

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

## BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

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## MINUTES

### BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

#### REGULAR MEETING

**TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.**

**WILMINGTON SENIOR CENTER  
1371 EUBANK AVENUE  
WILMINGTON, CA 90744**

#### **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

#### **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 6:18 p.m. Commission roll was called by General Manager, Grayce Liu. Commissioner Lipmen arrived at 6:35 p.m.**

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 21, 2014. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (3 minutes)  
[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/04-21-14\\_draft-MINUTES\\_COMMISSION-MEETING.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/04-21-14_draft-MINUTES_COMMISSION-MEETING.pdf)

**ACTION: Commissioner Medina moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular meeting of April 21, 2014, as written. Commissioner Grant seconded the Motion.**

**VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Atkinson, Grant, Mack, Medina, Rubio, and Shaffer)  
Nays – 0**

**Motion passes unanimously.**

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:**

**Linda Alexander, President, Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council, the policy that once you've exceeded your quarterly allowance, for every item now that we want to purchase from as little as \$15-\$900 I have to submit a package of paperwork to get approval to spend the money that we have in our account.**

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

**ACTION: No representative present.**

6. Presentation by #LeadershipLA, Dave Meslin, Community Choreographer from Toronto, CA, will present his TED Talk on apathy. (10 minutes)

**ACTION: Dave Meslin, community choreographer from Toronto, presented to the Commission and visited Neighborhood Councils throughout the city, interviewing candidates, board members, and anyone with a great civic engagement story. Click on the link to view the [great video of his appearance](#).**

7. Discussion with various Harbor 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: Various Harbor area Neighborhood Councils, Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council, Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council, Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council, and Wilmington Neighborhood Council, representatives gave a report on concerns, operations, and best practices.**

8. Discussion with Councilmember Joe Buscaino, Council District 15, will provide his take on what it means to be a public leader and how he envisions partnering with Neighborhood Councils to reach the goals of his office. (20 minutes)

**ACTION:** Councilmember Joe Buscaino shared his point of view on being a leader.

We have done incredible work in the last couple of years specifically dealing with public safety. The Harbor area has led the city in overall crime reduction in 2013. We attribute that success to not only to the hard work of the men and women of the LAPD but also to the outreach efforts and our community-based policing efforts. Members of the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council kicked off last year with a seminar on community based policing. Later on in the year we had Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council and other Neighborhood Councils partnered with a crime prevention seminar that drew a lot of people throughout the district. Coupled with the fact that Neighborhood Councils in San Pedro worked on the importance of community-based policing, to crime prevention, to neighborhood watch groups emphasizing the importance of neighborhoods connecting, neighbors connecting with neighbors, I feel that attributed to the overall crime reduction leading the City in that effort. Leadership takes those types of partnerships, working together to set goals, achievable goals, and overall look at the overall measure of effectiveness and measure the success based on the relationships and also the partnership opportunities. In addition, we're looking at finding new ways of innovation, new projects that can be born with every single resident. Every resident can be empowered by coming to a Neighborhood Council and putting forward an idea or putting forward a project. It's important as far as the strategies and some of the challenges that I see in overcoming the Neighborhood Councils is when we have big ideas and bold ideas we need to continue to embrace the Neighborhood Councils and educate the Neighborhood Council members and stakeholders on issues that continue to impact the City of Los Angeles. As far as opportunities to partner with Neighborhood Councils some of the issues that I'd like to see take on some responsibilities, again putting on the Senior Lead Officer, beautification projects, quality of life issues, we have great partnerships with a number of non-profits. There are so many non-profits that I feel the Neighborhood Councils should really embrace and knock on their doors with funding so tight.

**Public comment:**

Andrew Silber – I am very encouraged to hear the communication between any Councilmember and his or her Neighborhood Council. It's so important to Councilmembers. Neighborhood Councils can be a huge resource to a Councilmember just as a Councilmember and his or her staff can be a huge resource to Neighborhood Councils because in the end our goals are exactly the same which is what's best for the citizens of L.A. and what will improve their quality of life. The key is good communication. That's where I think it can be improved in both directions.

Pete McNicholas – I want to strongly endorse what you said about a citizen's oversight committee. With the 2002 Prop Q \$600,000,000 bond the oversight committee during the depression was able to bring those all in on time, under budget, there were dozens and dozens of millions of dollars saved.

9. 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. This agenda item was taken out of order before agenda item no. 8.**

- **Budget and Finance Committee - we did go on Friday to support our budget request of a policy person, the support for the Congress, Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates as well as our outreach positions and funds for continuing our outreach and communications during non-election years for the Neighborhood Council system. This will also lead into doing a request for proposal for online voting for the 2016 elections.**
- **Funding – I do hear the frustration with the current funding system. CAO did submit their report to Educations and Neighborhoods recommending that we go forward with the Union Bank contract. The plan is to try to open at least 15 to 30 Neighborhood Council checking accounts this current fiscal year so that we can see what the end of a fiscal year would look like with the checking accounts.**
- **We will be releasing a budget package this week which is going to include a new budget request in terms of the new budget for 2014-2015, which Neighborhood Councils have been maintained at \$37,000 for next fiscal year, it will include a strategic plan like we did last year, it will include performance metrics, it will also include an outreach plan, and there will be a self-assessment for Neighborhood Councils in the last year.**
- **Elections, Outreach and Communication – Stephen Box reported – just finished the 9th region of 12 regions. Tonight we're finishing up two Neighborhood Councils elections going on, Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council, and Harbor Gateway North and that will be the end of Region 11, leaving two regions.**
- **The City is up 30% in voter turnout over 2012. One-quarter of the Neighborhood Councils have experienced historic highs.**
- **This coming Saturday we're on Region 10, the following Saturday we're on Region 12.**
- **We're down to five Neighborhood Empowerment Advocates for 95 Neighborhood Councils.**

**Public comment:**

**Pete McNicholas, residential stakeholder, Rampart Village – while it would be ideal this fiscal year to get a preview of the close of next fiscal year, I think it's basically a frivolous, silly, and waste of process time to try and get a feel for how next year's fiscal year checking account will close by forcing certain Neighborhood Councils into open and operating a checking account in the remainder of this fiscal year.**

10. Commission Committee Reports. (15 minutes)
  1. Ad Hoc Committee re Outreach (Members: Atkinson-Chair, Mack, and Rubio)
  2. Ad Hoc Committee re ability of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners to implement citywide policies (Members: Shaffer-Chair, Grant, and Medina)

3. Ad Hoc Committee re Leadership Development for Neighborhood Councils  
(Members: Rubio-Chair, Medina, and Shaffer)

**ACTION: None.**

**Public comment:**

**Bob Gelfand – the critical metric obviously is how many people participate in the Neighborhood Council system citywide, not just governing boards but overall, but everything. That ought to be the metric that you should be looking at and you should be working to increase. The problem is that we’ve had City Councilman who aren’t really interested in us prospering.**

**Pete Nicholas – there’s constant reference to the number of people that turnout, and while that’s important, it is not the pen ultimate figure. It’s easy in a bedroom community of affluent people who are all NIMBYs to get them to all turnout because they don’t want a restaurant on that corner. What’s harder to do is to get an average neighborhood of average people with varied interest to turnout and so a lot of the comparisons are false because it’s just a bunch of crazy NIMBYs who don’t want that poll on that corner. I agree that one of the measure should always be how many come, how many turnout, how many participate, but it is not the only metric and please don’t let it become confused as such.**

11. A report by Commissioner Eli Lipmen on the development of metrics in relation to the 2014 work plan for the Commission. (10 minutes)

**ACTION: None.**

12. Previously, the Commission adopted the Neighborhood Council Plan Review Committee’s recommendation on the Brown Act and posting policies which stated:

Reaffirm support for the Brown Act for Neighborhood Councils and its single accessible 24 hour posting requirement, and reaffirm current board policies regarding electronic mail and website posting, with only one physical posting site as opposed to many. The email requirement shall specify that agendas be sent to “NCsupport” with the intent that the Department will post them to the City’s agenda system.

AND

Neighborhood Councils that do not have a website must post in at least five (5) physical locations.

Discussion and possible action by the Commission including but not limited to reviewing Commission Policy Number 2010-02 (Revised December 17, 2012 and signed January 14, 2013) regarding Neighborhood Council Posting Requirements, and adopting new policy which incorporates adopted Plan Review Committee recommendation. (Click on the link to view a copy of the document.) (20 minutes)  
<http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Posting-Policy-draft-revised-04-25-14.pdf>

**ACTION: Commissioner Shaffer moved as follows:**

**Be it resolved that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners creates the following policy:**

**NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL AGENDA POSTING REQUIREMENTS**

**WHEREAS, the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners established Working Groups comprised of current and past Neighborhood Council members and Neighborhood Council stakeholders to recommend changes to the Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils;**

**WHEREAS, the Working Groups recognized stakeholders are increasingly using the internet and that it allows Neighborhood Councils to communicate with their stakeholders efficiently and inexpensively;**

**WHEREAS, the Working Groups recognized that any change in the physical posting policy should be accompanied by increased use of other media for outreach;**

**WHEREAS, the Working Groups recommended that the posting requirements for Neighborhood Councils be changed to require only one physical Brown Act compliant posting while maintaining the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners other outreach requirements;**

**WHEREAS, Section 902 (b) Article IX of the new Charter provides that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners “shall be responsible for policy setting and policy oversight...and the promulgation of rules and regulations but not be responsible for day-to-day management.”**

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners establishes this policy regarding the posting of agendas for Neighborhood Councils.**

**POLICY NUMBER:**

2014-01
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**Neighborhood Councils are required to post meeting agendas for Board and Committee meetings as follows:**

- 1. Neighborhood Councils shall post at least one Brown Act compliant agenda for all Board and Committee meetings. Any additional physical postings shall be within the Neighborhood Council boundaries and shall be Brown Act time compliant.**

- 2. Neighborhood Councils shall post agendas of all Board and Committee meetings on their web site or, on a page made available to them on the EmpowerLA web site. Such postings shall be Brown Act time compliant.**
- 3. Neighborhood Councils shall submit a copy of all regular and special Board and Committee agendas to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (Department) to be posted through the Early Notification System (ENS). The agenda for regular meetings shall be submitted to the Department not less than 72 hours in advance of the meeting and the agenda for special meetings shall be submitted to the Department not less than 24 hours in advance of the meeting. As soon as feasible, the Department will submit the agenda for posting to the ENS system. Accordingly, posting the notices of meetings to the ENS system will not be required to comply with the Brown Act's time limits for posting agendas.**
- 4. Neighborhood Councils that maintain an email list of stakeholders may email either a copy of the agenda for all Board and Committee meetings or an announcement of the meeting with a link to the agenda. Distribution to the email list will not be required to comply with the Brown Act's time limits for posting agendas.**
- 5. Neighborhood Councils shall inform the Department of (a) the physical location of their posting site, (b) the address of their web site, if any and (c) confirm with the Department whether they use a stakeholder database to distribute their agendas. Neighborhood Councils shall be required to submit this information on a form approved by the Department.**
- 6. Neighborhood Councils that do not maintain a web site or, if available a page on the EmpowerLA web site shall continue to comply with the five (5) to seven (7) physical locations posting requirements imposed during their certification process; one (1) of the posting locations shall be Brown Act compliant; the remaining posting locations shall be within the Neighborhood Council boundaries and shall comply with Brown Act time limits for posting.**
- 7. These posting requirements shall be appended to and become a part of the bylaws of all current and future Neighborhood Councils and any violation of this policy may become the subject of a grievance.**
- 8. If a Neighborhood Council is notified by the Department prior to any Board or Committee meeting that a confirmed violation of this policy has been reported the Neighborhood Council shall repost in accordance with this Policy. If the scheduled meeting cannot be reposted in compliance with this Policy, the Neighborhood Council shall cancel the meeting and make reasonable efforts to inform its stakeholders. If it becomes necessary to cancel Board or Committee meetings Neighborhood Councils are encouraged to contact the City Attorney for further guidance.**

9. If a Neighborhood Council is found to be in violation of this Policy three (3) times within the current fiscal year the Board and any non-Board member committee chairs shall be required to take additional training as may be determined by the Department. If after receiving additional training the Neighborhood Council is again found to be in violation of this policy during the current fiscal year, then exhaustive efforts to remedy this matter, including loss of funding may be taken by the Department pursuant to Article VI section 4 and Article X section 3 of the Plan for a Citywide system of Neighborhood Councils.

Commissioner Lipmen seconded the Motion.

VOTE: Ayes – 6 (Atkinson, Grant, Lipmen, Mack, Rubio, and Shaffer)  
Nays – 1 (Medina)

Motion passes.

Public comment received from:

Glenn Bailey – I did participate in one of the Plan Review Committees. The whole concept of moving to the option of a single posting and coupling it with some other provisions came out of Plan Review. Some of these policies have been policies of your predecessor Commission I think since August of 2010 is when it was first implemented and then there was a revision of the policy which mandated the website posting which mandated the eblast which mandated sending it to NC Support so it could get into Early Notification and I'm here to tell you that I subscribe to all of the Early Notification for all 95 Neighborhood Councils and I'm here to tell you that 60 of them participate either all the time or periodically. That leaves 35 of them have been in violation of the Commission policy for over four years and nothing has been done about it, nothing. I think it's time for this body to step up and figure out a way to make sure that when you set a policy that people listen and that the Neighborhood Councils step up to the plate and do what they need to do. How hard is it to add one more email address to a distribution that's going to the Board of Directors of that Neighborhood Council and add NCSupport@lacity.org? That's all they have to do to get on Early Notification. I totally support that, I can't think of a better idea. I urge you to move ahead on this.

Bob Gelfand – Len, taking this the first five right, wonderful, 6-fine, little harsh, 7-putting them in the bylaws seems kind of unnecessary because it would be a citywide policy, but maybe its suppose to make the grievance process work easier, 8-again, you're turning DONE into a police agency where somebody would have to call up DONE and tell them, hey somebody violated the posting policy now you gotta go and do something. So is DONE gonna send somebody down to the end of San Pedro to look at those postings? No. 9-frankly I'm shocked and offended. This is going so far beyond any kind of policy we've ever had in this system.

Diana Nave – I too support the basic policy and also participated in the Review Committee that looked at it and came back with this recommendation. I have a concern on your very first paragraph. I think that what's said may not be what you're intending. The second sentence says, "Any additional physical postings shall be within the

**Neighborhood Council boundaries...” Why are you limiting us to posting within the Neighborhood Council boundaries? In San Pedro oftentimes we post things in places that are not within our boundaries because there are places where people will see them. So that seem to be a bad policy to me.**

13. Previously, the Commission established Regional Standing Committees to provide recommendations to the Commission regarding improvements to the Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils. The Regional Standing Committees, also known as the Neighborhood Council (NC) Plan Review Committees, have forwarded their recommendations to the Commission for review and action. Discussion and POSSIBLE ACTION by the Commission on the recommendations of the Regional Standing Committees and the Commission’s positions with respect to the recommendations, including but not limited to drafting a communication or Resolution to the City regarding: (30 minutes) (Click on the links to view copies of the documents.)

[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Memo-re\\_Eight-Motions.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Memo-re_Eight-Motions.pdf)

[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Attachment-A\\_survey-results.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Attachment-A_survey-results.pdf)

[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Attachment-B\\_NC-Resolutions.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Attachment-B_NC-Resolutions.pdf)

[http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Survey\\_8-motions\\_text2.pdf](http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Survey_8-motions_text2.pdf)

1) Training and Leadership Development

NC Plan Review Committees’ Recommendation:

- a) Neighborhood Council board members be required to complete Ethics, Financial Policy, Sexual Harassment, and ADA Compliance training, and that the Department offer classes including, but not limited to leadership, City government basics, parliamentary procedures, land use, and candidate training.
- b) There be a citywide standard period of time from date of seating, not to exceed 90 days, that a Board member will have to pass the required training, and that this be enforced by the Neighborhood Council bylaws, which shall prohibit voting on any matter coming before the Neighborhood Council board. Inability of any board member(s) to vote for failure to timely complete training will not affect quorum.

Additional Commission proposals:

- c) That the Commission may amend the recommendation regarding training to include consequences for failure to complete the training within the allowed period of time. The ultimate consequence being the removal by action of the Department of any offending board member.
- d) That the Commission may amend the recommendation regarding training to include Workplace Violence/Bullying Prevention training.

**ACTION: None.**

**Bob Gelfand** – this Board has now asserted an authority over me and over participants that has never existed before and the same argument falls on this proposal. Again, all this nonsense about training and sexual harassment, there's a couple you left out. Again, it's an insult to the good Neighborhood Councils. The first eight of that last motion would have sufficed and you're not going to be able to enforce this with the fist and the iron glove. It's just not gonna work.

**Laurre Jacobs** – Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council, I am an unpaid elected official and we have enough time, hard time recruiting more people so asking this type of training and to have it done in such a short time period is really counterproductive to our recruiting efforts to get more people to work on the board and why don't you add beside sexual harassment maybe how to dress properly, how to speak articulately, it could go on and on. Maybe a compromise to this is that you have just one or two members on the board to have this training and they be sort of the sergeant of arms and the reporting.

**Diana Nave** – I noticed that this says that the working groups recommended this. Actually the working group from our area did not recommend this and the reason we didn't was because we felt that a policy might be put into place that required training where there was something happening that necessitated training, but that it should not be a blanket policy applied to all boards because there are many boards where they do not need it, where people have had that training in other venues, or other ways and as volunteers there is a lot of time that is required now of volunteers. So we did not feel that the additional training should be mandated for everyone. Like I did on the last one, I have problems with the way it is written.

14. 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.**

15. 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:**

**Pete Nicholas** – want to again comment on opening checking accounts this fiscal year. I think my Neighborhood Council was one of those Councils who months ago when offered the opportunity, you want to open your check account early? Yeah, we wanted a checking account early. That's what we were volunteering for. We were not volunteering

for being guinea pigs in the last month of fiscal year having to go through this horrendous new process. City Council has not authorized the contract, the contract has not been signed, nobody has an ATM card, nobody has checks. Let's take our resources and use them intelligently, trying to solve the horrendous backlog of demand warrants to better close out this fiscal year.

Ray Regalado – Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council – we are very hard at work trying to do those things that we are asked to do. Today was a very important day for Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council. We had our elections. I felt, honestly, I felt cheated that you chose to have a meeting here in the Harbor area and I had to choose whether to be here or at our elections and our elections are so important. Given the fact that this is part of the outreach that we do the hard work that people like, Diana Nave, Laure Jacobs, and others in our Neighborhood Council went out and tried to generate candidates, people to come out and vote but again we had to choose. I'm asking that in the future could you please, I think it would help us in our desire to be engaging as we ask the community to be engaged that consideration be taken when we have big events such as this in our Neighborhood Council that perhaps we can adjust these meetings so that they don't fall and we have to make choices.

16. Adjourn

**ACTION:** Commissioner Shaffer moved that the meeting be adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

**####**