

Pulling the plug?

Old Northridge Neighborhood Council risks its own demise

LA Daily News

August 31, 2005

The city of Los Angeles' neighborhood councils are supposed to serve as laboratories of democracy, and sometimes, when experiments go awry, it's best that certain laboratories get shut down.

Such might be the fate of the Old Northridge Neighborhood Council, but the facts are far from clear yet.

The city's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is threatening to decertify Old Northridge, citing insufficient community outreach and too narrow an organizational focus.

According to DONE, the council never held adequate elections, and rather than representing a broad cross section of the community, it's become an insular enclave for arts enthusiasts. DONE officials say they've tried working with members to reform the council, but they've received little cooperation.

The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners may pull the plug on Old Northridge at its Tuesday meeting. Let's hope it doesn't need to come to that. Let's hope that DONE and its staff and the members of the Old Northridge Neighborhood Council look for a way to resolve this conflict without resorting to a process that doesn't serve the community.

Neighborhood councils are laboratories of democracy, and both the bureaucrats and activists need to respect that.