

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA

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INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER

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MINUTES

BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING – BOARD PLANNING RETREAT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2012  
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

CITY HALL, 10<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE CENTER  
ROOM 1035, 200 NORTH SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Paul Park, President  
Leonard Shaffer, Vice President  
Carlene Davis (last meeting-resigned from the Commission)  
Douglas Epperhart  
Linda Lucks  
Karen Mack

**ABSENT**

Daniel Gatica

**DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT**

Grayce Liu, Interim General Manager  
Joseph Hari, Project Coordinator  
Janet Lindo, Executive Administrative Assistant

**CITY ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE**

Darren Martinez, Deputy City Attorney  
Carmen Hawkins, Deputy City Attorney

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION STAFF**

Francisco Ortega, Human Relations Advocate, Facilitator

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

**ACTION: Commission roll was called by Janet Lindo, Executive Administrative Assistant, at 10:22 a.m. Commissioner Epperhart arrived at 10:27 a.m. Commissioner Lucks arrived at 10:31 a.m.**

2. Introduction of facilitator and identification of goals for the meeting. (10 minutes)

- Review the work of the Commission over the last year to acknowledge successes and challenges and lay a foundation for planning.
- Set priorities for the coming year.
- Develop action steps.

**ACTION: Francisco Ortega (Facilitator) gave the introduction and identified the goals of the meeting.**

3. Introduction of Board members. (10 minutes)

**ACTION: Taken out order after agenda item No. 4. The Commissioners introduced themselves and shared their priorities for the upcoming year.**

**Commissioner Davis (announced this is her last Commission meeting)**

- Equality vs equity.
- When looking at policies think about their impact on the equity of getting all Neighborhood Councils to a place that create a strong system.
- Focus time around the standards and best practices that the Commission set up.

**Commissioner Epperhart**

- Commission's mission is to make Neighborhood Councils stronger and better.
- Focus on outreach

**Commissioner Lucks**

- Look at what policies this Commission have already passed, look at where they are and look at what we might go forward with the already existing policies to get them implemented in the eight months that we have left. Decide what priorities they take and what we have to do to get them implemented with the cooperation of the Department.
- Developing relationships with City officials.

**Commissioner Mack**

- Focus on the role of bringing people into the civic space and supporting the liaison with the City.
- Diversity - make the civic space a place where everybody feels welcome and support Neighborhood Councils in being effective.

**Commissioner Paul Park**

- Diversity
- Neighborhood Council Reform
- Focus on unfinished priorities from last year

**Commissioner Shaffer**

- Bring Neighborhood Councils up to the Commission rather than the Commission just going down to the Neighborhood Councils to get a partnership.
- Build with the Department
- Work with other Departments
- Foster an understanding amongst City Departments and foster a partnership
- Convince Neighborhood Councils that they need to partner with the Commission, and the Department

4. Presentation by and discussion with Deputy Mayor, Torie Osborn. (15 minutes)

**Agenda item taken out of order, after agenda item no. 5.**

**ACTION:** Deputy Mayor, Torie Osborn, gave an introduction and shared that she sees her role as supporting Interim General Manager, Grayce Liu.

- Hand in glove with Grayce on some of the tweaking of some of the issues that have come Deputy Mayor Osborn's way.
- Will be helpful in terms of reforms that need to be made.
- Strong supporter of not cutting the budget, of keeping the elections process as it has been working so well relative to past years.
- Interesting thing is how some policy issues find their way through the Neighborhood Council system and some do not.
- In support the Commission's idea that official Neighborhood Council representatives be given up to 5 minutes of speaking time when presenting the view of their board at City Council, City Council committees, City Commissions and Board meetings.

5. Overview of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's priorities with Interim General Manager, Grayce Liu. (15 minutes)

**Agenda item taken out of order, before agenda item no. 3.**

**ACTION:** Interim General Manager, Grayce Liu, gave an overview of the Department's priorities:

- Elections - 4 more regions to go, elections end November 15 with the last region.
- Candidates to open seats radio, citywide up 31% over 2010, Valley up 45% from 2010.
- Voters increased in the Valley 20%, still trying to calculate the rest around the city.
- Beyond the ballot box – creating elections regions that will work with one another after the elections.
- Collected over 3000 post elections surveys that help the Department focus on what is important in terms of making any adjustments to elections.
- Asked locally what types of concerns that you have for your Neighborhood Councils, from public safety, outreach, zoning transports to public transportation. The information is provided to Neighborhood Councils as we finish up with every region.
- Voter information is also provided to Neighborhood Councils so they can be added to their database.
- Department added 3000 more voters to our database so that we can keep them engage.
- Will be meeting with City Clerk in the next couple of weeks to discuss next steps. The elections revert back to the City Clerk in 2014 based on the current ordinance.
- Having a few glitches in terms of transitioning from the Elections team to Independent Elections Administrators (IEA) to the Neighborhood Empowerment Analysts (NEA) swearing in new boards and helping them select their executive officers.
- Funding - we want to take on a new system through online demand warrants and looking at possibly shifting the whole funding program to just a purchase card with demand warrants only being used for a high amounts of grants like \$5000 and over.
- Budget - we have been asked to take, for the next fiscal year, a 10% cut in our staffing budget, approximately \$230,000 equals about three to four positions.
- Department has 15 regular permanent authorities, 4 resolution authorities (can be taken at any time) and 4 emergency appointment project coordinators (for elections).

- **We need more funding and field staff.**

6. Discussion and Motion to adopt a current Board of Neighborhood Commissioners Code of Civility. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (10 minutes)  
[http://done.lacity.org/dnn/portals/0/documents/LEARN/About\\_the\\_commission/Code\\_of\\_Civility\\_101712.pdf](http://done.lacity.org/dnn/portals/0/documents/LEARN/About_the_commission/Code_of_Civility_101712.pdf)

**ACTION: Commissioner Lucks moved that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners adopt a current Code of Civility with the below amendments:**

Delete the acronym, “BONC” in the document, change the acronym to Commission.  
Item No. 8 – strike the last five words of the sentence, “as specified in the bylaws”.  
Item No. 11 – add “d” to the word pledge.

**Commissioner Epperhart seconded the motion.**

**Vote: Ayes – 6  
Nays – 0**

**Motion passes unanimously.**

**Public comment received from: Ivan Spiegel.**

7. Discuss the priorities of the Commission for the previous year, and assess the successes, failures and challenges of the Commission in addressing its priorities. (30 minutes)

**ACTION: Agenda item taken out of order, after the lunch break. Priorities of the past year:**

- **Diversity and how to go about it**
- **Outreach**
- **Visibility**
- **Collaboration, not only at City level, but within the Neighborhood Councils themselves**
- **Reforming the City Plan**
- **Setting standards for Neighborhood Councils**

**Epperhart – At the January Commission meeting, the Commission adopted a four-part work plan.**

**Standard, Rules and Best Practices Committee (Chaired by Commissioner Park, Epperhart and Shaffer).**

**Outreach and Publicity Committee (Chaired by Commissioner Mack, Lucks, and Park)**

**Education and Training Leadership Development (set aside to see what became of the standards)**

**Plan Review Committee (Epperhart-Chair, Shaffer, and Gatica) will begin reviewing the “Plan” after the first of the year. The vision for the process is to split the city geographically into three regions with Valley (34 NCs), East and Central (30 NCs), West, South and Harbor (31 NCs) and have the groups working parallel using the Bylaws Task Force model. Everyone will start in the same place with the same documents and then let each of the group go through the Plan. The idea is with three parallel groups is to not allow for any specific region to be dominant. The groups will do the investigation and bring back the recommendations to the committee. Within that looking at big ticket issues such as factual basis stakeholders, Brown Act vs Sunshine Ordinance, and setting up subcommittees to tackle specific issues.**

**Outreach Committee (Mack-Chair, Lucks, and Park) –** The committee invited a few communication professionals to speak with them. Data collection is an important thing we need to start thinking about. How do we measure the impact of Neighborhood Councils so we can have a rigorous conversation about it. The self-assessment can be a data collection vehicle. If we did it, we can use Survey Monkey or some other kind of electronic capturing tool to streamline and not require too much staff capacity. A major success was the EmpowerLA Award to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Neighborhood Councils. The idea was to use the award as a tool for raising the profile of Neighborhood Councils. More outreach can be done by using the stories in the EmpowerLA newsletter.

**Rules, Standards and Best Practices Committee (Shaffer-Chair, Davis, and Lucks) –** The committee worked for about one month and half to two months to come up with a draft document. The draft Rules, Standards and Best Practices document was taken to the local level by hearing feedback at every Commission meeting. The draft document was also presented to the Neighborhood Council Alliances.

**Public comment received from: Mary Prange, Emily Roberts, and Ivan Spiegel.**

**LUNCH (30 min)**

8. Discuss and prioritize the key objectives to be addressed, and how the Commission will reach its objectives during the upcoming year. (90 minutes)
  - What should we do in the next year based on our vision for the system?

**Park – Move forward with the work of the subcommittees (Review and reform of City Plan, communication outreach, standards). The policies that will be undertaken by the review and reform subcommittee are the posting policy, grievance, factual basis issue, Sunshine Ordinance, diversity and inclusiveness.**

**Epperhart – Outreach, Plan review, training and leadership development, getting this system after ten years of experience with a basic Charter in the form of a Neighborhood Council plan that is truly useful.**

**Lucks - Build stronger relationships with City Council members about who this Commission is and what we do. Prioritize the policies that we have already passed and the ones that have not been implemented.**

**Mack – Communication plan, implementation of the standards,**

**Shaffer - Build relationships with City departments. Get points of contact in each major Department in the City that Neighborhood Councils are able to communicate with when the need comes.**

9. Develop implementation plan to accomplish Commission priorities for the upcoming year. (60 minutes)
  - What specific action steps and responsibilities effectively move our agenda forward?

**Epperhart – Using the Bylaws Task Force model, the Plan Review Committee will come back with a timeline and some proposals in terms of how to begin the process which should be done through widespread publicity and setting up a separate blog spot, etc.**

**Shaffer – Let the Neighborhood Councils know that the Commission exists and are on their side. The Commission has a duty to promote Neighborhood Councils citywide (outreach and communication). The Commission has to gain the blessing of the Chair of the Education and Neighborhoods Committee to say, yes go forward with a revision of the Plan, I will champion it before City Council for you. Then the Commission has to move forward with that implementation and see which of the Commission’s former policies announcement should be incorporated within a draft plan.**

10. **RECAP** (15 minutes)

**ACTION: None.**

11. Adjournment

**ACTION: The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.**

**####**