



an insider look at city hall

CITYWATCH

CITYWIDE EDITION

March 6, 2006
Volume 4 Issue 9

CityWatch Today-The NC Congress delegates met for the second time on Saturday. Procedurally, most would agree the meeting was a success and the group is making progress. Procedurally, they get it.

The question is: do they get it philosophically and strategically? This CityWatch offers a couple of perspectives.

We also offer you a couple of special and important meetings not to miss, not the least of which is Tuesday's session with the BONC.

How should NC outreach be measured? Can it be measured?

What if NCs received funding based on size? Based on the effectiveness of their outreach? These questions could well be part of the discussion mix when our Neighborhood Commissioners get together at 5:30.

Thanks for stopping by.

--Editor

Say What?

***“We’ll hold them accountable,”
(and if the city’s department managers don’t respond),
“We’ll do it for them.”***

**--Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa
From the Daily News**



LANCC Report

NC Congress Senate Elects Interim Officers; Agrees on Rules to Play By

By David Lowell

Neighborhood Council delegates got their meeting decorum under control for their second official gathering and then agreed on some rules and elected interim officers.

With 28 of the 36 member councils on hand, the NC Congress Senate approved nine Standing Rules, including a July 31 deadline for holding their first election of full-term officers.



The panel chose Coastal San Pedro's Robert Gelfand as Vice President, Jeff Jacobberger and David Strouse as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Both are with the Mid City WEST Community Council. Len Shaffer, former prosecutor with the District Attorney's office and current Tarzana NC President, was elected Chair at the inaugural February 4 meeting. All of those elected are serving on an interim basis.

Analysis

*For more on
This story, see
“Perspective”
below; “Analysis”
Page 2, this
CityWatch.*

Progress continued, says Brady Westwater, President and delegate from the Downtown LA Neighborhood Council, “we adopted the first working rules, developed by the Organization & Structure Committee—with many well thought-out changes after amicable, informed debate—and then we elected three more temporary officers.”

See Page 5. “Congress Elects Officers”

Perspective

NC Congress Passes on Chance to Respond to Diversity Complaints

By Ken Draper

There can be little question that one of the most serious issues facing the fledgling Neighborhood Council Congress is the diversification of its own board of delegates—or, Senate. In things political, perception is reality. A board that reflects this city geographically, ethnically and racially is critical to the credibility and effectiveness of this new NC Congress.

The formation group agreed, saying that their highest priority, after becoming “official,” would be member growth and diversity. But, the walk is different than the talk. The Congress' Senators missed an opportunity to mitigate the diversity complaints on Saturday, when they elected three more white board members to serve as interim officers.

See Page 6. “Perspective”

(For another take on the Congress' actions: See Page 2)

Analysis**NC Congress Making Progress—
Just as Expected**

Brady Westwater

When I was requested to ask LA Times and other media to cover the first meeting of the NC Neighborhood Congress, my feeling was that the politic time to invite the press would be the second meeting – not the first.

But, I also agreed that it needed to be done. My initial reasoning was: I knew how the first meeting would look to anyone not involved in the process. The organizing committee purposely did not select a chair for that meeting and purposely did not dictate the rules for the new Congress to follow.



The goal was to allow a creative mix of ideas and full spirited debate. To question everything that had been done up until then and everything that was going to be done – and that is exactly what happened. Creative Anarchy. Everyone had their say then the delegates got down to business.

Other stories on LANCC meeting: This CityWatch, Page 1

They quickly elected a temporary chair and then set up a several committees. And, quite amazingly, everyone who had been arguing about how they got there, suddenly came to together, in almost total agreement, on how we were going to move forward.

That progress continued with the March 4 meeting. The Congress adopted the first working rules developed by the Structure Committee – with many well thought out changes after amicable, informed debate – and then they elected three more temporary officers.

See Page 7. “Congress Making Progress—As Expected”

GuestWords**Setting the Record Straight: Watts NC
Not “Beside Themselves with Anger”**

By Henry Broomfield

We, the Watts Neighborhood Council, have some concerns regarding an article that appeared in the Wave Newspaper and CityWatch Newsletter. The article indicated that “Tim Watkins and other Watts residents are beside themselves with anger over the termination of Jamiko Bell from the staff of Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE)...” The article goes on further to allude that Ms. Bell’s “assistance significantly contributed to the certification of the Watts Neighborhood Council and her loss [from DONE] to the community is regarded as tragic.”

**Memo: CityWatch Editor
Re: Article in CityWatch
(February 27, 2006, Volume 4,
Issue 8, Page 3 “Watts Angry
Over Bell Termination.”**

The Headline of this article, “Watts Angry Over Bell Termination” in the CityWatch Newsletter was a bit circumventive.

We felt that since the CityWatch basically caters to information regarding the City and Neighborhood Council’s, the article was not deemed necessary because the statement was not made on behalf of the Watts Neighborhood Council and the stakeholders we serve. It wasn’t made clear what organization Mr. Tim Watkins represented. However, he does not represent the Watts Neighborhood Council nor is he a board member.

See Page 8. “Setting the Record Straight”

CITYWATCH
The E-Newsletter for LA’s NC’s

March 6, 2006
Volume 4 Issue 9

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CITYWATCH is published to encourage grassroots civic engagement through information, ideas and perspective.

CITYWATCH the E-Newsletter is published weekly. Share it with your Neighborhood Council and other activists.

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We've Got Mail



City Offers 2-Cents Worth

I enjoyed your article (*CityWatch* -February 27, "Easy to Produce Agenda-Flier is an Outreach Winner") illustrating the ease and effectiveness of getting out the message to announce monthly meetings.

I would like to add my two cents (2 ½ cents actually) to the mix. I am the Director of Publishing Services for the City of LA, a City division (part of the General Services Agency) that provides printing, at cost, to City agencies. Our charge for the \$60 job that went to Kinko's would have probably been about \$20.00. We charge .025 for single sided and .04 for two sided copying. Color copies are 30 cents each.

More importantly, we operate a full offset facility if your run lengths increase or should you need more sophisticated production, including variable printing if you want to simply provide your mailing lists to us.

Perhaps most importantly, we will work closely with all Neighborhood Councils to give you the most cost effective alternatives for getting your message out - at cost.

If there is anything Publishing Services can do to help the NCs with their printing needs please don't hesitate to contact me.

--Michael Leighton
Director of Publishing Services
General Services Department

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The City Doesn't Seem Interested

I would love to be on the Commission but I thought it would be useless to try because DONE/the City don't seem any more interested in having people with actual NC experience on the Commission than they have in employing them at DONE. If there is a place/person I could contact, please let me know and I will try.

Thank you for your excellent publication.

--J.A. Ciancimino
NCWPDR



Adv

Special Planning Meeting

Thursday, March 16

4 p.m.

City Hall-Council Chamber
3rd Floor

The Planning Department has been directed to study the future use of industrially zoned land.

This Special Meeting is an informational session for the City Planning Commission and the general public about trends, demands and other issues related to use of industrially zoned land in Los Angeles

A panel of experts will present info from the perspectives of industrial users, developers, economists and housing advocates. This meeting is an important to future policy decisions on land use designations in industrial areas.

Info: Conni.Pallini-Tipton@lacity.org

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.

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CITYWATCH DayPlanner

City Council

Mar 7, 8, 10 (10 a.m.)
City Hall (Council Chamber)

Education & Neighborhoods

March 14 (9 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1060)

BONC

Tuesday, March 7 (5:30 p.m.)
Banning's Landing Community Center
100 E Water Street, Wilmington

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

NC/Planning Dept MOU

Saturday, March 11 (10 a.m.)
DWP Building
Hope & First Streets

Budget & Finance-Special

Tuesday, March 7 (6 p.m.)
Ramona Hall
4580 N Figueroa St

Planning Commission-Regular

Thursday, March 9 (8:30 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1010)

Valley Alliance

Thursday, March 9 (6:30 p.m.)
Sherman Oaks Hospital
4929 Van Nuys Blvd

- Councilman Alex Padilla – Guest

Olympic Park NC Health, Wellness, Safety Fair

May 20 (10-2 p.m.)
Queen Anne Park Rec Center
Info: www.olympicparknc.org

DONE Congress of Neighborhoods

June 17
LA Convention Center

LANI Forum

May 18 (7:30-2:30 p.m.)
USC Davidson Conference Center
Info: www.lani.org



CITYWATCH:KNOWMORE

NC/Planning MOU Taskforce NEXT MEETING

Saturday, March 11
10 a.m.
DWP Building
Hope & First Streets
Parking Free

The continuing modifications of the draft MOU will center on the Planning Dept holding educational forums and monitoring the deliver of services

Info: Jlamishaw@socal.rr.com

Valley Alliance of NCs

Thursday, March 9
6:30 p.m.
Sherman Oaks Hospital
4929 Van Nuys Blvd

Councilman Alex Padilla-Guest

**Topics: Review Commission;
LAUSD governance;
NC/Planning Dept MOU**

Info: jbarad@adelphia.net

Adv
"#1 Flea Market in Los Angeles!"
-New Times BEST OF LA
"LA's Hottest Scene!"
-Los Angeles Magazine
The Melrose Trading Post
Antiques & Collectibles Market



NC Congress Elects Officer-From Page 1

“The (delegates) also agreed to have new elections for all officers no later than July 31, after more councils have joined from more parts of the city.”

Shaffer opened the meeting with a detailed account of how the LA NC Congress evolved from a USC Neighborhood Participation Project-facilitated workshop at the October, 2004 Congress of Neighborhoods. He addressed the Brown Act and personal liability issues that have been fomenting among some stakeholders, but offered no solutions or official rulings. Shaffer said that the Brown Act requirements and the risk of liability “probably do not apply to the LANCC,” but that the questions had been submitted to the City Attorney.

With the most recent additions of Studio City, Canoga Park, Historical Cultural and Encino, the NC membership in the Congress is now at 36. Twenty eight of the 36 councils were at the table for the Saturday meeting. (See complete list of NCs represented by delegates at this meeting, elsewhere in this issue.)

The next LANCC Senate meeting is set for April 1 at 10 a.m. at the same DWP location. It was agreed that future meetings would be held in different neighborhoods around the city. ■

LANCC Report Card

Attendance Record—NC Members of the Congress in attendance (3/4/06) representing their boards and stakeholders.

- Arroyo Seco-yes
- Atwater Village-yes
- Bel Air Beverly Crest-yes
- Canoga Park-No
- Central San Pedro-yes
- Coastal San Pedro-yes
- Del Rey-no
- Downtown LA-yes
- Encino-yes
- Granada Hills North-yes
- Grassroots Venice-yes
- Greater Griffith Park-yes
- Harbor Gateway So-yes
- Historic Cultural-yes
- Historic Highland Pk-yes
- Hollywood United-no
- Mar Vista-yes
- Mid City WEST-yes
- North Hills West-yes
- Northridge West-yes
- Northwest San Pedro-yes
- Pacoima-no
- Pico Union-yes
- Reseda-yes
- Silver Lake-yes
- So Robertson-no
- Studio City-yes
- Tarzana-yes
- United Neighborhoods-no
- Valley Village-no
- West Hills-yes
- West LA-yes
- W VN/LBalboa-yes
- Westside-yes
- Winnetka-yes
- Woodland Hills-WC-yes

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Perspective-From Page 1

It would appear, as one board member said, "They just don't get it."

Between the first and second meetings of the Congress, a bunch of hours were spent on structure and organization, including the election of interim officers. But, despite the fact that a reasonable number of people of color make up the 50-60 NC reps in the eligible delegate pool, little time was devoted to ensuring that nominations for those positions would reflect the makeup of even the areas represented, let alone the city.

When a stakeholder observed that he "Didn't see any diversity here," a delegate shouted that "we're working on it." But for minorities that have been shut out before, that's an old song. Especially when, at least in the nomination process, there was an opportunity to do something about it.

This Congress has the potential for becoming a coalition of influence that cannot be ignored.

One delegate said that the goal was to select the best person for the job. Another said that "it seems to be a fact that minorities don't want to participate." All of which seems to fly in the face of some other facts: The Mayor is of Latino heritage, seven of the 15 City Council members or persons of color, numerous Neighborhood Council boards in parts of the city are made up predominantly of people of color. When there is a reasonable shot at getting into the game, it would seem, minority participation is not an issue.

An issues and networking congress has been a vision of grassroots activists since long before the public's approval of the new City Charter in 1999. This Congress has the potential for becoming a coalition of influence that cannot be ignored by the City's elected officials and its commissions. The neighborhood lobby against the paid and the powerful, as one member put it. But, its success is hinged to its credibility and how accurately its voice reflects the faces, and the will, of LA's neighborhoods.

The Congress delegates have at least two more opportunities to demonstrate their intent and the seriousness with which they take the diversity issue. At its next meeting the Senate will decide on future locations for meetings. The East side or South LA might be good choices. And, this issues Congress will soon begin to consider the discussion of issues. Making sure that issues of import to all of Los Angeles' neighborhoods ... including those populated by predominantly people of color ... are in the mix would go a long way toward convincing folks that this Congress is open to the voices of all of the City's neighborhoods.

It might also help convince stakeholders that when the crafters of the Congress said that growing membership and diversity was its highest priority, it meant it. ▀

Legal Tips

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Mr. C.'s Trust

Mr. C. asked me to help him make a few changes in his living trust. During our visit, I learned that all his property was in his name alone. What's wrong with this?

The Rule

A living trust allows your loved ones to avoid probate, but only as to the property that is titled in the name of the trust!

Protecting Your Own

Like many folk, making sure his children avoid probate fees and delays were the very reasons Mr. C. created a trust. Mr. C.'s dilemma is all too common. The good news is, it can be corrected.

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Congress Making Progress—From Page 2

The Congress also agreed to have new elections for all officers no later than July 31st after more councils have joined from more parts of the city and after NCs and their reps have gotten to know each other better.

Clearly, there are still parts of this city underrepresented in this Congress, but several more delegates, from those areas, were at the table than at the February 4 meeting. Others were in the audience as observers who expressed hope they would be back as official members.

Congress Not Talking Bylaws Yet

This is why this Congress is not yet talking about by-laws – just rules that can be easily changed or amended. This is why the Congress is not yet electing anyone to any office for more than the next few months.

The LANCC will continue to outreach to all NC's. At the DONE-organized Congress in June, LANCC will outreach to stakeholders whose councils are not yet a part of the Congress. Only after that, will they elect the first slate of officers to serve a full term or start to develop a set of by-laws.

So for those councils who have not yet joined the NC Congress– the job of developing both the structure and leadership is wide open. And you are needed at the table to successfully accomplish this. (*Brady Westwater is the President of the DowntownLA NC and a delegate to the NC Congress. Westwater is also a writer and contributor to CityWatch.*) ■

CityWatch

2006 Assignments

◆ Time is Running Out For NCs to Weigh in on the Commission that Could Change their Activist Lives

Does anyone really care about the NC Review Commission? The City? DONE? You?

◆ Wilshire Center Koreatown NC

Pulls Out of Another Election with Just Hours to Go

Why does this keep happening? What does DONE plan to do about it?

◆ The City's Budget Mess:

NCs Must Get Involved. Really Involved.

◆ Can the City, DONE and NCs

Collaborate on an Emergency Preparedness Net?

There are some who believe it will never happen

◆ Are There Issues with the NC Issues Congress?

A handful of dissidents raise questions about the NC Congress. Are they real? Or the work of egotists who are upset they were left out of the loop and afraid of losing control?

◆ 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:

March 13 ...

...ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

We

Don't

Report

The

News ...

We

Report

What

The

News ...

Means.

**CITYWATCH:
KNOWMORE**

...

Setting the Record Straight-*From Page 2*

In the CityWatch Newsletter, the tone & connotation of that headline was that the Watts Neighborhood Council was Angry at DONE for Terminating Ms. Bell. This implication is not true by any means. The Council understands that Mr. Watkins is the CEO/President of Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC), why didn't these articles make mention of that. The tone of the article makes it appear that Mr. Watkins presented himself as an agent of the Watts Neighborhood Council and for that we are making contentions to those articles. We need a retraction so that it makes it very clear of the views of the statement made by Mr. Watkins on behalf of the those community stakeholders who echoed his sentiments. We understand that people have their freedom of speech, however, when it is at the inference or implication of another group, such as the Watts Neighborhood Council, their statement needs to be clear and what organization they represent.

Understand Greg Nelson's Actions

We, the Watts Neighborhood Council, understand the actions that Mr. Greg Nelson had to take and we support his efforts in getting the organization, The Department of Neighborhood Council in order. We, the Board of the Watts Neighborhood Council are the voice of the community because the community elected us to do so. We don't want the people of Watts nor others to misinterpret or misrepresent the views of the Watts Neighborhood Council and the stakeholders we represent by statements made of individuals who appear to represent themselves as an agent of the Council.

Therefore, our recommendation is that in the future should you choose to carry a story regarding information pertaining to or about the Watts Neighborhood Council, that it be clear and concise who made their statements and what organization they represent so that the reader can clearly identify their intent (*Henry Broomfield is Communication Secretary for the Watts Neighborhood Council. Contact info: wattsnc@sbcglobal.net or 323.564.0270.*)

CityWatch

Welcomes

Your ideas and comments

Editor@CityWatchLA.com

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Covered !!**

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