

Governmental Efficiency

Amending Motion

FEB 28 1997

LOS ANGELES CONGRESS of NEIGHBORHOODS

The Eighth Council District recently celebrated its Fifth Annual *Empowerment Congress* (neighborhood council convention) with more than five hundred residents, business owners, religious leaders and neighborhood activists in attendance. Recognized as the City's most mature and organized network of neighborhood participation and citizen empowerment, this unprecedented project lends itself to maximizing neighborhood participation in charter reform and other civic issues. The structure of the neighborhood council is easily adapted to each of the remaining fourteen council districts as boundaries, population, council district staff members and other basic infrastructure are in place. Each neighborhood council would be unique and would adopt its own by-laws and procedures for selecting its representatives.

We therefore move that the Neighborhood Council items (Wachs, Ridley-Thomas, et al) currently being considered by the Government Efficiency Committee be amended to adopt a three-year citywide neighborhood congress as a pilot project consisting of ~~fifteen neighborhood councils that respect community and council district boundaries as appropriate. Return to current council district boundaries as defined by the most recent reapportionment.~~ neighborhood councils which respect community and council district boundaries as appropriate.

Mark Ridley-Thomas
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Councilman, 8th District

Aura Chick
Aura Chick
Councilwoman, 3rd District

Jackie Goldberg
Jackie Goldberg
Councilwoman, 13th District

Joel Wachs
Joel Wachs
Councilman, 2nd District

Mike Hernandez
Mike Hernandez
Councilman, 1st District

MOTION

Democracy In The Information Age

Neighborhood Councils have tremendous potential to foster a powerful network of community organization across the city. A vital part of this network will consist of communication between these neighborhood councils throughout Los Angeles.

Technology has the potential to increase participation and facilitate the connection between constituents and their government. Increasingly, city service delivery is enhanced by the efficient use of information technology. Clearly, an integrated electronic government strategy which is connected to the city's existing and planned Constituent Service Centers, should be an integral part of any discussion on neighborhood councils and constituent empowerment. Deliberative and participatory democracy must be encouraged within the context of the information age.

Now is the time for the city to begin to formulate an electronic government strategy for neighborhood councils. This should be a comprehensive plan and one which will enhance communication between the city and its neighborhood councils as well as between the various neighborhood councils themselves.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Information Technology Agency, with assistance from the CAO, report to the Information Technology and General Services Committee within 30 days with a strategy to address the need for a technology solution for a citywide network of neighborhood councils which will be supported by a newly formed Department of Neighborhoods.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CAO and the CLA research the technology solutions which are being utilized by other cities to enhance communication for their networks of neighborhood councils and report back to the Information Technology and General Services Committee within 30 days.

PRESENTED BY: _____
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Councilman, Eighth District

SECONDED BY: _____

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The City of Los Angeles is currently considering or implementing various proposals to strengthen neighborhoods through the creation of community councils, park advisory boards, a matching grants program, a neighborhood codewatch program, and enhanced neighborhood watch efforts. In cities such as Portland, Seattle, and St. Paul, a primary agency has been responsible for advancing neighborhood advocacy activities. Much of what these municipalities have accomplished in enhancing community participation and improving quality of life can be traced back to a specific city agency that primarily focuses on supporting neighborhood activities and advocating for their needs.

No matter where Los Angeles residents live, residents should be empowered to participate in their neighborhoods and make their communities the best they can be. Resources should be extended communities so that they can be leveraged to create better neighborhoods. The Mayor's Fiscal Year 1997-1998 budget proposes much-needed investments in neighborhoods by providing more than \$750,000 dollars toward programs that strengthen public participation in local government.

However, bringing grassroots democracy to life and enhancing the diverse neighborhoods of Los Angeles will not be an easy task because the various City's programs that address neighborhood problems and enhance communities are disconnected and administered by many different departments. Because so many City agencies serve neighborhoods, it may be time to review and create a new City blueprint how to most effectively serve and improve our neighborhoods.

To this end, the City should take inventory of its neighborhood efforts and explore how City government may be restructured to further advance and more efficiently serve neighborhood groups. These programs can include providing information, financial support, and coordination for community-based efforts such as graffiti removal, tree planting, neighborhood code enforcement, rebuilding communities, and enhancing public participation in City government.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and the City Administrative Officer (CAO), with assistance from other City departments including Public Works, Commission on Children, Youth and the Families, Environmental Affairs, Recreation and Parks, Community Development, Mayor's Office and others, develop and present a proposal to the City Council that restructures existing City resources, without adding new bureaucracy, to create an Office of Neighborhoods that will coordinate services and resources available to neighborhoods.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA and the CAO, in developing their recommendations, examine how other cities such as Portland and Seattle, structure their neighborhood programs, take inventory of City agencies' current neighborhood-based efforts, explore possible grant funds for this effort, and prepare a plan and time-line for setting up an Office of Neighborhoods.

PRESENTED BY Laura Chick
LAURA CHICK, Councilmember, Third District

SECONDED BY [Signature]

April 23, 1997

GOV. EFFICIENCY
BUDGET

MOTION
Establishing A Department of Neighborhoods

The Government Efficiency Committee is currently reviewing several motions which propose the creation of Neighborhood Councils in the City of Los Angeles. Specifically, the motion (Ridley-Thomas- Wachs) proposes the creation of a three year citywide pilot project modeled after the Eighth District Empowerment Congress.

If any of the proposals under review is to be successfully implemented, it is essential that the project have the necessary resources for both start-up and implementation activities. As part of the City's ongoing efforts to improve the delivery of services, the Mayor has provided \$105,000 in his FY 97-98 budget for 127 Recreation and Parks Advisory Councils. It is clear that without funding, attempts to expand the neighborhood council concept in order to maximize neighborhood participation will not succeed.

A Department of Neighborhoods consisting of between 15 and 35 neighborhood councils could utilize various funding mechanisms. These funding options could include the creation of a new Department of Neighborhoods through the restructuring of existing resources. Or, a Department of Neighborhoods could be developed using new resources appropriated for this purpose. Another possibility is the creation of a Department of Neighborhoods which would be located within an existing City department, using the resources of several departments (for example the Problem Property Resolution Team in the City Attorney's office). At this point, it is appropriate that all of the potential funding options be examined and that specific recommendations for funding a Department of Neighborhoods be developed and presented to Council.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Administrative Officer chair a working group consisting of the Department of Building and Safety, the Los Angeles Housing Department, the Community Development Department, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Department of Recreation and Parks to determine funding options for a Department of Neighborhoods.

I FURTHER MOVE that the abovementioned working group report to the Budget and Finance and Government Efficiency Committees within 30 days.

PRESENTED BY: _____
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Councilman, Eighth District

SECONDED BY: _____