

That license plate and identification tag were turned over to Jeffrey Allen, who was arrested at his Ventura County home on suspicion of felony hit and run charges and of manslaughter.

The motorist, Armando Gonzalez was hit by a 1994 white Ford F-150 truck registered to Allen, Whetzel said.

Police said witnesses reported the truck speeding between 70 mph and 80 mph in a 35 mph zone at the

area and to pay for a room at the motel, then called a cab to take him home.

Whetzel said police discovered

we impound the vehicle, to Newbury Park, he opens the door and he talks," Whetzel said, "I hit a large animal."

Mayor nominates Valley men to key panel

By Rick Orlov
Staff Writer

In the biggest challenge facing Los Angeles — possibly including whether it will remain one city or break up into several parts — two San Fernando Valley men will be playing key roles.

Lee Kanon Alpert and Keith Weaver have been nominated by Mayor Richard Riordan to serve on the Neighborhood Empowerment Commission created by voter approval of the new City Charter.

And, if the appointments are approved by the City Council, the two will be involved in developing a system designed to handle the biggest complaint of residents — that City Hall is too removed, too uncaring and too unresponsive to neighborhood needs.

"It's awfully exciting," said Alpert, an attorney who has long been active in a variety of civic matters. "There's the newness of it. You can

strategize and create. There is no structure to follow. This will be grass-roots government."

Weaver, a former aide to state Sen. Herschel Rosenthal who now works for Kaiser Permanente, sees the job in a similar light.

"I have always thought that neighborhood councils or things like that are designed to give people more power at the grass-roots level," Weaver said. "And, it's exciting to work on something new."

Originally, Riordan had appointed three Valley residents to the panel. However, nominee Carrie Castro Armour of Sylmar announced on Friday that she would not be able to accept the job because of time constraints. Riordan aides said he plans to nominate another Valley resident to take her place, giving it three votes on the seven-member panel.

Alpert and Weaver said they both support the study being conducted

by the Local Agency Formation Commission on whether the Valley should be allowed to break away from Los Angeles.

Both men said they believed they were walking a narrow line on the issue, but that no real decision can be made until the LAFCO study is completed and there is an objective analysis of the costs involved.

And, both said, they recognize that if they do their job as commissioners well, it could head off the Valley secession drive.

As part of their job, the commission will be overseeing the creation of neighborhood councils around the city. The councils may vary in size and areas covered as well as the authority they are given.

"If government was responding the way it should then there wouldn't be the secession drives there are in the San Fernando Valley and elsewhere," Alpert said. "I think what we will be doing is flipping government

on its head."

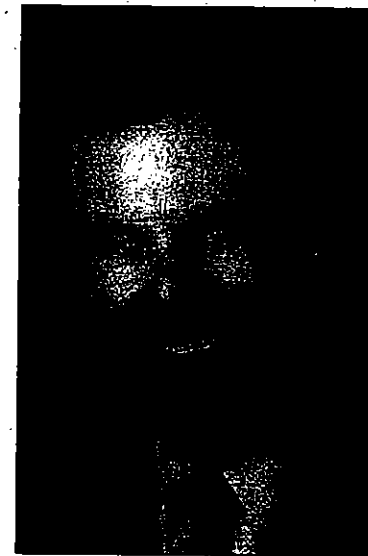
Alpert cited the example of the city's Recreation and Parks Department where local park advisory boards are telling the department what their needs are rather than being told what will be done.

"What we want to do is let decisions be made at the grass-roots level rather than having the downtown bureaucracy tell people what they need," Alpert said.

Weaver added the neighborhood councils also will provide a broader voice to decision making by the city.

"The councils will speak to the needs of the entire city," Weaver said. "If you are talking about Valley secession, it doesn't address the problems of other areas. In terms of public policy, the councils will allow the city to address some of the problems inherent in city government."

Alpert said he also saw the neighborhood councils as a way of



Lee Kanon Alpert
Attorney active in civic matters



Keith Weaver
Ex-aide to state lawmaker

unifying the city with meetings at least once a year by the panels.

"Right now, people in the Valley don't care what's going on in the Westside, the Central City or the harbor," Alpert said. "And those areas don't care about the Valley."

"Everybody has different ideas but there has been no way to have kind of communication," Weaver said. "If the neighborhood councils work, it can be a way for us to all together and make this work."