas, who will be responsible for the rent after people are settled in the units, and why \$1.2 billion will provide housing for less than half of the City’s known homeless when there are grave concerns that the numbers are far higher due to not counting couch surfers, adult children ‘temporarily’ back with their parents, and the dangerous, often illegal, overcrowding of apartments and homes as rents skyrocketed.

We need to establish the qualifications for COC members before they are put on the Committee, and to establish which authority the Committee members will have. COC members need to have the knowledge and ability to evaluate opposing concerns, they need to be given the necessary information to make meaningful recommendations, they need a measure of independence from the City to represent ALL interests and, above all, they need the power to enforce their decisions. But none of these should be a cause for delay. Any necessary changes can be made later.

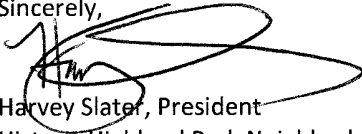
The City Council may see the COC as having the power to remove some of the Councilmembers’ authority, but this is not accurate. The COC will ensure that Councilmembers’ authority is used most effectively and fairly. The COC will need sufficient power to effectively address the concerns of the homeless residents, of the stakeholders who will be affected, and of the communities in which projects will be built. These concerns need to be addressed BEFORE projects move ahead so they do not grind to a halt in the same manner as has occurred with the storage facilities in Venice and San Pedro, and the ‘safe parking zones’ provisions.

HHPNC – Citizens’ Oversight Committee to ensure public accountability of resources for the homeless

It should be noted that not only neighborhoods opposed these ‘solutions’, but also the homeless themselves: these undertakings did not address the issues of those living on the streets but seemed more intended for the benefit of those developers winning the bids and for the businesses and residents reclaiming space from the dispossessed.

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council calls on the City Council and the relevant committees to immediately expedite the establishment of the Citizens Oversight Committee pursuant to the terms of Measure HHH, and to give the Committee the tools and authority necessary to effectively control the actions of the City departments, developers, stakeholders and neighborhoods it oversees on behalf of the tens of thousands of homeless City residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvey Slater", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Harvey Slater, President
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council