



an insider look at city hall

CITYWATCH

CITYWIDE EDITION

February 20, 2006
Volume 4 Issue 7

CityWatch Today—An eclectic menu this issue. Exiting Interim LA Planning Director, Mark Winogrand, leaves some verbal notes taped to the water cooler for incoming Gail Goldberg (Page 1).

The faults are still settling as DONE GM, Greg Nelson, and the Mayor's new BONC appointments get acquainted and establish the rules (see Perspective, Page 1). That some sparks could result is a reasonable forecast.

Everyone agrees, disaster preparedness is important. Especially to LA's neighborhoods where there doesn't seem to be much of a realistic responder design. What should we make of the Mayor's appointments to the Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee then, with no neighborhood representation? Brady Westwater takes a shot at the answer (Page 2). See the complete list of advisors in this CityWatch.

And, more. I hope you find it useful. —Editor

Say What?

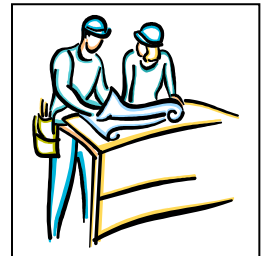
“When I arrived, I saw that I had to ... re-instill hope, belief and excitement ... and to begin building bridges.”

—Mark Winogrand
Outgoing Interim
LA Planning Director

Interim Planning Chief Says He Had to Instill Hope and Rebuild Bridges *Winogrand Reviews LA Experience & Challenges Ahead*

Highly respected and longtime area planner, Mark Winogrand, came out of retirement last year to take hold of the interim reigns of the LA Planning Department following the retirement of Con Howe. Winogrand sat for an interview with The Planning Report, an on-line industry publication. What follows are excerpts from that January 2006 story.

When I arrived, Mark Winogrand told The Planning Report, I committed to the mayor that I would do three things: First, help him find the best possible candidate in the United States; second, keep the department stable ... and third, draft my own personal assessment.



When I arrived I saw that I had to add a couple of things. One was to re-instill hope, belief and excitement ... and, I recognized the need to begin building the bridges from the department to the various places where bridges might have been damaged, including City Council offices.

Has the mayor picked the right person?

We all hope so and we believe so. I have no doubt Gail (Goldberg) will do the job exceptionally well.

See Page 8. “Interim Planning Chief”

Perspective

BONC vs. DONE: Dueling Visions of the Board's Purpose Could Produce Sparks

By Ken Draper

The Board of Neighborhood Commissions meets tonight and it might be worth your time to pay a visit. Even if you have no particular business to transact, it might be entertaining.

There are not so subtle signs that the newly appointed BONC commissioners and the DONE General Manager are headed for a showdown. They are at odds over who's in charge.

All city boards and commissions are not equal. Some are incredibly powerful and in effect run their departments. Service on the Public Works board is a full-time, paid position. The Charter provides the BONC with a limited set of instructions: Create and oversee policy, certify and decertify, approve bylaws amendments and “the promulgation of rules and regulations.” The DONE General Manager runs the department.



See Page 7. “Perspective”



CityWatch Op & Ed

ViewPoint

Mayor Appoints Disaster Panel With No NC Representatives On It.

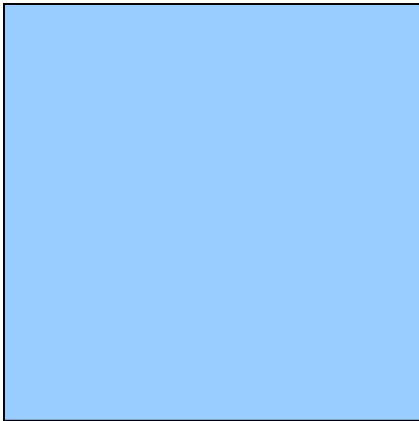
By Brady Westwater

And he's right. For now.

Looking over the list – which will soon be expanded – it is filled with people who represent institutions that will be able to instantly deliver hard goods and hard services throughout the city when disaster strikes.

Can we say that about NC's today?

Well, right now we barely even know each other, much less work with each other - which is a reason for the new Congress of Neighborhood Councils. We are also only at the beginning of the process of developing our own disaster plans, and have not even begun to co-ordinate with any city wide disaster plan.



I talked with several members of the Mayor's Office today and they all assured me that that the NC's will very soon be represented in the second round of members – when the Mayor selects those who will be working on the grass roots rather than the regional basis. And that is who we are right now – and what will always be our greatest strength, our connections with our local stakeholders and our knowledge of our local communities. (Brady Westwater is a writer and sometime contributor to CityWatch.) ■

Opinion

NC's Feeling Like Rodney Dangerfield

It's a real stretch to believe that City Council President Eric Garcetti takes Neighborhood Councils all that seriously. Education either, for that matter.

Think about it: He and Committee Chair, Alex Padilla, have scheduled the Education and Neighborhoods Committee meetings for 9 a.m. on Tuesday's, twice monthly.

First, City Council meets at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays. Even if the E&N meetings were to start on time ... a rarity for committee meetings ... what kind of serious agenda can they realistically cover and still adjourn in time for committee members to make the City Council meeting on time? First time out on this schedule, discussion on the important ... at least to Neighborhood Councils ...912 Review Commission missed the cut.

Consider as well, the constituencies here: community re

educators. What's wrong with this picture?

For a City Council that claims to be forward-thinking and constituent-responsive, making the E&N schedule more user friendly would seem like the right thing to do. Walking the walk, if you will.

And, while Eric and Alex are revising the schedule, how about another idea: actually holding some of the Education and Neighborhoods committee meetings in the neighborhoods.

-CW

CITYWATCH

The E-Newsletter for LA's NC's

February 20, 2006
Volume 4 Issue 7

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*CityWatch
Arrives on Tuesday
This week, because
Monday was a holiday.
Thank you.*

In Case You Missed It ...**LAT Reports Mayor's Dream for LA: Mixed-Use High-Rises, Parks, Subways**

(Neighborhood Councils take heed. Mayor Villaraigosa's vision for Los Angeles will affect you. The Los Angeles Times Sunday edition, in a story by Staff Writer Jim Newton, provided some of the details. The story was headed: "Tall, Green, Vital: L.A. as Mayor Dreams It." In case you missed it, here are relevant excerpts.

(Mayor Antonio) Villaraigosa's imagined Los Angeles is denser, taller and greener than the city he now governs. High-rises dominate the skyline and hold not just offices but thousands of apartments, cleared for construction by zoning rules that encourage development of housing towers. The **subway** reaches west under **Wilshire Boulevard**, paid for with money Villaraigosa is convinced he can secure from the state and federal governments.



Islands — **villages**, as he calls them — sprout **around subway stops** and are ribboned together by swaths of **green space**, most notably along the **Los Angeles River**, where the mayor



imagines trees and grass in place of the long segments of concrete culverts and channels that once carried runoff to the ocean. And all across that vast landscape, scores of **pocket parks** bring smatterings of green to even the densest urban neighborhoods.

Downtown is the heart of Villaraigosa's future Los Angeles. It hums late into the night. The Civic Center is a sloping park surrounded by museums, restaurants and shops. New apartment buildings feature courtyards that offer public space during the day and protected enclaves at night. Some of the new buildings have small parks on the roofs, projects designed with energy efficiency in mind.

"We're going to have," he said, "stylish density," "transit-oriented development," "a sea change" of high-rise construction, a "string of emeralds" proposed decades ago but never adopted.

A year ago, the mayor says, there were 26 high-rise projects on Los Angeles' planning books. Two weeks ago, there were 51. And one week ago, there were 58. They stand at different stages of the long process: Five have received permits to build and 12 have submitted plans; others are at earlier, more tentative stages of development

As for size, the smallest of the proposals is for an 11-story building while the tallest is a 58-story tower. Even if projects fall through, as Villaraigosa acknowledges many will, those that are built, he says, will help lay a foundation for a new skyline.

To transform his vision into a plan, Villaraigosa has hired Gail Goldberg, an urban planner whose tenure in San Diego has been lauded for its integration of neighborhood development with downtown expansion. Goldberg will soon assume her duties as Los Angeles' planning director, and she argues that the

See next column

Preventive Law**Who Gets the House?
Are you sure?**

Thinking about adding a loved one as joint tenant on the title to your house? Many people think this is a good way to avoid probate.

Avoid a Court Action

But here are some things to consider. First, if a creditor ever gets a court judgment against the other joint tenant, the creditor can start a legal process that can end with you, the 'good' joint tenant, co-owning 'your' house with a stranger.

Face the Tax Issue

Second, if you expect the property to appreciate significantly between the time you add your friend or child's name to title and the time you die, your friend or child might face capital gains taxes that she would avoid if you instead gave her the property in your will or trust.

There might be other factors to consider, as well, depending on your situation.

Practice Preventive Law--

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From previous column

city can have density along the lines that Villaraigosa espouses without compromising neighborhoods.

Under her tutelage, San Diego adopted a plan known as the "City of Villages," in which priorities for downtown and the rest of the city were spelled out in detail after various communities met to discuss and harmonize their hopes for the future. Los Angeles, she said, may benefit from a similarly inclusive process. *(Complete story: www.LATimes.co)* ■

News That Was

City Councilmember Support Puts LA River and NE Open Space ICOs on Hold

Staff Writers Report

With the help of City Council members LaBonge, Greuel and Huizar, NCs, community coalitions and stakeholders made enough noise last week to convince the City Planning Commission to place a moratorium on the LA River Basin and Northeast Open Space Interim Control Ordinances (ICO).

The LA River issue had generated heat last week because of the short hearing notice on an ordinance that affected dozens of neighborhoods all along the river's lengthy and twisting course.



The Forth District's Tom LaBonge was particularly effective arguing that the Commission hadn't shown why implementation of the proposed ICOs was urgent. "We need time to educate and inform constituents on these ICOs and their affect on their quality of life," LaBonge told the panel.

Council Backs Smith's RENEW LA; Delays BFI Renewal to Consider Trash Options

Councilman Greig Smith's colleagues supported his alternative waste disposal plan (RENEW LA) and then postponed a decision on the Sunshine Canyon contract renewal until the end of the month. They were buying Smith some time to find price competitive alternatives to BFI contract.



The action left the Granada Hills, where Sunshine Canyon is located, Neighborhood Councils and other community organizations like the North Valley Coalition, with a ray of hope. They have been fighting for the closure of the BFI owned Sunshine Canyon for years.

Clock Ticking for Labor Head Ludlow

It's decision tome for County Federation of Labor chief and former City Councilman Martin Ludlow. He is in trouble because of alleged involvement with the misuse of union dollars in his 2003 city council election campaign. Insiders suggest that his problems run considerably deeper. He is also the target of a federal probe related to his stint on the Metropolitan Transit Authority Board while he was a councilman.

Prosecutors have offered Ludlow a plea bargain and have given him until tonight, February 21, to respond. ■



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Turning up the Heat on DWP Solar Program

It is vitally important that as many NCs (and other stakeholders) as possible attend the Wednesday workshop on the Solar Program -- and weigh in on the current draft of the Guidelines. This workshop is a perfect opportunity for NC liaisons and others to make concise, on-point comments on the Guidelines, budget and Net Metering regulation.

The guidelines represent only 1/3 of the Solar Program, the other 2/3 being the budget (including how much \$ was spent and on what since the beginning of the FY05/06 7/1/05) and the onerous Net Metering statute (the contract, if you will, governing the contract between ratepayers who have purchased a PV system and DWP).

It would be a shame if LADWP staff droned on for 2 to 2.5 hours of PowerPoint presentations without letting the NCs and other stakeholders comment as the presentation unfolds (as they did at the recent Energy Efficiency workshop).

--Peter Parrish

ASNC Liaison to the LADWP

(Board of Water and Power Commissioner's workshop on the LADWP Solar Program scheduled for Wednesday 2/22, 1

from <http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp007731.pdf>.)

Mid-Town NC Split Up, cont.

*An excellent, fair and objective article.
Thank you, Gary!!!*

--Kristine Eide

MTNHNC Board Member

(See "Mid-Town Split Up is Change for Better"—CityWatch 2-13-06.) ■

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Status Report

Studio City is 34th to Join NC Congress; Reps Meet March 4

By Sara Epstein

The Studio City became the 34th Council last week to join the NC Congress. That report from SCNC President Polly Ward.



The Westchester Playa del Rey Government Affairs Committee, meanwhile, voted unanimously to recommend ratification to their full board.

Chair, Julian Sean Rogers, says his Empowerment Congress Southeast will consider ratification on February 28.

...

The Congress' Senate meets next on March 4 at 10 a.m. They will be considering, among other things, recommendations from the Congress' Ad Hoc Structure Committee on officers, terms and elections.

The Structure Ad Hoc Committee meets again this Saturday, February 24 at 10 a.m. All Congress and Congress committee meetings are currently being held at the John Ferraro Building at Hope and First Streets. *(Info on NC Congress meetings, members, Charter at www.LANCCongress.org.)* ■

Adv

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-Los Angeles Magazine



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Photo by Donovan Marshall

CITYWATCH



**First Thing
Monday
Mornings**

CITYWATCH DayPlanner

City Council

February 21 & 24 (10 a.m.)
City Hall (Council Chamber)
February 22
Council in recess

Education & Neighborhoods

February 28 (9 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1060)

BONC

February 21

- Status: Vermont Harbor
- NC Review Commission
- NC Funding Program
- Report from BONC Ad Hoc Committee on NC Outreach

Arts, Parks, Health, Aging

Wednesday, February 22 (8:30 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1060)

- AIDS Program
- Roosevelt High School Pool

Public Works

Wednesday, February 22 (9:30 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 350)

PLUM

Wednesday, February 22 (2 p.m.)
City Hall (Rm 350)

Transportation

Wednesday, February 22 (3 p.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1010)

- DOT reports: Red Flag fiscal impact; parking lot for transit riders at Chandler/Lankershim; Hollywood Car-share pilot program; regulating parking of recreational vehicles on residential streets

City Planning Commission

Thursday, February 23 (8:30 a.m.)
Braude Center (1st Floor)
6262 Van Nuys Blvd

Affordable Housing

Thursday, February 23 (12 n)
Garland Bldg (Rm 912)
1200 W 7th Street

CityWatch

2006 Assignments

◆ Getting the Word Out: NCs Big Pain

Complete, detailed "How-to" on one Council's solution

◆ For NCs, the Mayor Has Promises to Keep

How good is the Mayor's word?

◆ The Best LA City Council Ever?

Our panel and our readers have opinions

Next CityWatch:

February 27 ...

...ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

Adv



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Info & Technology Board

Friday, February 24 (1:30 p.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1010)

- Status report: City Channel 36

Citywide Alliance of NCs

March 18 (8:30 a.m.)

- Scheduled: Deputy Mayor Larry Frank; Councilman Alex Padilla; Planning Director Gail Goldberg

Details: www.allncs.org



Perspective: Dueling Visions

From Page 1

The Mayor has changed the BONC dynamic. He has appointed four new commissioners and they appear to be on a mission to energize and define ... if not redefine ... the Board. In the process, the boundary lines are being tested. The GM is sensing infringement, if not a takeover, underway and will be inclined to push back. And, the who's-in-charge duel could produce some sparks.



As examples, there are two discussion issues on tonight's agenda: the NC Funding Program and a report from the Board's ad hoc committee on Outreach. Seem innocent enough, but for starters, I'm having trouble finding any BONC minutes reflecting the appointment of an Outreach ad hoc committee at any public meeting. Clearly a violation. Clearly violating the spirit of openness demanded of the Neighborhood Councils themselves.

Should NCs Receive Funding Based on Performance?

Then there is the past Board discussion on these subjects. Should NCs receive funding based on performance? Should NCs lose funding if their outreach efforts are lacking or fail? And, what criteria would we use for measuring the success of outreach? No mistake here. The discussion is about the possible imposition of yet more restriction and control on councils that the Charter promised could ... and should ... be independent.

It could be an interesting and entertaining program. Admission is free. No reservations required. (February 21--6:30 p.m.--BONC meeting: Lincoln Hts Senior Center, 2323 Workman Street, LA 90031. Complete agenda at: www.lacityneighborhoods.com.) ▣

Need to Know

Mayor's Day of Service May 7-Central Region

Greetings All!
As promised, Mayor Villaraigosa is set to present his 2nd Day of Service on May 7. This time the Mayor will be partnering with Big Sunday, an annual Los Angeles-wide service day project. In May we are looking forward to expanding on the successes we had last October for the 1st Day of Service. To do that we will be asking for the wonderful assistance of you!

We will be holding our first planning meeting on February 23 at 5 pm at the Hollywood Municipal Building at 6501 Fountain.

Thursday February 23

5:00 pm

Hollywood Municipal Building

6501 Fountain Ave (cross street Wilcox)

I really look forward to seeing all of you next week. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please have a proxy attend for you.

Michael Cathey
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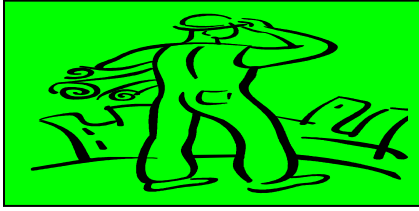
PASS IT ON

Interim Planning Chief

From Page 1

Conventional wisdom has it that the Planning Department, while staffed by talented people, has been in a rut.

The department, while replete with talented individuals, had dismantled most if not all of the organizational functions that deal with planning.



There was an enormous number of vacancies ... funded and unfunded ... and the work wasn't being done. So we, in quick order, started the process to bring in a whole new generation of

planners. That is up and running.

The senior managers are now required to make collective decisions. And, we have re-birthed the code studies unit ... the section assigned to managing, modernizing and updating the code that had literally been removed. The community plan update section is being revived, as is the citywide transportation unit.

What are the opportunities to work collaboratively as a city?

I cannot tell you the number of meetings I've been in regarding this question. Someone will say, "You know, I've been working on this stuff since the Bradley administration and we have never met together before like this," where key managers of the departments, with real tools and real money, are working collaboratively on strategies. It's very exciting.



This is the most unique opportunity I've witnessed since I've know Los Angeles: a passionate, strong mayor who gets it. He is instructing the departments to work together and holding them accountable. We have a City Council that is supportive and a Council President, a PLUM Committee Chair and a new Planning Commission who really get planning.

How does City Hall make residents believe that planning will cope properly with the expected growth?

The proof is in the pudding. Those government people you just mentioned must approve projects that meet the neighborhood concerns. In many cities in the United States ... certainly in the ones that are doing well ... this issue has been addressed head-on, and thoughtful solutions have evolved. Two pieces are missing in the Los Angeles solutions. First, the city must recognize that streets are public rooms and that development offers the opportunity to influence the quality of those public rooms. My favorite quote of the great architect Louis Kahn is, "A street is a room by agreement." ■

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Disaster Prep**Mayor Picks Homeland Security Panel; Says He Will Sleep Better**

Saying he will “sleep better knowing that we are drawing on the best and brightest talent,” Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa named 40 high profile city and community leaders to his team of Homeland Security Advisors. *(Notably missing: leaders speaking for neighborhoods. See CityWatch Page 2 for that perspective.)*

The Advisors will be organized into working groups, the Mayor’s office said, and tasked with the following missions: 1) Counter-terrorism; 2) Private sector outreach; 3) Government outreach; 4) Evacuation planning; 5) Emergency preparedness.

Homeland Security Advisors**Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Chair**

Councilmember Jack Weiss, Co-Chair

Deputy Mayor Maurice Suh, Co-Chair

Mayor Richard Riordan

Matt Betenhausen, Director**California Office of Homeland Security**

Amy Zegart

Riordan Center for Homeland Security, UCLA

Albert Carnesale, Chancellor, UCLA**Events (CREATE)**

Richard Andrews, Senior Director

National Center for Crisis and Continuity Coordination

Ellen Gordon, Associate Director**Executive Education Program, Center for Homeland****Defense & Security, Naval Postgraduate School**

R.P. Eddy,

Senior Fellow for Counter-terrorism, Manhattan Institute

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Next!**CITYWIDE ALLIANCE OF NCS**

√ **Councilman Alex Padilla**
 √ **Deputy Mayor Larry Frank**
 √ **New LA Planning Director**
Gail Goldberg

March 28 (8:30 – 1)**www.allncs.org***for details.*

Mark your calendar
An NC MUST!

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KNOW MORE

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Captain Peter Neffenger,

Captain of the Port (LA/Long Beach), US Coast Guard

Larry Fetters, Federal Security Director at LAX

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