

Eagle Rock forming local council

By Helen Gao
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EAGLE ROCK -- Local residents don't have any big complaints with City Hall, but when they do they want to make sure they will be heard.

So following in the footsteps of neighborhoods across the San Fernando Valley, community leaders are organizing to form a neighborhood council.

"To not have a neighborhood council seems kind of irresponsible since everyone else has the option of forming one," said Wanda Kuenzli, chairwoman of the board of the Eagle Rock Community Cultural Center, who sits on the formation committee.

"Our community deserves to be represented just as any other community deserves to be represented."

The Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council Formation Committee will hold an election March 13 to fill a half-dozen seats on its interim board, which will do the legwork before council members are elected.

So far, 10 people have already been appointed to the board.

The election along, with a communitywide meeting, will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. at Eagle Rock High School, 1750 Yosemite Drive.

The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners is scheduled to vote on April 2 to certify Eagle Rock's application to form a council.

Formation committee Chairwoman Dalila Sotelo hopes that a neighborhood council would help draw out those who don't typically participate in local politics.

"We are looking at this as a long-term investment in Eagle Rock," she said. "We work with Glassell Park and Highland Park to represent the entire northeast, not just our myopic community."

Bylaws drawn up by the formation committee call for 17 people to serve on the neighborhood council: a president, a treasurer, six people representing community stakeholder groups, eight people representing geographic subdistricts, and a youth representative.

The boundaries for the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council are proposed to be the 134 and 2 freeways and the Pasadena city boundary. The southern boundary is defined roughly by the base of the mountain ridge down to York Boulevard and over to Eagle Rock Boulevard.

Approved by voters in 1999 as part of a new City Charter, neighborhood councils are intended to be independent entities that will provide input to city officials on neighborhood issues. The councils determine their own leaders, agendas and boundaries.

So far, eight neighborhood councils have been certified, including Glassell Park and West Hills.

After certification, residents within the boundaries of the neighborhood council hold a formal election to vote for their representatives.

In Eagle Rock's case, its formation committee has decided to lower the voting age to 16 to encourage greater participation by young people.

For more information about the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council formation effort, call Carol Baker Tharp at (323) 257-0354.

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