

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

ARROYO SECO

ASNC: Certified But Still Protested

by Margaret Arnold

As soon as our story hit the streets, it was irrelevant. The ever-changing story of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council (ASNC) has taken a brand new turn. According to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), they are now fully certified and ready to begin their election process. But a lot of people in Mt. Washington have another view.

Here's the story so far (again):

In October, the city's Board of Neighborhood Commissioners had

certified the ASNC with the understanding that certain changes would be made in its bylaws, most notably, an increase in representation for Mount Washington, the largest of the five communities making up the ASNC. But almost seven months later, after more meetings and discussion than anyone would care to remember, ASNC stakeholders failed to pass the mandated bylaw changes. The council was stalled in its tracks. Further, a well-organized group of frustrated Mount Washington residents was seeking to form its own neighborhood council, a move that

would necessitate the complete decertification of the ASNC.

But on May 8, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, the city agency responsible for the oversight of neighborhood councils, came to the rescue. A letter arrived from DONE General Manager Greg Nelson stating that the months of bylaw committee labor and the ensuing vote had been unnecessary. "It is our understanding," the letter read, "that the authority did exist for (ASNC) contact persons to accept the BONC's recommendations."

When councils apply for cer-

tification with the city of Los Angeles, they are required to list on their applications the names of "contact People." Robert Nakahiro, Pat Griffith, Jim Thompson and Louis Quirarte were listed as contacts by the ASNC. (Thompson replaced Anna Carpenter three weeks before the certification.) According to the DONE finding, that listing on the application was sufficient to give those four individuals the power to accept requested bylaws changes at the certification hearing on behalf of ASNC stakeholders.

Nelson wrote to the ASNC

Transition Committee. "I would like to commend you for your exhaustive efforts at discussing these amendments within your by laws committee and presenting them to your stakeholders at your recent general meeting." But why had DONE allowed the grueling process to proceed with its full knowledge if it was totally unnecessary?

According to Mount Washington resident Denise Weinstock, bylaws meetings went on for five hours at a time over a space of many months. Nelson wrote, "I would advise the ASNC to follow the bylaw amendment procedure outlined in the Article XI of the ASNC bylaws after the initial Board is elected to the ASNC." In other words, elect an initial board with the structure agreed

upon by the BONC and the contact people, and only let stakeholders evaluate that structure after it's already in use.

In the case of the ASNC, Mount Washington activist Dan Wright points out that Thompson, who accepted the BONC's bylaw changes, even told the commissioners as he made the acceptance that he had only been chair of the ASNC interim steering committee for three weeks.

Nelson's letter concludes, "On May 1, 2003, Department staff received amended ASNC bylaws that included the changes agreed upon by the authorized contact persons at the BONC hearing."

On April 26, the bylaw changes had failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority support

and ASNC interim leadership had been requested to draft a letter to DONE officially notifying the department of the situation. DONE subsequently ruled that Stewart erred in requiring two-thirds rather than a simple majority.

A letter was then sent by ASNC Transition Committee Chair Bill Murray. It read in part, ".the meeting ended in confusion. Although the clear majority of the stakeholders who attended voted in favor of passing the entire set of revised Bylaws, 71 in favor and 61 against, they did not constitute a 2/3 majority, and Parliamentarian Jimmy Stewart was challenged as to the need for this. The group never got a clear ruling of which was correct." Murray enclosed a two-page argument pre-

pared by Thompson and Griffith arguing that the two-thirds requirement was procedurally incorrect and that the vote was unnecessary anyway. This is the argument DONE then backed up in its letter to the ASNC. The fledgling Mount Washington Neighborhood Council are moving ahead undeterred. If the situation with the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council cannot be resolved amicably, Wright says that they will explore legal challenges. Several hundred Mount Washington residents have signed on as supporting an independent MWNC.

It is quite likely that the DONE decision will stand and the ASNC will move forward, though the Mt. Washington formation group will definitely not go away quietly.

Neighborhood Council Meeting Schedules

The Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council regular board meetings are continuing on the 1st Tuesday of each month at the ER Library from 6 to 8 p.m. All are invited to our meetings and events. For more information about ERNC, call (323) 257-6381. Look us up at <http://www.eaglerockcouncil.org>.

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council General Meetings are the second Thursday of the month at the Franklin High School Cafeteria 820 N. ave. 54 Highland Park Info: Rob Mendel 323.258.9282.

Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council (GEPENC) -- March 25 -- Logan Elementary School Auditorium. 7:00PM-9:00PM

Atwater Village Neighborhood Council meets at the Glen Feliz Elementary School Auditorium, 3955 Glenfeliz Blvd., L.A., CA 90039 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Questions or comments please call Lenore: 323/669-0892, Roberta: 323/669-0997, Mark: 323/661-7612, LinMin: 323/662-6880, or email Elisa: eabelle18@harmonygold.com

Glassell Park NC will meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm at Fletcher Elementary, 3350 Fletcher Dr. Every 2nd and 4th Monday we will meet at 7:00pm at Glassell Elementary, 2211 West Avenue 30.

Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council Meetings: Transition Committee TBA

Greater Cypress Park Neighborhood Council Stakeholder Meetings are always held at Aragon Elementary School (1118 Aragon Avenue, LA CA 90065 323-221-5173) on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of EVERY QDD MONTH. So, the first, third, fifth month and so on. Interim Governing Board Meetings are generally held weekly or biweekly at The Cypress Park Community Center (929 Cypress Avenue, LA CA 90065 323-226-1682) or The Cypress Park Recreation Center (2630 Pepper Street, LA CA 90065 213-485-5384)