

PRESENTED BY COUNCILMAN JOEL WACHS
TO THE
CITY OF LOS ANGELES CHARTER REFORM COMMISSION
July 22, 1998

- ✓ The Charter should mandate that the City Council and Mayor develop a system that ~~permits~~ requires the formation of neighborhood councils. (Page 3.)
- ✓ The Charter should create ~~an Office~~ a Department of Neighborhoods to assist in the development and continued support of neighborhood councils.
- ✓ The boundaries and selection methods of neighborhood councils should be determined by ordinance; however the charter should mandate parameters, including:
 - ✓ The boundaries of each neighborhood (neighborhood councils), and clusters of neighborhoods (community councils), must always respect neighborhood boundaries, and not political boundaries.
 - ✓ The leaders of the neighborhood councils shall be self-selected by anyone who lives, works, or owns property in the neighborhood (i.e., the stakeholders). The neighborhood councils would determine the method of selecting the leaders of the community councils, and include it in their petition to the Neighborhood Empowerment Commission for recognition and funding.
- ✓ The City should be required to create and fund at least 35 clusters of neighborhoods called "communities" so that there would be enough local offices to permit the effective administration of the system.
- ✓ A Neighborhood Empowerment Commission, created within the Department of Neighborhoods, would certify, and decertify if necessary, the neighborhood and community councils.
- ✓ ~~The specific list of subject areas or decisions that would be considered by neighborhood councils should be prescribed by ordinance. The Charter should require the implementing ordinance to identify decisions that especially impact a neighborhood or its residents. (Let them discuss whatever they want to consider. Many citywide ordinances directly and significantly affect local residents.) (Page 4.)~~
- ✓ The Charter should require that neighborhood and community councils be given an opportunity to provide input before the City makes decisions which affect them affecting their neighborhood. The procedures for obtaining input from neighborhood and community councils should be designed by ordinance, but the Charter should mandate that the City enact an "early warning ordinance" to require that the City give neighborhood and community councils a reasonable amount of time to know about, understand, establish a position, and express their opinions on local and citywide issues that affect them, such as planning and land use matters, capital improvements, and the delivery of city services, together with citywide issues such as the city budget, tax increases, bonded indebtedness, and broad-based ordinances. (Page 5.)

- ✓ Regulations for selection of governing boards must provide for an opportunity for representation of ~~a diversity of~~ an area's diverse interests and geography.
- ✓ At least quarterly, representatives from the neighborhood and community councils should convene as a Congress of Neighborhoods to exchange concerns and form consensus of citywide issues such a City Charter amendments, ordinances, initiatives, programs, multi-cultural dialogue, and the general overall course of the city.

RECOGNITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS:

Each neighborhood council seeking official recognition from the City shall submit a plan to the Neighborhood Empowerment Commission showing, at a minimum:

- a. A guarantee that any neighborhood selection of leaders will be equal, free, and non-discriminatory to anyone who lives, works, or owns property in the area (i.e., the stakeholders).
- b. A plan of goals and objectives.
- c. A system through which the neighborhood council will communicate with each stakeholder on a regular basis.
- d. Assurances that the leadership of the neighborhood council will reflect the diverse interests within their area.
- e. A system for financial accountability of its funds.
- f. Guarantees that all meetings will be open and public.

RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS:

Each community council seeking official recognition from the City shall submit a plan to the Neighborhood Empowerment Commission showing, at a minimum:

- a. A system for the selection of community council leaders by the neighborhood councils.
- b. A plan of goals and objectives.
- c. A system through which the community council will communicate with each of its stakeholders and neighborhood councils on a regular basis.
- d. Assurances that the leadership of the community council leaders will represent the diverse interests within their area.
- e. A system for financial accountability of its funds.
- f. Set a minimum and maximum size of neighborhoods within their community.
- g. Guarantees that all meetings will be open and public.