

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

## BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

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**VICTOR MEDINA**  
**OLIVIA RUBIO**

JANET LINDO  
Executive Administrative Assistant  
TELEPHONE: (213) 978-1551



**ERIC GARCETTI**  
MAYOR

**EMPOWER LA™**  
Department of  
NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

20<sup>th</sup> FLOOR, CITY HALL  
200 NORTH SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

TELEPHONE: (213) 978-1551  
TOLL-FREE: 3-1-1  
FAX: (213) 978-1751  
E-MAIL: [EmpowerLA@lacity.org](mailto:EmpowerLA@lacity.org)

**GRAYCE LIU**  
GENERAL MANAGER

[www.EmpowerLA.org](http://www.EmpowerLA.org)

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

#### REGULAR MEETING

**TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.**

**EL SERENO SENIOR CENTER  
4818 KLAMATH PLACE  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90032**

#### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Karen Mack, President  
Leonard Shaffer, Vice President  
Joy Atkinson  
Lydia Grant  
Eli Lipmen  
Victor Medina  
Olivia Rubio

#### DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Grayce Liu, General Manager  
Stephen Box, Senior Project Coordinator  
Joseph Hari, Senior Project Coordinator

#### CITY ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE

Alois Philips, Deputy City Attorney

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

**ACTION: Vice President Shaffer gave the introduction.**

2. Call to Order and Commission roll call. (1 minute)

**ACTION:** Vice President Shaffer called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m. President Mack arrived at 6:21 p.m. Commission roll was called by Joseph Hari. Commissioner Rubio arrived at 6:53 p.m.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 19, 2014. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (3 minutes)  
[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/05-19-14\\_draft\\_COMMISSION-MINUTES.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/05-19-14_draft_COMMISSION-MINUTES.pdf)

**ACTION:** Commissioner Medina moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular meeting of May 19, 2014, as written. Commissioner Shaffer seconded the Motion.

**VOTE:** Ayes – 5 (Atkinson, Grant, Mack, Medina, and Shaffer)  
Nays – 0  
Abstention – 1 (Lipmen)  
Absent – 1 (Rubio)

**TOTAL – Ayes** 5 **Nays** 0 **Abstention** 1 **Absent** 1 **Motion Carries** X **Fails** \_\_\_

4. General Public Comments - Comments from the public on non-agenda items within the Board's subject matter jurisdiction. This agenda item will last a total of 15 minutes and no individual speaker will be allowed more than three minutes. (15 minutes)

**Public comments received from:**

**Sharon K. Christie – one of my issues and the reason I am here is access. The access to the City is leaving something to be desired for we who are volunteers and we take things very seriously.**

**Michelle Corzantes – Treasurer, LA-32 Neighborhood Council, On May 7th when DONE was here doing the training they did help us and they did assist us and they did explain on the exhaustive efforts and exhaustive efforts has to do because they didn't get along so we have to move out of exhaustive efforts. In order to do this we need support from the former board who has not been very supportive as far as making the transition smoothly.**

**Shawn Gannon – Mar Vista stakeholder – anyone withdrawn from a race shouldn't be on a ballot. Instant run off voting does not work for two candidates.**

**Marleen Fonseca – newly elected President for LA-32. Regarding LA-32 vacancies, myself and the current new board have inherited a Neighborhood Council that is in exhaustive efforts. My role at this point is to serve the community best which would be to get this Neighborhood Council out of exhaustive efforts and that would entail doing whatever criteria the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment sets forth and that is what I am focusing on and concentrating on.**

**Yolie Garcia – resident of El Sereno and a regular stakeholder to our Neighborhood Council meetings. My comments today is in regards to our Neighborhood Council being in exhaustive efforts. I just wanna clarify that our Neighborhood Council we receive plenty of information of why we went into exhaustive efforts. Ms. Lisette Covarrubias**

was here and she went down the list telling, remind everybody exactly why we were in exhaustive efforts. There was a bunch of documents that had not been submitted. There were other reasons, but I don't wanna take too much time. I do recall though that one of the requirements to exit exhaustive efforts was to submit an inventory of items equipment purchased with LA-32 funds and I would like to make sure that before we go out of exhaustive efforts that that item and the other items that we were told we had to comply with are complied with. If possible I would even recommend for us to have an inventory audit for the last six years, you know accountability. Where did our tax money go to? Where are those items? So that is one request that I have. Also, in regards to the recommendations by DONE of decreasing our board from 21 to 15 board members I and other stakeholders that I have spoken to and board members welcome the idea of decreasing the board.

Scott Johnson – LA-32 stakeholder, commend President Mack on her conduction of the last meeting I went to at City Hall. After the previous elections we still have vacancies on the LA -32 Neighborhood Council that should be filled by community members who would seek to empower themselves to better their community.

Anthony Manzano – stakeholder LA-32, concerned with the elections and LA-32 exhaustive efforts and agenda posting.

Linda McGuire - resident of El Sereno. The Assistant IEAs, I just feel that they need a little more training. They are a little toxic when they talk to volunteers and it was a little disheartening. Also, I understand that Assistant IEAs also get a gas stipend. If that's the case then I think that volunteers who drive further than 10 miles out should get a small gas stipend.

Michael McGuire - concerned with the elections and filling vacant seats.

Maria Miranda – stakeholder – everything that I have heard in the meeting, they're talking about a lot of change, change, change. I'm not against change. I love change and sometimes it could be beneficial but a lot of times when there are so much new things that you have to learn first what is there before you change. You have to learn what the policies, procedures, etc., are before you change.

Hugo Pacheco – concerned with LA-32 being in exhaustive efforts.

Alison Regan – live in the Palms area of Los Angeles, concerned about some of the irregularities that occurred after the Region 11 elections that were held on May 18th. The day after the elections the results were publicly announced and put up on the website. Then that Friday, five days later, I got a phone call from Alisa Smith saying that there had been a recount the day before and the results were changed and the other candidate was now declared the winner.

Tom Williams – we have a problem, how can we fix it? I don't know. It may be there will be a hundred different fixes. It should be allowed to reflect the community in which it is resident.

5. Verbal update from a representative of the Office of the Mayor Eric Garcetti. (10 minutes)

**ACTION: None. No representative present.**

6. General Manager's Report. (10 minutes)
  1. Briefing on Departmental activities.
  2. Staffing, budget and other operational matters.
  3. Neighborhood Council 2014 Elections

**ACTION: General Manager, Grayce Liu, gave the General Manager's Report.**

- **The checking accounts contract was approved by City Council today. We expect that the contract will be executed hopefully by early next week and Neighborhood Councils will start having their checking accounts opened by next week.**
- **We will be releasing the new budget package to Neighborhood Councils this week. It will include an outreach plan, the strategic plan, request for rosters and the new board budget.**
- **The Department received three unfunded positions for next fiscal year in our budget, one for policy and two for outreach.**
- **For the first time we have also been given the opportunity to request any unused Neighborhood Council funds to fund those positions as well.**
- **Field – training has been going very well. We've been getting positive reviews. Field is also following up with the second meetings. The one's we can't make we send out Council-for Councils for observation.**
- **Olympic Park Neighborhood Council is no longer in Exhaustive Efforts. MacArthur Park is still in Exhaustive Efforts.**
- **Will be doing a debrief on Neighborhood Council elections on June 9th.**
- **EmpowerLA BootCamps in Outreach and TUX skills will take place on June 5th and June 19th.**

**Public comment received from:**

**Scott Johnson – concerned about LA-32 being in exhaustive efforts and IEA, Jay Handal, conducting elections.**

**Pete Nicholas – residential stakeholder, Rampart Village Neighborhood Council, suggest an improvement for the next cycle of elections. There should be a process whereby in each year not just the year of the elections that a Neighborhood Council can reserve some of its funds for the cost of elections.**

**Lee Wallach – concerned about election irregularities. Unfortunately, in the Palms area, Region 11, we had some real problems. This election was decided by staff, period.**

7. Discussion with various East area Neighborhood Council representatives who wish to report concerns, operations, and best practices. Neighborhood Council representatives should complete their questionnaire in advance of the meeting. This matter will last a maximum of 20 minutes and the time will be divided among those representatives wishing to speak. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (20 minutes)

[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BEST-PRACTICES-QUESTIONNAIRE\\_03-19-14.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BEST-PRACTICES-QUESTIONNAIRE_03-19-14.pdf)

**ACTION: None.**

**Public comment received from:**

**Robert Guevara – Eagle Rock – we're talking about the brain trust. A lot of the people from my observation when you leave Neighborhood Council, when somebody replaces you, you lose the election or just get tired, generally from what I've seen in the last four years people don't come back unless they know somebody and they're there to support a new specific issue. Your brain trust really fades out.**

**Hector Huezo – Chair, Alliance of River Communities – shared an event they had this Saturday that the Alliance hosted for particularly new board members, but also invited stakeholders and existing activists in the area to participate and learn more about the Neighborhood Council system and called it a crash course.**

**Scott Johnson – one of the more insightful ways of growing your experience to empower your experience is going to the LANNC meeting once a month. What I'm advocating is that the Commission here and the leadership of the Department need to empower Councils for Councils and work with them to create a mechanism to train future mentors among the Neighborhood Council activists within the City of Los Angeles.**

**America Lopez – recently got elected to Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council – on the first day I served on the board there was like Univision Television, it was like so many stakeholders and it was like about a bullying issue and unfortunately we had to decide on like training and like oh to discuss the bully issue more so we had to already decide on the issues we already had like the proposes that already been done for the committees. I was very surprised on how it's actually run so like it has to be run by these committees first.**

**Anthony Manzano – some of the best practices for our community is using the experience from previous board members. Some of the things that we've encouraged in the past is getting out there and taking active measures in cleaning our streets.**

**Linda McGuire – I just think when I was part of the NC my favorite experience was going through the CORO training. I thought that was the most powerful training I had ever gone through. I think something that is just not DONE sponsored would be a lot more interesting.**

**Hugo Pacheco – when we get involved here in the Neighborhood Council it takes a lot of guts to be able to stand up to those politicians downtown and tell them what they're doing a lot of times is wrong. There's something wrong with the whole system.**

**Dr. Tom Williams – it's a problem, how can we work with the other departments? Because we're part of the City of Los Angeles we have to suffer all of the bad things on it we should have some of the good things. Such as why doesn't every agenda item on City Council agenda have CD 14, NC LA-32? Because I always look at that last line on**

**every agenda item, community impact statements. Why were Neighborhood Councils formed? Because we were looking at annexation.**

8. **TOWN HALL MEETING** - The Commission will conduct a town hall meeting where members of the public are encouraged to voice concerns and offer suggestions and comments to the Commissioners regarding a proposed policy requiring Neighborhood Council board members to take the required training within a certain amount of time from being seated, e.g., 90 days. This policy may also include a mechanism for enforcement, including but not limited to, prohibiting persons from voting (without impacting quorum) and/or removal from the Neighborhood Council board. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (60 minutes)  
[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Training-Policy\\_Proposed\\_Draft\\_6-3-14.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Training-Policy_Proposed_Draft_6-3-14.pdf)

**Public comment received from:**

**Sharon K. Christie – The first thing that we call this policy is the guideline, a skill set for mindfulness because that is what it is that people need to have for one another. Background check I think is extremely important.**

**Alejandra Cortez – new President, Greater Cypress Park Neighborhood Council. I think this could be a policy that can serve as a tool, but can also be served as a weapon. A recommendation that I can give is having a retreat or requiring some sort of retreat so that board members cannot only get to know each other but also understand these policies.**

**Michelle Corzantes – I think this is great; it's going to do good. This is perfect. This is going to help us so that we don't treat each other like that.**

**Scott Johnson – we need to make sure that the final draft of this document is an adjustive tool to regulate conduct. I would like to see this document incorporate the brain trust of the Neighborhood Council system. We need a mentor board, a group of first responders who could be used to intervene in disputes involving personnel on a given board. For this to work we need not to rely on the five or six NEAs that have to work with 90 Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles. In order to really make this go places the mentors who are the volunteers who want to get involve have to be an integral part of this process and they have to be on call and we need to have a panel in place when these grievances come forward we have to have a first responder group set aside to intervene to keep our NCs from going to the last resort which is called exhaustive efforts and decertification.**

**Anthony Manzano – stakeholder – served by the LA-32 Neighborhood Council, resident of the community of Rose Hills – I'm in favor of something like this, but there's just a little bit of things you have to consider. The basic reason for applying these principles is to protect the City from violation. That's what the trainings are for to protect the City. I think a good thing that you guys could implement was also do a background check. Ask them to take this training before they even apply as a candidate.**

Hugo Pacheco – address comments to draft (Prohibition Against Bullying and Harassment Between Neighborhood Council Board Members) got to be careful with some of this language. Item No. 3a – who is going to determine the severity? 3b-i., ii., iii, iv., – my problem is not so much with a Neighborhood Council being able to regulate themselves. I got a problem with DONE, the way DONE right now is administered. We have a system all we need is to define what bullying and harassment is. There’s already a system to take care of problems like this.

Lee Wallach – There is a real need for training. I would add a recall process for the community as well. I wholly support that board members should be able to vote a member off the island, so to speak. I would also add that if this member has other family members, colleagues or others intimidating on their behalf, we are seeing that in our Neighborhood as well.

9. Commission Business - Comment from Commissioners on subject matters within the Board’s jurisdiction. (15 minutes)
  1. Comment on Commissioners’ own activities/brief announcements.
  2. Brief response to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their general public comment rights/ask staff questions for clarification.
  3. Introduce new issues for consideration by the Commission at its next meeting and direct staff to place on the agenda.
  4. Ask staff to research issues and report back to the Commission at a future time.

**ACTION: None.**

10. General Public Comments - Comments from the public on non-agenda items within the Board’s subject matter jurisdiction. This agenda item will last a total of 15 minutes and no individual speaker will be allowed more than three minutes. (15 minutes)

**Public comment received from: None taken due to the closing of the meeting location.**

11. Adjourn

**ACTION: Commissioner Shaffer moved that the meeting be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.**

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