

To: Joel
From: Greg
Re: Neighborhood Councils

10/2/98
p.m.

We won't have time to discuss NC strategy until after the funeral on Monday at the earliest, but wanted to give you some responses to questions you raised in case you wanted some time to think about the whole thing.

In answer to the questions you raised on my last memo:

1. You wondered why Boland voted for our plan but said she wasn't going to vote for both a participatory plan and an elected plan. I explained to you at the time it happened a couple of weeks ago that Boland voted for our plan, but explained that she wasn't going to ultimately support both a plan like this and an elected one because she felt that we wouldn't afford both, even though she had no idea what either would cost.
2. In a subsequent vote that same day, she voted for the Kayser plan which called for an elected decision-making system that was revenue neutral. You asked what that meant. At Thursday night's meeting, Kayser said that Fleming, at a meeting of The Coalition, described revenue neutral as having a minimal cost like \$4-5 million a year. You also asked why Boland would vote for ours and the Kayser plan. I guessed that she was saying that if there was to be just a participatory plan, she would favor ours. And if there were to be just an elected plan it would be Kayser's. That's a little tough to explain because Kayser's plan doesn't contain elements that she considers crucial, mainly a carrot and stick incentive for the local councils to approve a development. She didn't say which she would pick if it was all before her.
3. You noted that the Glushon/Toronto plan described in the minutes of the task force was not what Michelle described in her memo. Very true. And it wasn't the same proposal that Glushon presented to the task force Thursday night either. He changes it as he learns more about the Toronto system; as he tries to design it to fit L.A.'s situation. His previous plan called for a City Council of 25-30 members. Now he's at 15.
4. You reworded my new Plan B, but I think we're saying the same thing. We and the task force are calling for a mandatory review of the NC system by a new charter commission, which shall include a comprehensive, professional analysis of the choices some period of time before the new commission convenes. The task force has recommended that the new commission convene 5 years after implementation of the NC system. Neither of us has suggested how the new commission would be appointed. I would give the consultants 2 years to do their work. My feeling is that any serious consideration of a dramatic change in our system of governance is going to require thoughtful consideration, and involve all the stakeholders. It's likely that a consultant would be retained anyway, but I think we look more serious by recommending that it be required. We can assure labor, management, the ethnic groups, and the public through the newly formed NCs, etc. that they will all be involved. It gives a reason why we have to wait as long as 5 years to convene the new commission.
5. If I read your notes correctly, you want the enabling language to either require that the recommendations of the new commission go directly to the ballot, and/or you want to require approval

from a majority of the NCs.

THE CONFUSION:

Your final comment was how confusing this whole issue is. That's an understatement. Too many people are trying to come up with answers to things they don't understand. The confusion presents a golden opportunity for someone like us to come in with the answer. We've done good so far. They accepted our plan because it seems complete and thorough to them. Nobody could poke holes in it other than to be skeptical about the whole effectiveness of any participatory system. No one has suggested specific changes to make it better.

PLAN B:

Now we need to have Plan B ready in the event we need to provide the commission with some elected or decision-making element in order to save our plan.

MAYOR'S OFFICE:

One, they feel that the early warning ordinance shouldn't be an ordinance. Actually, it doesn't have to be.

Second is the cost and who gets to spend the money. Our plan calls for the NC clusters to get a budget so they can hire their own staff, print newsletters, etc. They're uncertain about this, and might prefer that the Dept of Neighborhoods dole out this money. I'm going to hold real firm on this by making the following arguments: (1) NCs need independence to be meaningful, (2) they need to build self-sufficiency so they won't always be reliant on City Hall, (3) the DON can stay small as long as it is there to support the NCs and not control them, and (4) by giving them discretionary funds you give them the ability to be creative and flexible by, for instance, using lots of volunteers and few paid staff, or finding local merchants to underwrite their newsletters, so they can use the money for other community improvements. It's all part of what empowerment is.

The third is guaranteed funding. I will explain that if funding is left to the City Council, it would be too easy for the City Council to gut the whole thing by not providing funding for independent staff and communications.

VICA

A committee of VICA asked me and some others to come to their breakfast meeting this Wednesday and talk about NCs and charter reform. Bonnie Herman has been real nice to me on this issue, so I'll go out there. 7:30 a.m. in Van Nuys! VICA has broken ranks with the business community on this issue, taking more of a Fleming approach.

ELECTED COMMISSION

The full elected commission meets on Monday night.

OCTOBER 19 COMMISSION MEETING

We have to figure this to be D-Day because we don't know if the issue will be continued.