

# Los Angeles Daily News

## Councils hope to be certified

2 new Northridge panels are replacing older group

By James Nash

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**Friday, September 19, 2003** - NORTHRIDGE -- A group that promised to do battle with Los Angeles City Hall as the city-certified Northridge Neighborhood Council has been replaced by two smaller, less-militant groups.

The Los Angeles City Council voted in June against certifying the Northridge Neighborhood Council, which would have allowed the group to join dozens of advisory groups advising city officials on neighborhood concerns. City leaders said the Northridge group failed to reach out to the 60,000 people it was supposed to represent and fought with officials and other residents.

The leaders of the Northridge group, however, said they were punished for their outspokenness on controversial issues in Northridge, notably the long-shuttered city swimming pool at Northridge Recreation Center.

Elbowing aside the leaders of the established group, two new neighborhood councils now are forming, with the dividing line at Reseda Boulevard. Leaders of the two groups say they will attempt to be recognized as official neighborhood councils next year.

"We're just trying to get started again after all the chaos," said Dorothy Boberg, an organizer of the proposed Northridge East Neighborhood Council. "It was too bad that there was a clash of personalities. We really needed to start over again with new leadership."

Leaders of the old neighborhood council fumed that they were being pushed aside by people who they say would rather kiss up to city leaders than advocate for Northridge.

"Essentially what it is, is a bunch of self-appointed wannabe people trying to speak for the community when they haven't been elected," said Charles Brink, vice president of the old neighborhood council. "Until the court adjudicates who's the neighborhood council, it's not decided."

Brink and other leaders of the old group have said they plan to file a lawsuit to overturn decisions by the Los Angeles City Council and Board of Neighborhood Commissioners denying their application for city certification. But no lawsuit had been filed as of Friday, they said.

Even though city officials don't recognize the Northridge Neighborhood Council as a true neighborhood council, members of the panel have continued to meet and discuss local issues as well as their own battle for certification.

Meanwhile, the two new groups say it's time to pick up the pieces of the failed effort and form neighborhood councils that are less confrontational.

"You have two individuals who are trying to hold up Northridge over their own ego battles," said Jim Alger, an organizer of the Northridge West Neighborhood Council, referring to Brink and Jane Lowenthal, president of the Northridge Neighborhood Council.

Lowenthal denied the accusation, saying she has attempted only to advocate vigorously on behalf of Northridge residents, workers and property owners.

The two new groups seeking to represent Northridge will be able to go through the city-mandated certification process just as the former one attempted to do, said Greg Nelson, general manager of the city's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

The old group has no official status, he said.

"They came, they applied and they were denied," Nelson said. "They're not a neighborhood council."