

Yucca Corridor picks a Neighborhood Council

By Kevin Butler, Hollywood Independent, July 3, 2002

Residents of the Yucca Corridor ended a territorial dispute between two Neighborhood Councils last Wednesday by voting 18-14 at a sparsely attended forum to join the Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council.

The Yucca Corridor, which lies south of Franklin Avenue, north of Hollywood Boulevard, west of Cahuenga Avenue and east of Highland Avenue, will not be part of the proposed Hollywood United Neighborhood Council, whose members were divided at the meeting about whether to embrace the area.

The small neighborhood was originally claimed by Hollywood Hills West and the Hollywood Alliance. The latter has since merged with the Franklin-Hollywood Hills Community Council to create Hollywood United, which has not yet been certified by the city.

The two camps made presentations to Yucca residents, explaining their structures and borders before audience members argued which council would best serve the area.

Some members of the former Franklin Hills group who are reconsidering the merger with Hollywood United, spoke against including Yucca, saying the neighborhood was too different and could distract them from handling their own problems.

"[Yucca] is like a wart on our area because we are not going to be able to focus on the issues we need to," said George Abrahams, adding that the two areas have different traffic flows. "Their issues are not our issues."

Representatives from Hollywood Hills West stressed that if Yucca residents joined their group, they could help solve traffic problems created by the Hollywood & Highland complex, which lies within the council's borders.

"That's something that definitely affects the people in Yucca and their neighborhood," Darren Gold said.

Representatives from Hollywood United said Yucca shares many characteristics with their area and that the group would strive to get every community involved.

"We feel that there is more commonality to the east [of Yucca] than to the west," Hollywood United representative Andrew Glazier said.

Each group also laid out its governing structure. Hollywood United would be run by a 17-member board composed of six members elected by district plus representatives from business, education, renters and other groups.

Hollywood Hills West would be governed by a 23-member board consisting of 18 committee chairs and five at-large representatives.

Leaders from the two sides repeatedly stressed during the meeting that they did not consider the

matter a contest.

"For me, it was never what the actual vote was," Hollywood United representative Russell Brown said after hearing the election result. "It was always about whether the community wanted to be involved and which geographical area they felt most comfortable with."

Yucca residents voting to join Hollywood Hills West said they did so partly because the group was larger, more established and therefore could have more clout at City Hall.

"The group that's larger is actually going to accomplish more than the smaller group," Yucca resident Edward Frost said.

Hailey Dangerfield, who has lived with her daughter in Yucca for nine months, said she voted to join Hollywood Hills West so she would have influence over problems created by Hollywood & Highland.

"I just feel that Hollywood & Highland being on the corner, we will get more of the area and get it cleaned up and make it safer," she said.

But other Yucca residents felt their neighborhood should go to Hollywood United, which extends roughly eastward from Cahuenga to Western Canyon and Fern Dell Road and northward from Hollywood Boulevard to Mulholland Drive.

Yucca resident Gustavo Garcia said his neighborhood "shares" little in common with what he sees as the wealthier Hollywood Hills West area.

"We really enjoyed working with the Hollywood Alliance, the older group," he said. "Just driving through that place, you see the difference."

Heated exchanges occurred at the meeting between some members of Franklin-Hollywood Hills Community Council and the proposed merged entity Hollywood United, which will take its bylaws to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment on July 11.

"What you were seeing was not really representative of the group or the people involved," Brown said, adding that only a minority had problems with the proposed merger.

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