

July 12, 1996

PASADENA:

Office of Neighborhood Connections  
Cynthia Abbott, Director.

Pasadena=s system of neighborhood associations started in 1985 when the Council raised the utility rates. The neighborhoods said they should have been consulted and told about the plans beforehand. So to avoid a possible recall movement, Rick Cole designed a position paper. General Fund money was used to create the Office of Neighborhood Connections to work with the 90 NA=s. The ONC, not the departments, mail notices to the NA=s.

△People support what they help to create.②

Like Oakland, they use the small claims court to find neighborhood problems like drug houses. Using an old state law that make the property owner responsible for disturbances and nuisances from their property, they encourage neighborhoods to file small claims against the owners of drug houses, etc., and they each get judgments of \$5,000. If 20 neighbors join together, that=s a big impact.

L.A. should consider beginning by dividing the city into districts (25-30?). Because of the huge number of neighborhoods, you=ll probably need this additional layer between the NC=s and City Hall anyway. Empower them. Provide them with some funding and communications ability. Then let individual neighborhoods emerge from within the districts. It=s far too difficult and time consuming for City Hall to define neighborhoods on its own.

If you need help defining the districts, and it=s probably a good idea to begin involving the community at this point, ask the leaders of selected neighborhood groups to appoint a representative to a planning group. You don=t want the presidents or chairs for 2 reasons. (1) If you=re trying to avoid having one dictatorial president trying to take over a district and run it the same way, this begins to develop new leadership, and (2) many presidents are spread too thin anyway. Ask the planning group for help in defining the districts. Shouldn=t take but one or two meetings.

To avoid the dictator problem, the districts, at least at the beginning, could be headed by not 1 person, but 3, all sharing equally in the decision making. Once established, the NC=s themselves could decide how they want to select their district leaders.

NEW YORK CITY:  
Marjorie Cohen

Doesn't have a clue how receptive City Hall would be to a formal NC system, but is more than happy to be the one we keep posted as to what we're doing. Municipal elections are coming up, and at least a couple of borough presidents want to be Mayor, so she hopes that one of them will take up the crusade of the neighborhoods.

DETROIT:

Deborah Ferris, Special Projects Assistant, City Planning Commission  
313-224-6225

Janese Chapman, Historic Designation Specialist, Historic Designation Advisory Board  
313-224-3487

Talk about primitive! They still elect their Council at large, so there isn't a strong desire for an NC system. But the next ballot will have on it a Charter amendment to create a district system. The Mayor and Council oppose it. I suggested to them that if they feel it will be passed by the voters, they should find of the Councilmembers who would see the advantage of supporting the Charter amendment, and promoting the neighborhoods as a stepping stone to the Council presidency or Mayor.

HOUSTON:

Thought it would a good idea for the big cities to find a way of getting together and sharing ideas.

SALT LAKE CITY:

Marge Harvey, Administrative Asst for Community Affairs, Office of Mayor.  
801-535-7976 Fax=535-6331

Started an NC system 5 years ago. Now have 26 community councils. Mayor meets with them once a month. Initially they started by dividing the city into 7 districts which were so distinctive that it was easy to draw the boundaries. Shortly afterwards, they added 1 or 2 more. Then a redefinition took it to 26.

Mediators, offered through the Bar Association, were used to settle boundary disputes.

The city mails meeting notices and other information through water bills. City provides leadership training.

\$250K was set aside this year for Mayor's Grants. City will match up to \$10K for community projects. For the match, city credits NC's with \$10/hour for volunteer time.

The only opposition to the plan 5 years ago came from the departments that feared more work.

#### KANSAS CITY:

Nanci Regan, Supervisor, Neighborhood Assistance Center, Neighborhood and Community Services Department  
816-274-1851

^Neighborhoods are a source of gifts, not problems.@

City just got a new city manager from Ann Arbor who has started a re-inventing effort. Is big into customer service. He believes that the city doesn't have a monopoly, but that it is in competition because people can always pick up and move somewhere else.

#### LITTLE ROCK:

Ms. Johnny Pugh, a Little Rock neighbor, and member of ACORN.

In 1992, there was a community-based effort put a measure on the ballot to elect the Council by districts. Minorities were unrepresented. 900 signatures were needed to qualify the measure. They got 7,000 in one day. With no money, and facing well-funded opposition, they got 40% of the vote. But City Hall could not ignore the message from the people. Eventually, a compromise ward system plan was approved. African American representation on the Council went from 10% before the ward system, to 38% afterwards. Female representation went from 9% to 50%.

#### BIRMINGHAM

Janet Smith, Community Resources Officer, Dept of Community Development  
(???) 254-2434

Most of the NC=s are not nonprofits, so they are not able to raise money from other sources. City used to give each one \$9,000/year. Now it=s \$3,500.

Magnolia Cook, neighbor, Tuxedo Neighborhood Assn.

B=ham has 99 neighborhoods. No problem with neighborhoods overlapping Council districts. It=s a benefit to be represented by more than one Councilmember. If you can=t get something done through one, you can go to the other.

Each neighborhood falls under one of 10 communities. Each one has a Community Resource office and staff. City provides printing, mailing, and other expenses.

#### PITTSBURGH:

Josette Fitzgibbons

City has no official NC structure. Everything is grassroots. City provides technical assistance centers which train neighborhood association leaders in leadership skills. Office of Neighborhood Initiatives provides liaison between community and city departments. Trying to be more customer friendly.

During a recent budget deficit crisis, the NAs were asked to help set priorities.

In the past, City Hall's message was, "Here's what we did, now we'll show it to you." Now the message is, "Here's an idea. Let's work on it together."

FT. WAYNE:

Barbara Schoppman, Neighborhood and Citizen Advocate Office

An activist for 30 years. With a population of 196K, they have 200 neighborhood associations. Largest has 4,000 homes.

Started with concerns over policing. Mayor didn't want to begin with a pilot project. He said, "Do it!"

Developed Direct Action Response Teams of city employees. Example: a community wants stop signs, so the police, engineers, and planners get together to consider car counts, enforcement policies, etc.

Interesting issue: The police got 58 new squad cars. The neighbors wanted to allow officers to home garage them. It was limited to only those officers involved in community based policing and who lived in city, and there was an issue regarding how to compensate officers who, while technically off duty, had to respond to an incident. They can take the car to the store, church, etc., but they have to have the radio on. One Councilmember voted against the take home plan, and he nearly lost re-election -- surviving only after a recount. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been saved. The union agreed that the first 24 minutes of an off-duty response would be free, then OT would be paid.

In one program, the city pays 50 cents for every old tire that gets turned in to them. And they pay local labor \$15/hour to clean vacant lots.

"The priorities of the neighborhoods have become the priorities of government."

ST. PETERSBURG:

Tried to implement a police home garaging plan, but the police union shot it down saying that it was a meet and confer item.

DAYTON:

Claud Bell, neighbor, Innerwest Priority Board  
(W) 513-223-5089

Priority Board choose own leaders. Some have term limits.

From \$200K from city, Innerwest has one full-time coordinator, two FT service workers, and one FT secretary. All are civil service. PB=s prefer this because you have to be inside City Hall, and part of the system, to get all the necessary information. To communicate, they pay \$5-10/hour to local kids to distribute flyers.

There is an Office of Neighborhood Affairs out of the City Manager=s office.

ST. PAUL:

Paul Gilliland, Chairman, CIB Committee

His committee is concerned with licensing, land use, and zoning. Been involved since the beginning 20 years ago.

L.A. should begin by defining natural and man-made boundaries that divide neighborhoods. Then let neighborhoods decide their boundaries inside those areas.

Does not recommend including residential areas into industrial areas unless the industrial activities actually affect those homeowners. It=s OK to have an NC that=s solely commercial or industrial...

St. Paul funds NC=s at \$30K/year, but provides more depending upon a formula that uses population and number (not percentage) of people in poverty. This creates a range of \$35-55K.

NC=s review all CDBG and CIP applications through a special task force. Mayor request 3 names from each NC, and picks 18 people to serve. Rating criteria is used to rank projects. The downside is the competitiveness between neighborhoods (i.e., the fair share argument). Paul says they should do what Dayton does, and establish a baseline to measure changes in service levels in each neighborhood.

Private foundations like programs that deal with racial harmony issues.

Feels that St. Paul=s system of providing each NC with a staff person is not good. They were supposed to be community organizers, but have now become a executive directors.@ Thus, citizen involvement has been lessened.

Keeping the NC=s in an advisory role is much more effective than giving them direct

power.

To prevent business interests from taking over an NC, a membership@ should not include those who work in an area, but rather be limited to those who have an ownership@ interest in the area. Each business should be allowed to designate one person to represent them.

CDBG money, if used to fund NC=s, will include too many restrictions.

Karen Swenson, neighborhood activist, former State planner, and former City Council research analyst.

612-771-6955

An early warning system@ is critically important.

St. Paul has biggest NC in nation -- 25K.

Don=t set a minimum size for NC=s. Use district councils for training, printing, and other logistical things.

Should require NC=s to have conflict of interest rules if receive public funds. St. Paul used some state non-profit statute language.

Staff should hired and paid by NC=s to maintain independence. If needed, NC=s could contract with private payroll firms. But either way, NC=s need a solid fiscal management system in the event they want to get other money.

Minneapolis had problems because it was all centered around a neighborhood revitalization effort. It was not an attempt to encourage neighborhood participation. That was incidental to the goal of achieving economic gains.

Each district council submits a budget to the city as part of its contract. Travel requires documentation.

NC=s should not be required to abide by any laws regarding the protection of confidential information. In St. Paul, the NC=s are often given a developer=s pro forma so they can evaluate the project, and form questions. They don=t want to get in trouble if that information, which is normally proprietary to the developer, becomes public.

To avoid one group from taking over an NC, and then presenting themselves to the City Council as spokesmen for the entire community, the City Council should feel free to ask them what efforts they made to get opinions from all the diverse interests of the community.

Don't have unrealistic expectations.

It's important to have local development corporations working closely with the NC=s so the developers will have an incentive to come first to the NC=s. Developers want predictability, and by going through the NC=s first, this is what they get.

Everyone in the neighborhood doesn't need to participate in order for the system to work. Some can attend meetings. Some can write or phone their opinions. Typically, those who actively participate are 40-75 years old, and they've lived in the neighborhood for a while. However, Ft. Worth has been able to create active homeowner associates in their new sub-divisions. Overriding issue is preservation.

ANDREW CUOMO (Secretary of HUD):

△People shouldn't have to live in neighborhoods where there are more bullets flying than birds.△

△People will care when they have an ownership interest in what's happening to them. It's like the guy who had his jacket stole by the thief. A policeman saw it happen, and as he drew his gun and aimed it at the thief, the guy shouted >shoot him in the pants!=@ Then he used the △shoot him in the pants@ phrase throughout his speech whenever he wanted to underscore another community ownership example.

△Let them own their community if you want them to get excited.△

△We tried Model Cities. We tried busing. Should we give up? No more handouts. We need handups.△

△Our kids shouldn't go to high schools where the only electronic equipment they see is a metal detector.△