

School finally opens doors -- but at what cost?

If you want an example of how politics can hurt real people, look no further than the fight over Ivy Academia charter school in Woodland Hills.

The charter school finally got the temporary approval to open its campus on Monday, but it took two months of fighting with the city, Councilman Dennis Zine and the neighborhood council over what amounts to little more than technicalities. Meanwhile, students had to attend classes in churches and hotel meeting rooms; many parents withdrew their children.

There's no question the school made some mistakes in meeting requirements for permits. But rather than helping the school, Zine jumped aboard neighborhood council objections and raised a row. The issue got more convoluted with the disclosure that a member of the neighborhood council had discussed helping the school get approval for a \$5,000 fee.

Playing politics may be the right way to get elected, but it's not the way to improve the community. This debacle has cost Zine and the area's neighborhood council credibility, but hopefully it's taught students the importance of integrity in public affairs.