

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

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MINUTES

BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.

**MAR VISTA RECREATION CENTER
11430 WOODBINE STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90066**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Victor Medina

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Joseph Hari, Senior Project Coordinator

CITY ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE

Carmen Hawkins, Deputy City Attorney

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

ACTION: President Mack gave the introduction.

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

ACTION: President Mack called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Commission roll was called by Joseph Hari.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 16, 2014. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (3 minutes)

http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/06-16-14_draft_COMMISSION-MINUTES.pdf

ACTION: Commissioner Grant moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular meeting of June 16, 2014, as written. Commissioner Shaffer seconded the Motion.

VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Atkinson, Grant, Lipmen, Mack, Rubio, and Shaffer)

Nays – 0

Abstention – 0

Absent – 1 (Medina)

TOTAL – Ayes 6 Nays 0 Abstention 0 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:

Glenn Bailey – I want to focus on an issue dealing with the compliance of Neighborhood Councils to the Commission's requirement that all Neighborhood Councils submit their agendas for early notification service. In an audit that I did for the past six months (January-June) of the early notifications that were sent out by the City, I have found that there are 27 Neighborhood Councils that are not in compliance with regards to their board meeting agendas. That 27 out of 95 does not include those that may not be sending out for their committee meetings. In all this time for these Neighborhood Councils to not be in compliance is absolutely unacceptable.

Elliot Hochberg – Business Rep for Palms Neighborhood Council, brand new, just learning about this system, just found out about it this last year which is a little bit surprising considering how long the Neighborhood Council system has been in effect and I'm a Los Angeles native. The timing of the elections vs the budget has created difficulties, not just for our Council but for many Councils. I want to reiterate that is an issue. There isn't enough time for us to train and understand our responsibilities and it creates confusion between previous Councils and incoming Councils. The other thing is I also heard mentioned about the training. You're getting volunteers, people with various degrees of experience with regards to Robert's Rules or even running meetings or how to have civil conversations and it's my observation that we haven't received enough time for training or training that delves into that portion of the meetings which is actually in some sense is almost more important than the ethics trainings that we're required to take so I think it's imperative that this issue be solved. The amount of potential liability that we have if we make a mistake versus the Brown Act versus our training actually is frightening to me personally.

Rob Kadota – civilian Co-chair for the Pacific Community Police Advisory Board, LAPD. I want to welcome you to Mar Vista. I am a long-time local volunteer. I do have handouts for the upcoming National Night Out. It's an opportunity for neighbors and police to come together on an annual basis. It's always the first Tuesday of August. Pacific is

made up of Del Rey, Mar Vista, Palms, Playa Del Rey, Playa Vista, Westchester, and Venice.

Terri Ellen Robinson –Palms Neighborhood Council - it was very difficult founding a board because we didn't have a lot of help and you guys don't worry about it you will get the help now because there are things in line that will help you. You can talk to Stephen Box over in the City Hall and he will be glad to help you. Go forward, don't think that you're bad, just go forward.

Ivan Spiegel – Venice Neighborhood Council - I've been going around to Neighborhood Councils and observing and I don't have very good things to say. Most of the Councils that we've visited are having serious problems. Most of it comes down to leadership. I urge you to get on to leadership training. There's a disconnect because of the timing of the elections and the funding cycle. There a lot of Councils now who can't get their money because it's the end of the cycle. I urge you to work with the Department for the next election cycle. Having elections right at the end of the fiscal year is not a smart idea.

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

ACTION: No representative present.

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

ACTION: Joseph Hari, Director of Policy, and Field Director for South, West, Central and Harbor, gave the General Manager's Report.

- **Passed out summary of elections results,**
- **Budget packets due September 1, 2014,**
- **EmpowerLA Awards deadline is July 11, 2014,**
- **Checking accounts is starting today, this week. By Thursday we should have all checking accounts open, depends on paperwork that has been submitted,**
- **Field – we have six NEAs for the City. Right now, we have five, Barry Stone, has been out on leave for a couple of months and he's continuing to be out for the foreseeable future.**
- **C4C (Councils for Councils) have been going out and doing observations and giving us those observations,**
- **Two Neighborhood Councils are in Exhaustive Efforts, LA32, East Region and MacArthur Park, Central Region.**

7. Discussion and possible action on the creation of an ad hoc committee that will report back to the board regarding Neighborhood Councils websites. (5 minutes)

ACTION: Commissioner Shaffer proposed a motion that agenda item no. 7 be tabled until our meeting of July 21.

Commissioner Mack seconded the motion.

Commissioner Atkinson moved a substitute motion to set up an ad hoc committee on websites.

Commissioner Grant seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes – 4 (Atkinson, Grant, Lipmen, and Rubio)
Nays – 2 (Mack and Shaffer)
Abstention – 0
Absent – 1 (Medina)

TOTAL – Ayes 4 Nays 2 Abstention 0 Absent 1 Motion Carries X Fails

The original motion is now disposed of. President Mack stated that Commissioner Lipmen and Commissioner Grant are the committee members for this project.

Public comment received from:

Glenn Bailey – I just want to speak in support of establishing an ad hoc committee. This has been dragging on for nearly two years. The least you can do in my opinion is create the ad hoc committee so it's focused in the hands of two Commissioners who are really go-getters, who know things about websites, and as go-to folks for the Department to go to. There is no point that I can see, in deferring this for two more weeks. Vote on it, approve it today and get moving.

Jay Handal – West LA Neighborhood Council - stop forming committees and do something. Stop making believe you're part of the system and get out of it. The Department should own the website. The Department should automatically debit each Neighborhood Council's account for the monthly fee to pay for the domain and the hosting. Nobody should be able to hijack the websites. There should be criteria from the Department of what should be on the website. The website is paid with taxpayer dollars. It is not paid by private individuals.

Elliot Hochberg – when I came on to Councils I was flabbergasted that the sites weren't .gov and that there wasn't a default made by the City for the Councils to start with. DONE ought to make a default website that everyone can use and if Councils have the wherewithal to have a better site or a different site or a custom site that should be something that they can do as an option, but the default should be just easy. We should be able to just do what we need to do without thinking about it.

Ivan Spiegel – Denyse and I are the co-chairs of the programming committee for the Congress which is where your EmpowerLA Awards gonna happen. We've penciled in a space for you as one of the sessions. We are going public on the first week of August so if you want a session you've got to get to us with a description of what you're gonna do, what the topic is, within the next three weeks. Websites – C4C did a matrix about websites. I think it was two months ago. We handed it all to you. We did a complete listing of which Councils had active website, which ones was posting agendas, which ones was posting minutes. You can get it again. You don't have to double back and do that work. I agree with what's being said about the timeliness. Please you need to do this quickly. I agree, I think DONE should own the websites.

Terri Robinson – you people are highly intelligent. It's very obvious. There's nothing wrong with just sitting down and really setting up what each person is gonna do and then they have to follow it instead of sitting here and saying this and that and the other that's all you need to do. You have the ability to do it, do it and that way you'll be farther ahead than any other group who has ever done this.

8. Recognition and presentation of 10 Year Anniversary Certificate to the Palms Neighborhood Council. (10 minutes)

ACTION: Palms Neighborhood Council was recognized and presented their 10 Year Anniversary Certificate.

9. Discussion with various West area Neighborhood Council representatives who wish to report 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

ACTION: None.

Doug Fitzimmons – President Pro Tem, South Robertson Neighborhood Council – election – this year we had a 76% voter increase over 2012, doubled 2010, 68% increase in candidates, the key that we feel to that increase was a shift in messaging around elections and the use of social media advertising. Facebook advertising reached over 26,000 people with a frequency of 7.5. We think that was incredibly effective for a total spend of only \$280. We shifted our messaging to aspirational and duty-based. Training as part of our new board members is extremely important to us – we have a comprehensive training program that we put into place. We have archived all of our materials going back to 2002 and beyond.

Jay Handal – Chair, West LA - brief overview of what West LA has done – we went from 56 to 366 voters. It's still pathetic when you have 30,000 so we're not proud of that. That's not a best practice that's the tip of the iceberg. Our constant contacts are now up to over a thousand and growing because we're in high development area. We've held three town halls a year. We spend \$32,000 of our \$37,000 on outreach. We don't do NPGs, we don't do improvement grants. We focus on outreach. We mail three times a year to every mailbox in our district so that they know we're alive and what we're doing whether they care or not. This is our fifth year of concerts in the park. We hold eight concerts in the summer every Wednesday night starting the week after July 4th. This is our fifth year of movies in the park. We own the equipment. We had the foresight to buy the equipment years ago when we had extra money. We do eight movies a year and we've partnered this year with Paramount Pictures. They're all kids movies and they're all at dusk. We support Our House Grief Group that's in our district. This is the third year we've support their run. We've taken them and helped them go from 400 people to 1,200 runners. Four years ago we identified the need to have a skate park in our district because the skaters were tearing up the civic center area and we got the skaters to come in and they actually put together the skate park for the city. We have the top rated skate park in the country at Stoner Park. Nike came in and made an offer, let's partner and let's do an event in the civic center, skate day. They did a skate day, where we had

1,200 skaters come in and Nike invested \$100,000 in renovating the civic center and made it skate perfect. Nike has agreed to put up \$10,000 a year for five years to maintain the civic center to open that park up from 5 to 10 o'clock at night and let the skaters have a place to go and in addition to relight the civic center area and to secure it to make it safe for the skaters and the people in the area. We negotiate with developers every day. We've had developers take projects that were huge and make them not so huge. We have a really good reputation of working with developers in our district. West LA has a traffic mitigation fund through CD 11.

Bill Koontz – Mar Vista Community Council - had some big meetings of several hundred people. Anyone that shows up to anyone of our Committee meetings can vote. That's a good outreach tool. We have a very healthy and active green committee which every year puts on a wonderful green garden tour which gets thousands of people from all over the city. Every week we staff a booth at the local Farmers Market with our board members and anyone from the community can come and talk to our board members, it's a great outreach. We are in the process and have been going paperless at our meetings.

Marlene Savage – First Vice President, Del Rey Neighborhood Council – I was on Del Rey Neighborhood Council from 2005 to 2010 and then I left for four years and went over to help Venice out and went over to help Mid City West. We did have the smallest turnout, 141 people out of 30,000 people which is nothing to be proud of but I must say that everybody who ran, everybody who is on our board right now is so totally motivated. It's unbelievable, we just can't wait to get to work and that's what's gonna count to make our Council successful is oh the motivation for each board member. I am so proud to be back on that Council. Our President, Johnathan Newman, has been on the Council from basically day one. He was the Land Use and Planning Chair for all these years. We're so happy to have him as President. We have a lot of things that we have to do to make our Council a strong one, but like I say the motivation is there and I think we're gonna do well.

Ivan Spiegel – we work to keep our community engaged. We put on our agendas something that is gonna upset a lot of people and it brings them in in hordes. We came up with a way of doing community improvement projects. We developed an application which actually became the model for the NPG application that DONE has put out. We give almost half of our money back to the community but it's not grants where we just give people the money, it's partnerships, we build community partnerships with organizations and people in our community. We work with them on the project, we don't just give them money. We do events. Our big event of the year is our barbeque. The Venice barbeque is on August 2 at Oakwood Park. Training, we are very big on training. We do multiple trainings all year long for our board members, for our community. This proves to be very successful. We have philosophies that we put into work that seem to be working. Creating a culture for your Neighborhood Council. We have a culture of inclusion. Elections – 1,545 that's the number. We had half a dozen recruiting events, we came up with 59 candidates.

10. 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/2014/06/Draft-Bullying-and-Harassment-Policy-051514.pdf>

http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Commisison_Code-of-Civility_signed_01-27-14.pdf

ACTION: None.

Glenn Bailey – Agenda No. 10, Resolution draft horizontally looks pretty good to me. The City currently has training that it provides for City liability issues. Maybe liability should be added to your list. Sexual discrimination issue - the City already has current training provided.

Doug Fitzsimmons – I actually agree with some of the comments here. I do think it's largely a leadership issue. My Neighborhood Council had a very contentious period where we had a slew of grievances that were filed. We had loss of quorum as board members resigned. However, we came back from that. The executive committee which I was part set a new tone and today I think that we're reaping the benefits of that. The leadership has changed. We do not allow things to get personal. We do not allow behavior that is contrary to our code of civility. I urge you to set this aside and set focus on leadership training and mediation.

Jay Handal – I have a lot of concerns. My concerns start with who determines what the bullying is? Trainings – we don't have a training set up yet for ADA, sexual harassment, and all this other stuff. We have training for funding and ethics and you guys still haven't enacted the 60-90 day rule for that. I think this should all go to the grievance panel an independent group. Why are we not using the City Attorney's dispute resolution?

Olive Reed – Harbor City Neighborhood Council –had a board meeting last week and board voted 100% that they are against these drafts that they have read probably because the terms sexual harassment and bullying. They're feeling is because there are some Neighborhood Councils who have issues with this why do we all have to be drawn into it and being forced to have mandatory training.

Avis Ridley-Thomas – Institute for Nonviolence in Los Angeles - recommend considering a Days of Dialogue that may be helpful to help people understand for example ground rules something very basic about how we talk to each other when we are in a public forum.

Ivan Spiegel – if people are having problems they should be able go to a dispute resolution. Here's the problem, what is bullying and who's to make this decision? It's somebody perception of it. It's a personal perception of it. How do you define this stuff is the problem. Seventy-five percent of bullying doesn't happen from board members, it happens from your stakeholders. Until you can define this this is gonna become a

political tool. Probably ninety percent of bullying at a board meeting can be controlled by a good Chair who has had leadership training.

Lee Wallach – Motor Avenue Improvement Association - I feel that many Councils may not need this, but many do but there's a duty to protect the civility and some of the people who do need it. You need to protect some of the folks who aren't here today, who you've heard from. You've received letters, you've heard about physical, sexual, real harassment that is serious stuff. You've heard about people physical safety being an issue. Sometimes the safety issues need to be addressed immediately. I think that DONE needs to put some real thought into putting some teeth into this. You have to make sure that staff and you folks have the ability to really back this stuff up. There are real issues out there. We need a tool to in order to make some significant change.

11. 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.

12. 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:

Glenn Bailey – the discussion regarding the grievance policy, my recollection is that if you check the Council File Motion on the grievance policy, the City Council adopted that Committee report for the drafting of the ordinance bring it back, the Motion wording said effective date as of July 1, 2014, which is today. Somebody should check into that.

13. Adjourn

ACTION: Commissioner Shaffer moved that the meeting be adjourned at 9:30 p.m. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion.

**VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Atkinson, Grant, Lipmen, Mack, Rubio, and Shaffer)
Nays – 0
Abstention – 0
Absent – 1**

TOTAL – Ayes 6 Nays 0 Abstention 0 Absent 1 Motion Carries X Fails ___

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