

To: Joel
From: Greg
Re: Neighborhood Councils

10/1/98

The Weinberger task force met Thursday night, and things went about as I had expected.

They were not able to reach a consensus on anything except our plan which wasn't even discussed. Weinberger just reviewed the last meeting by saying that he assumed that everyone was still recommending the Wachs plan as the participatory element. The other elected plans will be sent forward to the full commission on Oct 19, and the task force doesn't plan to meet again.

As part of the review, he made sure that everyone was still in favor of a mandatory review in 5 years after implementation of the NC plan. They talked a little bit about how the new commission would be comprised, but settled on nothing. Kayser suggested a 1/3rd split between appointees from the City Council, Mayor, and Community Councils. MALDEF suggested the possibility of the whole system sunseting in 5-10 years, and they be forced to justify itself. But they weren't specific as to who would make the decision to continue them. I'll find out.

Hahn said she has not waivered in her support for a Kayser-type plan, but she understands the need for a review because we've never done anything like this before, and we might make mistakes.

Glushon said that's why you don't want to put too much detail into the Charter.

Vote was 5-0 for the 5-year mandatory review.

Glushon then made a motion for his Toronto Metro Councils plan, which would be advisory in that the decisions of the local councils would have to be approved by the City Council. Elect 7 people in each of the 15 council districts (or however many council districts we have); proportional voting; Metro Council to guarantee an equal level of discretionary funds for services and improvements to each district; council member would serve as ex-officio member of each local council; City Council can delegate local council to hold legally-required hearings of local concern and make decisions; and local councils have authority to review and make recommendation of anything of local and citywide concern; unpaid.

The proportional voting is some strange thing that is supposed to prevent one slate of special interest people from dominating all the seats in an election. Boland thought it was weird and undemocratic.

Glushon explained that in his plan they wouldn't have authority over land use issues, at least at the start. He said he met with the Daily News ed board that morning, and they said they wouldn't support an elected system that was limited to just land use.

Kayser said he was changing his mind about Council size, and was now tending to favor keeping it at 15. He said what made him change his mind is that someone pointed out that nobody is calling for more Congressmen.

Glushon said he has been meeting with homeowners groups and they don't want districts tied to community planning districts because they're too large and it would force separate and distinct

communities to be together in the same area. He thought that using council districts (despite the fact that they are even larger yet) would keep the connection with the council member.

Boland warned that if the cost is too high, someone will campaign against it on that argument.

Kayser estimated the cost for his plan at \$6-7M a year. He said Fleming defined Acost neutral@ as something as little as \$4-5M a year.

Hahn didn=t like the idea of the areas being tied to council districts, and she didn=t want council members to even sit on them as ex-officio members.

The vote was Yes (3): Weinberger, Glushon, Boland. No (2) Kayser, Hahn.

Hahn commented, AI can=t believe that I just voted against an elected system. What will my opponent say?@

Glushon said that we needed to know what the actual costs of the different plans would be.

Kayser reintroduced his old plan. Local decision-making authority; allocate a %-age of the ciyt budget to each of the 35 or so areas for services; etc.

Hahn said she had a concern about that part of the plan that allowed community councils to enter into development agreements as a way of generating revenue in their areas. Kayser said this was an alternative to the incremental funding ideas proposed by Fleming and Powers. He cited Warner Center and Lopez Canyon as examples. (I need to find out how much they generated, but every part of town isn=t going to have those kind of projects.)

Glushon reminded everyone that we need to have local councils that are responsible for their decisions. As a homeowner president he knows that in order to appease his people, all he had to do was say no to every developer. He doesn=t believe that we should create groups to do that. He described the Kayser plan as fundamentally unfair because it doesn=t give the local councils the ability to raise their own money.

Hahn said that out of respect for the hard work Kayser put into the plan, that it should go forward to the full commission. (Hardly a ringing endorsement.)

Weinberger said he favored sending forward all the plans they voted on.

Glushon also wanted to send forward the Powers plan and the two Fleming versions. Hahn commented that the full commission is going to think they=re crazy.

Frank Eberhard said that most planning cases get challenged and thrown out on procedural issues, so he warned that it was going to take a lot of staff to make sure that each of the decisions regarding land use was done carefully.

Weinberger said his main concern with the Kayser plan was that it defined Alocal@ issues as those meeting certain traffic criteria, but many of the issues they would be discussing couldn=t be measured

using traffic counts and estimates.

Yes (2): Kayser, Hahn. No (2): Glushon, Weinberger. Boland had left.

Weinberger mentioned that Jackie Dupont-Walker=s committee had recommended that departmental service areas match council districts. Glushon countered with a suggestion that all departmental service areas try to match each other. That discussion went nowhere.

Weinberger said he wanted something in the Charter that required departmental people to come to community council meetings. I don=t think that went anywhere because some of the commissioners figured that they would come anyway.

Kayser suggested that they also send forward the recommendations of the City Atty and Goldberg even though he admitted that he wasn=t even sure if they still favored their own proposals. So 7 proposals for elected, and ours for self-selected go forward.

Let=s do this:

1. I=ll work with MALDEF.
2. I=ll work with you on the enabling language.
3. We'll discuss the possible weaknesses in the early warning ordinance language.
4. You may want to consider meeting with the Mayor. I think they still have some concerns with our plan, such as them wondering out loud to me if the early warning ordinance really had to be an ordinance. If he=s going to be pushing your participatory plan, you two should reach some sort of agreement on what that is. If the mayor is serious, it would seem that we should reconsider proposing Plan B unless it=s necessary.
5. By the time you leave, you should have talked to your key people and done all you can do, and you=ll have to leave the rest to me, the commissioners, and maybe the mayor and Miguel.

The possible scenarios for the Oct 19 meeting are all based on the assumption that they are unable to come to an easy consensus on any of the elected plans, either because they understand the choices and don=t like them, or they simply don=t understand them because they are either incompletely developed or too radical to understand:

1. They get frustrated and settle for the Wachs plan, or the Wachs plan with the enabling language.
2. They get frustrated and pick one of the elected plans despite its flaws, with or without the Wachs plan.
3. They feel like they=re getting close, so they schedule it for another meeting probably without acting on the Wachs plan so they can consider the entire package.

One additional thing:

It wouldn't hurt for us to communicate in writing to the appointed commissioners about our concerns that they still need to include some basic fundamentals like self-selection into their package in order to avoid giving a future City Council the ability to totally gut an NC plan.