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CARMEN A. TRUTANICH
City Attorney

May 10, 2013

The Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Room 303, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The Honorable Herb Wesson
President, Los Angeles City Council
Room 430, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Support for Neighborhood Council "Seat at the Table" Resolution

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa and President Wesson:

I am writing to respectfully ask for your support of, and immediate action upon, a Resolution that is being considered by Neighborhood Councils throughout the City and is designed to provide their representatives with an effective "seat at the table" within City governance. In essence, the Resolution requests that a Neighborhood Council representative be placed as a non-voting member on all City commissions and committees. In doing so, Neighborhood Councils will not only be afforded "real time" notification of proposed actions on important City issues, but, more importantly, will allow their meaningful participation in the discussion, review and development of such matters.

Specifically, the Resolution, which alleges purported failures in current City practices, provides in pertinent part:

Whereas the City Council continues to ignore the Neighborhood Councils in decision making.

The Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa
The Honorable Herb Wesson
May 10, 2013
Page 2 of 3

Whereas the City Council has not devised a credible system to inform the Neighborhood Council System on items of concern in a timely manner.

Whereas the City Council continues to deride Neighborhood Councils for not weighing in on an issue.

Therefore, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Coalition demands that the City Council and the Mayor immediately open a non-voting seat for a neighborhood Council member on all City Council (Regular and Ad Hoc) Committees and Commissions to be elected by the Neighborhood Councils.

Notwithstanding the criticisms of City government contained therein, I believe that the essential spirit of inclusion and enhanced participation by Neighborhood Councils proposed by the Resolution should be embraced and supported.

In order to fulfill the goals of the Resolution, the Mayor could issue an Executive Directive immediately authorizing and directing the presence of non-voting representatives of Neighborhood Councils on all committees and commissions as proposed. Any more formal role, however, even if non-voting, would require amendment to the City Charter and numerous ordinances.

The proposed Executive Directive could specify, among other things, that: 1) Each Committee or Commission work with the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition to identify at least one Neighborhood Council board member to serve as the Neighborhood Council liaison to the Committee/Commission; 2) Each Committee or Commission shall deliver the meeting agenda and Committee member/commissioner packet (not just the agenda itself) to its Neighborhood Council liaison at the same time as the material is provided to the committee members/commissioners; and 3) Each Neighborhood Council liaison shall be permitted to speak and ask questions at the Committee/Commission meetings following the comment and question period for committee members/commissioners, rather than during public comment.

The Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa
The Honorable Herb Wesson
May 10, 2013
Page 3 of 3

I look forward to your response regarding this very important Resolution and will work with both of you, as well as members of the Council, in its review and implementation. Thank you for your consideration of my letter of support for this measure.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carmen A. Trutanich', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CARMEN A. TRUTANICH
City Attorney

cc: Miguel Santana, City Administrative Officer
Gerry Miller, Chief Legislative Analyst
Grayce Liu, General Manager, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment
Jay Handal, Chair, West LA Neighborhood Council; Vice-Chair, Neighborhood
Council Budget Advocates