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CALIFORNIA



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In Sunday's guest article, Gerald Silver complained that our new citywide system of neighborhood councils isn't meeting his expectations. In fact, the opposite is true. The neighborhood councils are starting to do what everyone expected, and he apparently doesn't like it.

It's clear that he doesn't like the idea that neighborhood councils are designed to represent all the people who make a community strong, such as those involved in local businesses, churches, and schools.

This is a big improvement from the old system in which someone at City Hall picked the leaders of the advisory groups, or, worse yet, in which one person declared himself or herself the spokesperson for an entire community.

Neighborhood councils can and have been affecting governmental decision-making. And to say that they are another layer of bureaucracy is just silly. They are actively holding their elected officials accountable and advocating for city services. They are doing it by picking their own leaders, their own boundaries, their own ways of making decisions, and their own issues.

Mr. Silver complained that in electing neighborhood council leaders, the right to vote isn't limited to just residents. That's exactly the purpose of neighborhood councils. It was the main selling point when the proposal was on the ballot. Everyone who has a stake in a neighborhood's future gets to participate.

What Mr. Silver failed to mention is that he remains an active member of his neighborhood council's executive board, so he can't be all that disappointed with the neighborhood council system.

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