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**ROSENDAHL APPOINTS TOM PONTON TO CITY COMMISSION  
STUDYING NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SYSTEM**

*Chair of Mar Vista Community Council to Represent 11<sup>th</sup> District*

LOS ANGELES - City Councilman Bill Rosendahl has named Tom Ponton, chair of the Mar Vista Community Council, to serve as his representative on a commission studying the effectiveness of the City's system of neighborhood councils.

Ponton, a lifelong Mar Vista resident and long-time community activist, will be one of 29 Los Angeles residents charged with evaluating the effectiveness of neighborhood councils and of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. The review commission is mandated by the 1999 City Charter, which created neighborhood councils to give people a greater voice in city government.

"Tom Ponton is the perfect choice to represent the 11<sup>th</sup> District on this commission," Rosendahl said. "He chairs one of our City's most successful, most active, and most inclusive neighborhood councils. His leadership style has helped build consensus on important issues that have improved the quality of life within our neighborhoods."

Ponton, a local businessman and property owner, has a long history as a community activist in Mar Vista and surrounding neighborhoods. An advocate for open space, Ponton led community activism to protect the Ballona Wetlands and minimize the traffic impacts of Playa Vista on the Westside. He also helped to assemble the first volunteer Park Advisory Board at Mar Vista Recreation Center and went on to chair that board for 4 years. During that time, he spearheaded beautification projects, annual community festivals, and fundraising efforts for a new roller hockey rink and an artificial turf soccer field in Mar Vista.

In February 2001, Ponton co-founded the organizing committee for the Mar Vista

Community Council, which was certified on August 13, 2002. He was later elected chairperson and has served in that capacity for the past 3 years.

"Bill Rosendahl isn't the only one who believes in bringing everyone to the table," said Ponton. "As chair of the MVCC, I've always fought hard for open public meetings that include everyone willing to participate. I'm honored to serve as a commissioner. I'll work to embrace the views and concerns of the other neighborhood council participants throughout Council District 11."

The Commission is composed of 29 members. Each councilmember appoints one member while the Mayor appoints seven members chosen from a pool of representatives nominated by the City's neighborhood councils, and seven other members at his own discretion.

The commission, which is expected to receive money for staff and operations during the city budget process, will start meeting in late June and make recommendations to the council and mayor on how to change, improve or reform the neighborhood system and its relationship with City government.

"Tom knows where neighborhood councils work well and where they have failed," Rosendahl said. "And he knows where the City has worked well with them, and where the City has failed grassroots democracy."

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