BEFORE THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

BILL CHRISTOPHER, PRESIDENT

In the matter of:
CITY OF LOS ANGELES
BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS

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TRANSCRIPTION OF TAPED PROCEEDINGS

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COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: -- Draper, there has been a request from the other side that you go first. Are you comfortable with that?
KEN DRAPER: I'm not sure we're ready at the moment, having planned on going second.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: All right.
KEN DRAPER: We have to make sure all of our
people are here.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER:  I'm perfectly willing to take five minutes yet and wait so --

We're waiting for a couple of people who apparently each have important information from both of the groups applying tonight, so it will take another few minutes before we actually get started.

In the meantime we do have handy-dandy little white speaker cards which everybody who wishes to speak this evening needs fill out. And if you can hand one of those to our staff members, then we'll be able to get everybody on the list to speak.

Okay. After a couple of false starts, I would like to welcome everybody to the meeting of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners for Tuesday, April 23rd.

We are at the Hancock Park Elementary School, and I'm joined this evening by Commissioner Tammy Membreno, Commissioner Mary Louise Longoria, Commissioner Pat Herrera-Duran, Commissioner Tony Luchente, Commissioner Jimmie Woods Gray, and Commissioner Ron Stone. And I'm Commissioner Bill Christopher.

And with that we will move into our agenda this evening. We have, on the agenda this evening in item number 2, two groups who have applied for certification as neighborhood councils, both representing essentially the same area which, depending on who you're in favor of, either Mid City West or West Wilshire.

Our agenda this evening will follow a format by which we'll ask staff to make a presentation first about the West Wilshire community council, then we will ask the applicants to come up and make their presentation. We will follow that by a staff presentation on the Mid City West community -- or neighborhood council, and we will follow that with the applicant's presentation for that particular application.

Once we've completed the applicants' presentations and the staff's presentation, the commission will have a chance to ask questions of both staff and the applicants. We will then open up for public comment or for public testimony.

We will take those who are here in favor of the West Wilshire community council first. We will then switch and take people who are in favor of the Mid City West community council. Then when we're done with that, we will take people who are either making general comments about one or the other or are who are making points in opposition to one or the other of the community councils.

So once we've all sat through all of that,
which will probably take us till somewhere around 9:30 or 10 o'clock hopefully, maybe not quite that long, the commission will close the public hearing and attempt to deliberate and make a decision in the case.

I want to give you a little bit of background so that you all understand what the commission has done in situations like this before and the way the commission will tend to view the applications.

This is about the fifth time that we've encountered situations where we have competing interests who are looking to be certified as a neighborhood council for the same essential geographic location.

The first time was in Westchester. And in Westchester originally two groups -- or one group began neighborhood council activity, split into two groups, filed essentially two separate applications or filed two independent tracts, through the mediation process through the Department came back together, unified and was certified under one unified application.

The second time was in Venice. In Venice we had two groups. One was a new group of people who had not been involved in organizing before and were essentially young grassroots organizers, the other group was group of long-time community advocates or community activists.

The first group filed an application. The second group filed a letter of intent. The first group came to its public hearing, presented its application with essentially full community support. The second group presented only token opposition at that hearing. And the Board certified the first application.

The fourth time we encountered the situation was in Hollywood -- or actually the third time -- was in Franklin Canyon in Hollywood where we had two groups who were competing essentially again for the same geographic area. And the dispute was primarily rooted in personalities and, to some extent, egos.

They went through a mediation process which was relatively unsuccessful and fairly acrimonious, came to the public hearing with essentially the same set of bylaws representing both groups, the same boundaries, and still a certain amount of personality friction and egos that were getting in the way of combining for a single neighborhood council.

The board looked at that and found that there was still room to negotiate or room for a certain amount of -- of consideration on both sides, sent them both back and said, "We would like to have
you mediate some more and see if you can unify."

They have been successful in doing that after the public hearing and we expect to certify a unified neighborhood council in the next several months.

The last time we encountered the situation was last week in Echo Park where we had two groups come before us, each again claiming essentially the same territory, and the first group -- well, coming out of the staff evaluation, they were essentially viewed as equal by the staff.

The first group got up before us and opened their testimony by attacking the process and ultimately attacking their competition and presenting little or no community support.

The second group got up, presented a relatively complete neighborhood council with a certain amount of broad-based community support, and the Board's decision was relatively simple at that point, to certify the second group.

So I give you that background tonight just to let you know that we've seen a few situations like this. Each one is different, each one is unique, and the board has treated each one individually and separately.

And we'd like -- we will continue that this evening and hopefully reach a decision by the end of the evening.

So with that I'm going to ask Romero, who's missing somewhere, to come to the microphone. There she is. And we'll start with the West Wilshire community council.

ROMERO: Good evening, Commissioners. Romero Malvo, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

The Department has received an application for certified neighborhood council status from representatives of the proposed West Wilshire community council. The Department has also received an application for certification from the Mid City West community council. And both seek certification for identical boundaries.

The Department has reviewed the application for conformance with the requirements as set forth in the plan and we are making the following recommendation: We recommend that the board adopt the findings of the Department and the findings in the evaluation of certification application prepared by the Department field operations division and move to disapprove the application as noted in the staff evaluation.

We have the following findings: The plan requires that an applicant describe their boundaries, present a rationale and have within the bounded area a minimum of 20,000 persons,
residents. There are -- there is in the plan provisions for less than 20,000, but that was not needed in this case.

The applicant did present boundaries. They presented the areas on the south bounded by San Vicente Boulevard from La Brea to Fairfax and Olympic Boulevard from Fairfax to the city of Beverly Hills, on the east La Brea Avenue, on the west Beverly Hills city limit, and on the north the West Hollywood city limits. Within that area there are approximately 54,000 people, so that requirement was -- was met.

The area is abutted by the Pico neighborhood council, which has already been certified, and the Mid Wilshire Greater Hancock Park proposed neighborhood council, and there are no areas that are left orphan -- I don't want to use that word any more, but there are no areas that would not be included in a neighborhood council or a proposed neighborhood council.

The rationale given by the group was that the group represent -- that the groups represented by the West Wilshire community council have been representing the residents and the businesses for many years in the existing community groups who share a common vision for the community. Many of the residents and businesses have been working together for over 30 years.

In addition, the Wilshire -- the West Wilshire community council also identified that their area is in the Wilshire community plan and that the area includes three historic preservation zones, the Miracle Mile, Carthay Circle and South Carthay.

In looking at the -- the application, the Department finds that they have satisfied most of the requirements for boundaries, but with the exception of the overlap. The plan does provide for overlap in some situations and none of the -- the situations apply in this case. Normally it would be for public use or for landmarks or for a historic facility. So the overlap is not justified in this case.

The plan also requires that the neighborhood council describe their -- their outreach effort. The -- and demonstrate an understanding of the community. The applicant did provide in detail of a profile of the neighborhood, of the -- in the area and did satisfy that requirement.

In describing their population, they were agreed with the staff because we're taking statistics from pretty much the same place. It's a population of 54,619. The -- the -- there is approximately 21 percent homeowners and 79 percent
In looking at the ethnic breakdown, the predominant group is white. It's 71 percent white, seven percent Latino, six percent African-American, and 11 percent Asian, five percent other.

In looking at the age structure, approximately 16 percent are 65 and over, approximately 12 percent are 17 and under, and the dominant age group is age 30 to 49 at 38 percent of the population.

In looking at income, there are -- approximately 24 percent of the households earn between 15,000 and 34,000. The median household income is 43,256, and that is based on 1999 information from United Way. We don't have the current census information on that.

It is a community with many businesses. The predominant number of business -- number of businesses, 3,626. About 2,228 are businesses that have one to four employees.

The West Wilshire group did conduct outreach. In terms of identifying their population, they write that the organizers have been involved in community affairs and largely their -- their process for identifying stakeholders really was based upon experience and a history of working in the community for many years.

In terms of informing the community stakeholders, they used a series of open meetings to announce to a variety of groups about neighborhood councils. They noticed in commonly used newspapers, fliers, letters, internet, word of mouth.

They have identified that they have held 24 general meetings between July -- between June 21, 1999 and October 30th, 2001. They did organize a large community meeting in order to elect officers, and there were over 125 persons in attendance.

The West Wilshire community council has organized itself into geographic areas based upon homeowner association boundaries. Some of the associations involved are the Beverly Wilshire homeowners associations, the Burton Way homeowners association, the Carthay Circle residential association, the Melrose action committee, and the Miracle Mile residents association, and Park La Brea tenants association.

When they had their elections they also had representatives that had candidates, and these were from the Miracle Mile Chamber of Commerce, the Miracle Mile Civic Association, the ministerial congregational unions, business developers, Fairfax BID, or business improvement district, and the arts museums and the cultural institutions.

They had submitted 203 signatures. The staff analysis of the signatures show that they were
spread throughout the geographic area with a greater
collection of signatures in the western and
southern parts of the bounded areas. There were a
few signatures west of La Cienega Boulevard and in
the northeast area of the boundaries. The
demographic information indicates that signatures
were collected from areas very high owner
occupancy.

In describing their continuing outreach,
the -- they talked in terms of working with
representatives and leaders of a wide variety of
residential, business community, and civic and
social groups, and they would continue advertising
in local newspapers and using organizational fliers
and news letters, the internet, and community
calendars.

The -- in looking at their -- in looking
at their outreach, we find that the -- they have
done extensive outreach and they have an extensive
knowledge of the community and a strong network of
leadership. But in assessing their -- their --
their outreach, we did not find that it reached or
consisted of the broadest array of stakeholders in
the community.

In looking at their organizational
structure, the governing structure has been
developed in a fashion that could exclude
stakeholders from becoming board members.
Designated homeowners association are proposed to
lead the regional elections, and a specific plan for
informing and incorporating other stakeholders
besides homeowners was not presented in the
application.

In addition, the selection of board
members representing issue-based categories does not
include the participation or the involvement of all
stakeholders.

The Department believes that the governing
structure and the election process developed by West
Wilshire community council will greatly limit the
participation and inclusion of diverse stakeholder
groups in the community.

In terms of the financial accountability,
the plans requires that there be a plan to assure
accountability. The proposed West Wilshire
community council provided the Department with a
copy of their accounting procedures. The section
was reviewed by the Department's staff, and it
incorporated the requirements of the plan and so we
find that they have complied with this requirement.

The plan also requires that there be a log
of public notice location, at least five posting
locations. In -- the applicant gave two that
included physical locations within the boundaries,
Farmer's Market and Gardener Street library. The
remaining locations were a website for the West Wilshire community council and the Hollywood Independent and the Beverly Free Press newspapers.

The Department requested additional physical locations and were -- were given locations as the County Museum of Art, Fairfax High School, Fairfax library, the post office on Wilshire and Detroit and the Bicentennial post office on Beverly Boulevard, so the Department finds that the applicant did meet that requirement.

There is a requirement that there be a treasurer. The group has provided the Department with the description of its organizational structure, and this does include the role of the -- does include a position for the treasurer, so we find that they have met that requirement.

They did submit a contact roster and they are -- all of the persons on the roster appear to be viable members of the organizing group, so we find that they have met that requirement.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any questions for staff? Tammy.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Romero, from the signatures that were collected, you mentioned that a great number were from homeowners. Can you -- do you have a rough idea of what percentage was from homeowners out of the 203?

ROMERO: I don't have an exact number for that.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Romero, and in line with that, you probably stated it but just for my clarification, what percentage of the neighborhoods are renters?

ROMERO: 79 percent are renters.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: In the outreach, I believe I heard you say that it didn't seem to go far enough. Can you tell me which specific stakeholder group you thought was left out?

ROMERO: The representation by -- by renters, the representation by -- one of the -- one of the major concerns is the -- the -- the areas that had high density in renter population seemed to have less signatures collected in those areas. The areas that had high percentages of -- of homeowners seem to have a lot of -- of signatures collected there. There were parts in the -- in the community that did not have signatures at all, but there was coverage in the entire community.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Are the renters concentrated in one part of that community? Are they all over?

ROMERO: You should have had -- you should have had maps.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I might have have --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The answer really is no, they're not. The renters are pretty much evenly distributed throughout the district, even where there are areas of higher concentration of home ownership, there's still a fairly substantial renter base in that same area, primarily because a number of those structures are duplexes and you have an owner occupant in one and a renter occupant in the other unit.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Was there outreach to seniors, since the renters -- to the senior root? Was there any indication of that?

ROMERO: To -- in the -- in some of the representation of the groups that they -- they identified as part of their base, yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Luchente.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Romero, I just wanted to get a clarification. The -- the lack of renters' signatures, that's -- that's been a pattern in other -- in -- in many other applications, has it not, in terms of the difficulty of outreach to that particular stakeholder group?

ROMERO: The renter population and outreach to renter is -- has been a problem throughout the areas that we've certified, correct.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Right. And I just wanted to clarify, you said this one didn't necessarily have the broadcast array of participation. Yet your description indicating Chamber of Commerce, business improvement district, you know, homeowners and such, and a pretty high attendance at that general meeting seems to indicate fairly broad participation.

Is your comment kind of one of degrees of participation?

ROMERO: I think that besides the -- besides the -- besides the traditional associations that have long histories in the neighborhood, you have other groups in the neighborhood that may not have that -- that strong institutional base. There's a large percentage of the population that's really only lived there five years or less.

So in terms of the -- if the core of the outreach is around the historical institutions of the community, there's the danger that some of the newer populations, some of the newer organizations would not have as much participation and outreach, too.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: But -- but the age of an organization doesn't in any way indicate the -- the representation in terms of how long somebody would have participated in these organizations.
ROMERO: Except that if you go through the outreach discussion, it talks in terms of largely working with those organizations and that population that has been historically in the community involved with the issue, worked through the issues for the community. And -- and which is a good thing because there -- it says that there's a solid core of leadership in the community.

The concern was whether the focus went outside of that traditional institutional base to bring in some of the newer populations that have come into the neighborhood more recently.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Okay. Thanks for that explanation.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Membreno.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Yes, Romero, on the question that Commissioner Luchente made in terms of the renters, yes, it has been a problem for some groups to get to the renters.

Would you say that this group -- that this neighborhood council had less or more opportunities to reach out to the renters in this area, just based on accessibility to their homes, you know, leaving information as opposed to building complexes and locked, you know, apartment buildings and so on.

ROMERO: I'm not sure that I could -- I could go in that direction because the information on the -- in the application just didn't have that level of depth.

One of the -- one of the concerns that we had was also in the structuring of the governance where it was -- it was geographic and that the boundaries were based upon existing homeowner associations and that the elections would be run through the homeowner associations.

And there was concern on our part as to whether or not that would be renter friendly, whether or not there'd be enough access by renters to participate in those kinds of processes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Romero, this is an ongoing discussion I've had with stuff all week. You characterizing all of the associations that are making up the West Wilshire group as being homeowners. That's patently untrue and I think distorts to some extent the discussion we're going to have later on this evening.

The Park La Brea tenants association obviously is not a homeowner association. The Miracle Mile residential association had a long-running gun battle with other homeowner associations on the west side years ago over the fact that they talked to the residents in the neighborhood, with not just to the homeowners.
The Melrose neighborhood association doesn't discriminate in its -- in its outreach to the community; just the fact that you live there helps.

So I would just like to sort of mitigate the issue up front that we're dealing solely with homeowners associations because we have a perception citywide that there -- that our program in general deals directly with homeowners. And that's not necessarily the image that we need to be projecting out beyond the staff and beyond the Department.

We -- we're a game that everybody plays and we want it to be a game that everybody plays. So we need to be careful in our characterizations to some of those -- those associations, organizations.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Mr. President.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Would you say that some of those groups then have a mix of obviously renters and homeowners and other?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Well, whatever that might be. So is it possible that an applicant could have broken down that information into the application?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: It's possible. I don't know that -- I didn't see that, that breakdown in the application.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Right, I didn't see it either. Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Any other questions for staff? Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Romero, in the field report, there is mention of a mediation process. Could you elaborate on the process that took place between this group and the other?

ROMERO: The staff received the application from -- from the West Wilshire group on November 21st and then received the application from Mid City West on December 21st. So it was within the required 20-day period. Both groups were notified in late December that there was an overlap and requested -- the Department requested that there be mediation.

There were two mediation meetings held. The first one was not really of a nature of mediation because at that meeting basically it was just describing the rules of mediation and the groups that came were not really prepared to enter into mediation. So that first meeting was largely a discussion of what mediation is, how long it was going to take, what kind of commitment, and it did allow time for the two groups to lay on the table what they thought the issues were.

A second meeting was held February 6th,
and at that meeting there was an attempt to -- to go
over some of the issues that seemed to be separating
the two groups. The issue was largely one of -- was
categorized as one of philosophy, that the two
groups had different approaches to the formation of
neighborhood councils and that they did not feel
that mediation could -- could assist them in this
instance because they felt that their differences
truly were fundamentally different ways of
approaching neighborhood councils.

Just to -- in terms of -- on the one hand,
there was the concern by the Mid City West group
that the processes and the structure of the West
Wilshire group was not open, did not allow for full
stakeholder participation and, as a result, felt
that they needed to form their own neighborhood
councils around certain principles which I believe
is outlined in the (inaudible) report.

The -- the West Wilshire group felt that
in organizing neighborhood councils you needed to
have a very strong accountability factor, they felt
that their structure realized that, and was not
really open to making a change in another
direction.

During the mediation at the second meeting
it was suggested that they -- the two groups
identify representatives and that the two
representatives come forward and try to come up with
combined bylaws. The Department had reviewed the
bylaws of the West Wilshire group and had our own
comments about some changes that needed to be made.

The West Wilshire group asked that they
postpone the decision about any Future mediation
until they met with the Department on their bylaws.
Subsequent to that, they did meet with the
Department, they -- they took the recommendations on
changing the bylaws and also informed the Department
that they did not want to wish to continue with
mediation.

In March of -- mid March we received a
proposal from the Mid City West group outlining some
possible ways that the groups could come together.
That was forwarded to the Wilshire West community
council group for consideration. There was
misunderstanding as to what this actually
constituted, what it was, and so there was no
response to the proposal.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Romero, you mentioned
that the bylaws of the elections of the governing
bodies, somehow within there the stakeholders might
possibly be excluded, may be room for exclusion.
Could you elaborate on that a little bit
more, maybe give me examples of how they would be
excluded or who would be excluded, who you thought
would be excluded?

ROMERO: Okay. The -- let me just give a little background on the board. The board consists of 27 members and 12 nonvoting alternative members. 15 members are elected from eight geographic areas, three members are elected at large. Nine members are selected from specific categories. That would be the Chamber of Commerce, social service agency or hospital, arts, civic association, business, religious, education, unions, and the BID.

The -- one of the things I think that is occurring for the staff is we had two competing applications for the same area. So in looking at the two applications, it's not just in isolation. It is a comparison between the outreach of one versus the outreach of the other. It is a comparison of the bylaws of one versus the bylaws of the other.

And the -- the -- the governing structure for the Mid City West consist of 50 members. 40 represent mandatory categories that include homeowners, renters, business, nonprofits, government, civic organizations, media, arts, urban planning, cultural and ethnic groups, seniors, youth, lifestyle groups, disabled, environment, labor, education, religious, five at large members, and they represent that -- five at large members will represent specific geographic areas.

So there was a mixture in the -- the competing proposal of area, specific as well as interest areas, as well as in comparison with the -- the West Wilshire group, it was -- for the election of the board, there were 15 geographic areas and that members would be elected -- members -- there would be a 15 geographic area board and members would be elected within each of the geographic areas.

A special -- a special category member would be selected by their constituency, so a special category would be unions, for instance, the union members would elect the union representative. Members at large would be elected at special interest group meetings.

In looking at the -- the Mid Wilshire -- the Mid City West group, all boards were to be elected in a public general meeting held in accordance with the Brown Act.

In looking at the notification process for elections, the West Wilshire group set an election date upon certification. It would be 90 days after certification. The officers would be elected within 30 days of the board election, and the geographic zones would select after doing -- after doing community outreach.

In the case of the Mid City West group,
the elections -- they would form an election committee 30 days after certification. The membership on the committee would be open to all stakeholders.

The election and the call for nominations would be publicized for a 60-day period prior to the election. There would be public notice, including posting at all the locations that were identified in the application as well as on the web and in the media, and there would be a distribution of no less than 35,000 fliers.

In the case of the Wilshire West group, the term would be for two years, not to exceed eight. In the case of West Wilshire -- in Mid City West the term is one year.

In trying to ensure the board -- COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I can see that in some ways all the stakeholders are represented in each groups, but in one group that's less numbers and in other there are more.

ROMERO: Well, in -- in trying -- COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: It sounds to me that's what I hear.

ROMERO: In trying to ensure that the board reflects the diversity, in the case of the Wilshire West community council, there are eight geographic areas and nine interest group categories. In the case of the Mid City West community council, there are 26 interest group categories, five geographic representatives, and open elections.

In addition, the Mid City West -- COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Can I -- before you go beyond that, is the kind of election that's -- that Mid Wilshire is asking for unprecedented in past councils that we've approved?

ROMERO: No, I don't think so.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I beg your pardon?

ROMERO: I don't think so.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Okay. Thank you.

ROMERO: There was one other point I wanted to make, and that was the Mid City West had agreed to have a third-party overseer of the elections if they were certified.

And when the question was asked of the Wilshire West group, they -- they really didn't see the need for a third-party oversight.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Romero, the field report and your comments make it seem like the staff is concerned -- actually, I'll read from the report. It says, "A strong reliance on existing homeowners associations to conduct the local geographic region elections," I'm looking at the bylaws section 3-A, and I don't see in there or elsewhere in the bylaws a provision where an existing homeowners association
would conduct an election.

Is that -- am I missing something?

ROMERO: I'm going to ask the -- I'm going to
ask Michelle to address that issue because there was
a lot of dialogue going back and forth on the bylaws
and I want to make sure the commission has the
context for that.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Okay.

MICHELLE CUEVAS: Good evening. My name is
Michelle Cuevas with the Department.

You're right, Commissioner Stone. They do
designate geographic zones based on existing
boundaries of established community-based
organizations.

They don't specify in their bylaws that it
will be conducted by homeowners associations.
However, in conversations with them, with their
bylaws, they did focus on the extensive outreach
mechanisms in place by the homeowners associations
and they would be leading the organizations, so
maybe West Wilshire can provide some clarity on
that.

COMMISSIONER STONE: And then, also, in -- in
section 3-A, the elections within each geographic
area appear to be open to all neighborhood
stakeholders; is that correct?

MICHELLE CUEVAS: They are. And -- and they
have stated this on several occasions, that although
the homeowner association may be the mechanism that
conducts the election, it would be open to all
stakeholders within that geographic area.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: What I'd like to do
at this point is to bring the applicant forward so
that we can actually hear from the West Wilshire
community council.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Hello, Commissioners. My name
is Diana Plotkin. I am one of the original
organizers of the West Wilshire community council,
and I'm pleased to be before you tonight.

I want to give you some historical
perspective of how the West Wilshire community
council came to be.

Many of the original organizers attended
every single Charter reform commission meeting
dealing with neighborhood councils. We attended the
committee meetings that the elected Charter reform
held dealing with neighborhood councils because we
were so interested.

We are perfectly aware that neighborhood
councils came out of the residents of the city of
Los Angeles yelling and screaming to bring
government closer to the people.

We -- from the point that the Charter
reform commission had passed the Charter, in June of
1999 we got together and we brought together the loosely organized community organizations that we had worked with over the past 25 years in our community. We drew our boundaries according to the Wilshire community plan.

We are the western portion of the Wilshire community plan. Most of the groups involved in this had worked in revising the Wilshire community plan that dictates what happens in our community as far as land use is concerned.

Our boundaries have always been from the West Hollywood city line to Olympic San Vicente, from the Beverly Hills city line to La Brea. We have never divided communities as our competition has, who had to change their boundaries a few months ago.

We brought everybody together and we got a set of bylaws. We took the bylaws of the Brentwood community council that was put together by Cindy Miscikowski, approved by the city of Los Angeles, who had will a set of bylaws that actually fit into our community.

It had geographical areas, zones -- they called them zones. We -- you call them geographical areas. But they had several zones of representation, a number of zones. Included in that was the business improvement district, large development, chambers, the civic association, the unions. They had the educator, the ministerial people. They also had social services, and they had culturals.

We included everything together because it was a set of bylaws that had been looked over by two attorneys and taken to an attorney that specializes in bylaws on behalf of our little group. We pulled everybody together and we started holding meetings to revise whatever we needed to do.

We based our representation on square footage of the area. We had several urban planning students from UCLA go over this map and designate how much square footage, residential square footage, existed and how much commercial square footage. And they came up with a ratio of 65 percent residential to 35 percent commercial.

We then had discussions with the business community, who didn't like that, so we based our representation downward and we are now 55 percent what we consider residential. That includes renters, condominiums, homeowners, property owners, and anyone else who's a resident of the city of Los Angeles.

The 35 percent -- the 45 percent includes everybody else. That means the business improvement districts, the Chamber of Commerce, the unions.

We believe greatly in accountability and
constituency. That is our philosophy. And for an
example, I will give you an example. Take the
unions. Our union representative is not only a
union member but works for the unions and has the
written support from AFTRA, SAG, Actors Equity, and
one other union who has already written for
support. They want this person to represent their
best interest.

Our educator, for instance, he's not only
a teacher at a middle school, he teaches in college,
his child who graduated from this school, he's
part of the booster club. He has three Elementary
schools have given him written permission to
represent their interests on our neighborhood
council.

When you come to the ministerial aspect of
this, this is a very highly populated orthodox
area. We have -- our representative has written
approval of 16 orthodox congregations, plus one
Catholic and one Protestant congregation that want
this man to represent him on our neighborhood
council.

It's accountability and constituency.
This is what we have based our entire West Wilshire
community council on. And that goes through all the
various selective areas.

Our social service person, we asked that
person to reach out to all social services agencies
and see if they would feel comfortable with that
person representing them.

When it came to the geographic areas, yes,
it's true that we had community groups in the
various geographic areas, but it didn't include just
the boundaries of those community groups. It
included an entire geographic area, which meant that
we reached out to everyone living in that geographic
area.

Not just the homeowners and not just the
renters, but every resident in that geographic area
was noticed of our elections for that particular
geographic area. They were noticed by newsletter,
they were noticed through the newspaper.

And that's true of everyone except the
Miracle Mile residents association who chose to have
only paid members of the Miracle Mile and their
board run for two seats on our community council.
That was a decision they made. We had no control
over that. Everybody else had an open election,
included everyone in the area including the
businesses. Fliers went to the businesses as well
as the residents in the area.

We believe very strongly -- again I will
say this -- in -- in accountability and
constituency.
We then -- once we developed this plan, this network of loosely grouped people that, you know, had been in our community, have worked with us over the past 25 years on various issues -- and I mean, we've worked very hard in our community. I can give you a whole list of things that we've done in this particular community -- then we started having meetings, we started trying to prepare for this process.

We then put together our group. We were going to have an election to elect officers but we were told that we were going to have to have another election so we didn't think that it was, you know, advisable for us to continue to have an election of officers.

We've had, as she -- as your staff has said, we've had over 24 open meetings that have been advertised in the newsletter, in the newspaper and through newsletters and everything, and people have been aware of our meetings and have attended our meetings.

I think that it's real important that -- or interesting to me that staff has never attended one of our open meetings. Staff has never attended one of the geographical area elections that we have held, and this -- certainly has not contacted any of us to ride around this community and from our perspective as to why we feel that constituency and accountability are so important in this particular area.

I do know that one staff person who had been here like on your staff for a week did attend one of our elections, which was the October 10th election where we confirmed or ratified the geographic area elections. We elected three members at large.

We can -- our members at large happen to be a city employee, a retired L.A. police detective, and also a doctor from Cedars-Sinai. We represent seniors. We have plenty of seniors on our board, so the senior population is very well represented in this area. The gay population is represented in this area.

We've reached out to everyone we could possibly think of. We've tried to get people active and to participate. Nothing has been just the homeowners. Most of the groups involved, as Commissioner Christopher has said, are not homeowners groups. They're residential groups. They entail -- they actually have people who are not only homeowners but residents as members of their association. And we've been working on this process since June of 1999.

Now I'm going to turn this over to Barbara Martinoff, who's going to explain to you another
BARBARA MARTINOFF: Hello. My name is Barbara Martinoff, and I'm a member at large and I live on 207 South Martel.

Well, this is going to be a challenge.

Okay. What I'm really here to tell you in a very quick nutshell and a yellow handout that you received earlier is really what the Power Point presentation is about, and it's really a summation of what our bylaws are, what our application is about and what we really stand for. Okay?

So really, the West Wilshire community council -- and I think just as -- as Diane has very eloquently described it, you know, this area, unlike maybe some other areas of the city, has years and has a history of organized activity, activism, I guess. And so you can't just discount a group that's been active for 10, 20, 30 years. So that is what's different in this part of the city maybe to other parts of the city.

Okay. The West Wilshire council really represents -- what I'm going to talk about is our -- what we stand for, what we're committed for, what we work for, what we believe in, and how our outreach was done.

So we really are, you know, an experienced, and we are proud of that experience. We also bring history and we bring accountable representation.

What we really stand for is dedicated representatives. We have both people who have had history of experience in activism and then there is members like myself who have no experience. And so we have both a mentoring experience and as well as a contribution of young and old, new and old ideas. So it's really a mix of kinds of individuals on the board.

Our representatives represent the neighborhood alliances, business associations, special interest groups, and stakeholders. We really categorized larger groups and within that we went into looking, as Diane said, trying to elect a fair representation.

What we really stand for is really a representation based on a broad-based outreach to all stakeholders in geographic areas. When you have as large of a geographic area as this council has and 54,000 people as a population, you can't just send out one or two little newsletters. You have to have a basis for outreach.

And that's what we really have committed to and that's what we -- by bringing together leaders who know how to do extensive outreach within their geographic areas, that was the basis for creating how do you do a much larger broad-based
outreach.
The experience and knowledge of city processes and services. Some of these individuals who are leaders of the different geographic areas have worked with the city, have fought the city, have challenged the city departments to making changes and working to improve the quality of life within their areas, and that's really kind of an experience that needs to be brought to this process because there are a lot of things in the city that city departments need to hear from this -- from the constituency at large.

And somebody who does not have that experience is very -- it's much more difficult to get something across, or get something to approve and get the city departments to participate in.

And I have worked on the other side so I know about customer service and how the city doesn't in all cases appear that they are being, you know, responsive to a community.

We have a commitment to safeguarding the quality of life because you have (inaudible) such a broad constituents of property owners, residents. You have the -- you know, the 10,000 renters in Park La Brea.

I'm a new homeowner in the area myself, so you know, I have a real stake in the community to make sure that our quality of life makes -- is -- is not only for myself but for my renter but also for my neighborhood.

We have a geographic inclusiveness of all stakeholders. When you look at our geographic outreach and the way we did the elections, which I'll talk about in second, we wanted to make sure it wasn't just a handful of people who came to a public meeting and said, "Gee, I want to" -- "I want to be elected" and they are going to represent the whole broad district.

So that's the big differences, okay, here is that we do in fact represent all four corners of the area.

What we're committed to is having open forums. We are basically open. All of our meetings are open to the public. It isn't just a couple of meetings a year, but every monthly meeting that we decide to -- you know, we're going to be holding, we will be open to the public.

We do outreach to all stakeholders who live, work, own property, a business or otherwise have vested interest. So when you're talking about a zone, for instance, it's anybody who fits in that description. It isn't just somebody who owns property or just somebody who rents or lives there. It's really a business person who can come in,
anybody who is in that area, wants to come in can
address an area within that area.

We have respect for existing geographic
boundaries of organized associations. This area, as
I mentioned in the beginning, is very unique because
there are existing organizations who have worked
very diligently for many, many decades, in some
cases, that they know what their neighborhoods are,
they know what their issues are, and that you can't
just ignore them. Because you do have to deal with
them. And they are there to support the larger,
broader council effort in terms of the objectives.

The council is going to work towards
coordinating efforts to address quality of life.
When you have -- you know, we have actually eight
different areas besides the business associations,
et cetera. We are going to make sure that we get
them to participate.

And by us having certain of our members
being, you know, nominated, elected from those
areas, they are going to be able to take the
information that's discussed at the councils, take
them back to the resident association or zone areas,
and then disperse that information out, as well as
bring up issues that are burning in that community,
and the council will then help coordinate those
issues, because if you have them in one area you
could very likely have them in two or three areas,
and the council will be able to discuss and -- and
kind of work on those issues together as a
broader-based organization.

We're also in partnership with the
existing neighborhood and business associations
because without their support, without their -- you
know, being able to feel that they are -- what
they've done in the past is going to count also and
that we would be listening to them, it's very easy
that you can have them work against the council,
which would be really detrimental to the whole
effort of what the councils are supposed to be
created for.

What we believe in is accountability.
That is the most intrinsic point here. I think
that's different from this council from the other
council, is because through our elections -- and I
just want to define what our elections are because
I've heard now some, you know, statements here that
weren't quite what we -- we have expressed in both
written and in meetings.

We have a three-tier election process.
Three tiers. Okay? One is the zone areas. That is
where we use the neighborhood associations or the
resident associations to help with the outreach to
-- through their newsletters to help us hold these
smaller area elections to nominate, you know, either
one or two and the alternates.
And in the back of the package with the bylaws you have the listing of how many alternates or how many representatives for each area.

Based on that, then we go to the second tier, which is the special interest group like business, business associations, the unions. They can either elect or to select. In the case of the unions, they selected somebody. They're not going to elect somebody. They're going to select because they want to make sure that that person is a spokesperson for what the unions are all about in this council area.

Then the third area, for those special interest areas that do not have a body that would automatically elect or select somebody, and including the members at large, those will be elected and caucused at the larger meeting which is where, at our CBS meeting for instance, I myself with 20, 25 other people got up and said this is who we are as individuals, this is where we're committed, and then there was a voting process.

So really, you really have a three-tier process to ensure that the members and the representatives come from all areas of the council district and that they represent from all aspects of it, of the council district.

For instance, in the Melrose area there were people who were elected there. It was a business representative. It wasn't a property owner. So you know, you really have a mix. You can't just say just because it's been helped with the outreach that it was -- only one type of individual going to be elected from the zone area. So I just want to make sure that that's clear with everybody.

We're involving really both new and old and seasoned and new start leaders, because that's how these councils are going to be effective in the long run. You need to have experience and you need to have a lot of youth and vigor and interest to want to continue the work that was started many years ago.

I'll go real quick now.

Recognition of the importance and the contribution, autonomy of the existing neighborhoods. We respect what the chamber is trying to do, or the BID, or the business association, or that particular zone, but we really have to work in partnership to achieve what the council's overall objective is going to be. And we will work in concert with those groups to make sure we know that.

The council also will strive to coordinate the quality of life issues with the city and other
governmental agencies, including the planning and
land use, traffic and streets, city surfaces and
development issues. Those are very core issues in
this council and I'm sure in other councils as
well.

Our outreach is really ongoing. Not only
do we outreach through our own methods which are
listed like the newspapers, the website, the fliers,
but we also count on the resident associations to
help with their newsletters to promote what's
happening in the councils. Because even though
there has been statements made that the other
councils has papered the whole community, in fact in
my community we've never seen any piece of
literature on them.

So you know, you do have to kind of weigh
-- you know, you can't just all have just one source
distributing information. You really need multiple
sources of information -- vehicles to distribute the
information because of the large population here.

We are long-standing ties and in both
neighborhood associations, business associations,
special interest groups of religious, et cetera. So
with all of that, you know, our resources and who we
represent as stakeholders, they come from libraries,
schools, social services, recreation centers,
museums, large and small business, home owners,
renters, unions, students, seniors, et cetera.

But most of all we really as a council, we
strongly believe in that we embrace and empower the
community and the stakeholders and then, now, and in
the future.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
(End of tape B, side A)

BARBARA MARTINOFF: We have one more speaker.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. All right.

Please.

HAROLD HAHN: Good evening, Commissioners. My
name is Harold.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: You need speak into
the mike, Harold. Into the mike?

HAROLD HAHN: Into the mike? Okay. I have to
raise it a little.

My name is Harold Hahn. I live in the
area south of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and west
of La Cienega Boulevard. I will be addressing both
the application from Mid City West and the staff
report, briefly.

First the Mid City West application. This
group is really not an organic organization.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Harold, I'm going to
-- I'm going to declare you out of order on that
score. This presentation we're in now, if you want
to speak later on the public testimony on their
written application, yes, but for now we're in the part where you're presenting your application.

HAROLD HAHN: Okay. Then I will address the staff report.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: That's fine.

HAROLD HAHN: Okay. The Department comparison analysis between West Wilshire and Mid City shows two areas of significant difference. These include the structure and -- of our governing board and the election process. For example, the Department states that the bylaws of West Wilshire do not clearly specify our procedures.

Because this report was received only a few days ago, we could not fully analyze the Department's findings. And I would like to note here that, for instance, we received a letter from the Department stating that our bylaws were acceptable, and yet we read in the staff report that in fact there're major questions about that.

Secondly, this evening we learned that -- about that there is a question about our boundaries. And yet we received an e-mail from the Department stating that our boundaries are acceptable.

And these issues raise questions. I mean, there are somewhat disturbing that we are hearing different things at different times and that we did really not have a -- an appropriate time frame for analyzing the staff report.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Let me stop you for one moment. I'm not aware and I don't believe any of my fellow commissioners are aware of any boundary issues at all. As far as we're concerned --

HAROLD HAHN: We heard this this evening. Your own staff person said there was a staff -- a difficulty with the boundaries.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. We'll -- we'll sort that out with staff.

HAROLD HAHN: Well, we would like to -- since these issues were raised, we would like to work with the Department to clarify these issues raised in the report.

And that's why we would like to request a continuance of at least a month so that we can address the issues for board structure and election.

And so thank you for hearing our request and we hope that you grant our request for a continuance of a month.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Questions?

Tony.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I just had two questions. One is, in the presentation it mentioned that issues -- primary issues, planning and land use, traffic, and streets,
city services, and development, I'm just interested
in what development is. Normally I put that in a
planning and land use category.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Development goes in land use.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Okay. Thank you.

And the last question is, I notice that
there -- in the packet that there were several
iterations of the bylaws, including two recent
amended additions. Was that in response to --
DIANA PLOTKIN: In response to the city's --
the city attorney's request for changes in the
bylaws that came to us at the very last minute and
those that we have addressed, and I understand --
I'm not sure, but from the last that I heard, our
bylaws have been accepted.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: So you were -- you made
modifications --
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes. We made all the
modifications that the city had requested.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Okay. Thank you.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone?
MS. POINDEXTER: City Attorney Gwen
Poindexter.

Could you just state your name for the
record again so we know who you are?
DIANA PLOTKIN: I'm sorry. My name is Diana
Plotkin. Do you want my address?
MS. POINDEXTER: No, no. Just your name is
fine.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Okay.
COMMISSIONER STONE: A quick question for the
applicants. I have the bylaws and Appendix A is
listed that has the geographic zones.
Do we have, anywhere in the materials that
we've been presented or anything that you have, an
actual map of those geographic zones?
DIANA PLOTKIN: No, we do not. Unfortunately
the map that we had, I left out of town and I didn't
bring it with me. I apologize. We have only one
map. It's about as big as that. It does detail out
the geographic zones. We can present it at a later
date if necessary.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Does -- the map in front
of you there, everything in yellow, the boundaries
of the proposed neighborhood council, do the
geographic zones cover all of the area?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STONE: So there's not any
orphaned areas?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Well, we have tried to make
every geographic area by on that of a homeowner
association boundary to cover every area. We've
asked people to include areas that were not
covered. If we have left anyone out or there isn't
anything covered, those people could come and run
under the member at large category.
But we have tried to include everybody.
We might not be a hundred percent successful, but
for the most part we've included everyone within
those boundaries that you see there.
COMMISSIONER STONE: And in drawing those
boundaries, are you including businesses as well?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Oh, yes.
COMMISSIONER STONE: So something like the
Beverly Center --
DIANA PLOTKIN: Oh, yes.
COMMISSIONER STONE: -- would be included in
one of those -- which -- which area is that in?
DIANA PLOTKIN: His area.
COMMISSIONER STONE: Which is?
DIANA PLOTKIN: The area that goes from La
Cienega to the Beverly Hills city line and from
Olympic Boulevard all the way up to the West
Hollywood city line. They would be included in that
area.
COMMISSIONER STONE: Would that be a specific
zone?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes, but I don't have the
number on it either. It would be the Burton Way
geographic area as we put into our --
COMMISSIONER STONE: So that's Zone 2, Burton
Way geographic area?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Right. Exactly.
COMMISSIONER STONE: So businesses in the
Beverly Center would be able to participate -- all
neighborhood council members could participate in
the election, but outreach --
DIANA PLOTKIN: In that geographic area, yes.
COMMISSIONER STONE: But outreach through the
Burton Way geographic -- or through an association
that's already set in place will outreach to the
Beverly Center --
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.
COMMISSIONER STONE: -- businesses --
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.
COMMISSIONER STONE: -- to try to attract them
for the -- the elections?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes. To all small businesses
in the area and including the Beverly Center.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner
Membreno.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I have a couple
questions.
DIANA PLOTKIN: Sure.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: The first question is
in terms of the businesses, unless the report is --
is wrong here, but the number given as total number
of employees, it's almost as equal as the number of
residents or the population in this neighborhood
council. And from your presentation I believe that you're allocating one seat for businesses in your neighborhood council; is that correct?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Not one seat for business. We have different types of businesses. You have the chamber who represents all the small businesses in the area, you have the civic association which is made up of business, you have a business improvement district, and you also have a large developer.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: So if you're a business on, say, the 500 to 999 employees, which is -- in this area apparently there's five of those, where will you be represented?

DIANA PLOTKIN: In the geographic area where that business sits, I would say. They have the opportunity to run for a seat in that particular geographic area.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: But that area is also open for other categories?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Oh, sure. Anyone can run. That's the idea of having a geographic area, that everyone is entitled to run for a seat on the neighborhood council. That's the outreach done.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I just -- being that the numbers are so close just in -- as employees of a business, your stakeholder in that area, it seems to me like 50,000 folks should have a little more representation on -- on the board if nothing else other than being represented. 'Cause quite frankly, one -- one person can't take the seat away from a business if -- if they're from another interest group.

Is that my understanding, for example --

DIANA PLOTKIN: No.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: -- in the zone -- in the zoned --

DIANA PLOTKIN: When --

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Let me --

DIANA PLOTKIN: Oh, I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. So for example, if in Zone 4 you have -- that might not be a good example.

The Zone 3, you have Carthay Circle geographic area, and I don't know what -- it's in there?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Uh-huh.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And you have two seats.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Uh-huh.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And if one of the businesses is in that area, potentially that business -- the businesses in that -- in those areas -- in that area would not -- or may not have a seat
for Zone 2?

DIANA PLOTKIN: But theoretically they could. They are notified of the election. They can participate in the election. And it's been in the past where there have been businesses who have come in and taken over an entire neighborhood council and gotten all of their employees elected.

So theoretically that's not true. They can come in, they can participate in that geographic area election and they can get elected. They take both those seats.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. And the other question that I had --

JOAN CURTIN: (Inaudible).

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: If you're going to make a -- you have to speak on the microphone.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Come up here.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: And we need your name.

JOAN CURTIN: My name is Joan Curtin. And just to make sure that there's not some misunderstanding, we don't have just one business representative on the board. There's four. There are four.

We have the business developer, we have the arts cultural museum representative, civic associations representative, BID representative, and union representative, and the chamber representative.

And in addition to those -- and I think maybe that's -- that kind of ties into what you're saying, Commissioner, theoretically some of the delegates from Burton Way geographic area or the Miracle Mile geographic area could also be business people. So it's certainly not just one board member assigned. It's a minimum, a minimum of the four or five I just said.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: So potentially you can have four quote/unquote businesses represented on your board; is that correct?

DIANA PLOTKIN: You could have much more than four.

JOAN CURTIN: You'll have a -- you'll have a minimum of four board members who are dedicated business people. You could have people representing geographic areas who are also businesses.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: What's the likelihood of a business getting a geographic area seat?

JOAN CURTIN: Well, we just mentioned that. Recently we had -- it was -- what's Mark's group?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Melrose (inaudible).

JOAN CURTIN: Melrose action?

DIANA PLOTKIN: No. Melrose (inaudible).

JOAN CURTIN: Melrose neighborhood association. He had -- at a recent meeting of their group, when they were looking for representatives
who wanted to get involved in the neighborhood
council issue, the person who ended up being a
representative doesn't even live in the area. He's
a business person in the area who learned of the
meeting through the group's outreach and, therefore,
chose to become involved.

So you asked me what the likelihood is. I
can't give you statistics. I can only tell you that
we know it's happened.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: And could businesses
also (inaudible) in that large group?
DIANA PLOTKIN: I beg your pardon?
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Could businesses also
be represented by the at large groups?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes, of course. Oh, sure.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Other
questions?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Other questions?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Pat.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I just had one more.
In terms of the bylaws, you talk about there was
numerous revisions and -- that you guys did on the
bylaws.

Why did you feel that these bylaws were
the best fit for your -- for the makeup of your
community?
DIANA PLOTKIN: Initially and in -- in all
candor, this is before I got involved with the
group, but when the initial bylaws were put together
there was apparently very little groundwork at that
time being offered by DONE with respect to what
bylaws should be. I mean, DONE was just getting off
the ground and the whole thing was still kind of
like "You come up with what you suggest and we'll

see if we can work with it."

And at that time -- there were very few
neighborhood councils as well. So the West Wilshire
group took what they could do, what they could work
with and what they thought was a good solid
foundation, and I think reasonably so in taking
bylaws of the Brentwood neighborhood council, and
then kind of formed -- you know, customizing them to
our neighborhood because there were similarities.

Now, our bylaws have gone through
tremendous metamorphoses since we filed our
application. And I think -- with all due respect to
DONE, I think that DONE has gone through a lot of
revisions in its philosophies in what neighborhood
councils bylaws should be in the course of the time
that we've been involved in going through this
revision process.

And one example I can give you is, we sat
down with staff at a meeting to discuss our bylaws
and they gave us some suggestions of provisions that
they wanted included in our bylaws. And we didn't
object to that and we included them in our bylaws, and in a subsequent request for revision they asked us why we had put certain of those provisions in.

And -- and I'm not saying this in a critical way. I'm just saying that I think that there's still a lot of thought going into, you know, what the city attorney expects and what DONE expects the bylaws to be.

So we've gone through a lot of changes. We have not altered our philosophic beliefs in our bylaws, but we've certainly been willing and, you know, happy to amend the bylaws to encompass things that -- that meet with DONE's requirements.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: I'd say like to talk to you about your meetings. When was the last general meeting you had of the whole council area?

DIANA PLOTKIN: You have the dates?

(inaudible)

DIANA PLOTKIN: We had a meeting with Councilman Tom La Bonge open to the public, noticed in the newspaper two weeks ago. That was the last time we had.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: But this was a special meeting for (inaudible)?

DIANA PLOTKIN: No, all of our meetings are open to the public and --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: No, I understand that. But --

DIANA PLOTKIN: And we try to notice them in the newspapers.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: But this was a special meeting to meet with the council person?

DIANA PLOTKIN: No, we wanted him to come to our neighborhood council to get his ideas on neighborhood councils and talk to us about issues that we were discussing in -- at the -- in the --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: How did you do your outreach for -- and was -- okay. What I'm -- the information that I'm getting is that since October where you had the election, the various geographical areas, you have not had a general meeting in which all of them have -- all of the neighborhood council has been invited, have been participated and the outreach is done.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Well, that's not --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: I'm interested in two things: About how long ago and how active the neighborhood council has been throughout the whole boundary area and, secondly -- I think about the other one. Just go ahead with that one. I'm interested in that.
DIANA PLOTKIN: Our last meeting was two weeks ago. It was with Tom La Bonge. It was open to everyone. It was noticed to everyone in the community. And that was a general meeting, if you would like to call it a general meeting.

When we do outreach and we notice through the newspapers, we feel that people who are interested will be coming to us. That was the last meeting that we had that was a general meeting.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Okay. And since that general meeting since last October --

DIANA PLOTKIN: No.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: (Inaudible).

DIANA PLOTKIN: Up until now?

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Uh-huh, up until that meeting that you're talking about with Councilman La Bonge.

DIANA PLOTKIN: We have monthly meetings. They're all noticed in the newspapers. They're open to the public. They're on whatever issue we're going to be discussing and certification.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Are these monthly meetings a general meeting of the whole neighborhood council --

DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: -- or the geographic ones?

DIANA PLOTKIN: No, no, they're --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: And are they held in a public location?

DIANA PLOTKIN: They are held at Farmer's Market in their community room there. It's a public location. Anyone can attend and they're always in the newspapers, you know, public service announcements in the newspapers.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: My understanding, I think from a question that was asked before by commissioners, that you've relied on the existing -- correct me if I'm wrong, but this is my understanding. You relied on the existing residents or homeowners associations to reach out to the various geographical areas to inform them. And if I remember correctly, you said that there have been maybe some areas that may have not been reached because they lay outside the boundaries that -- of the particular association that was working in that area.

DIANA PLOTKIN: No, that's -- no.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Okay.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Our boundaries are not based on the association boundaries. Our geographic boundaries are based on an area where there is a residential or community organization that encompasses a complete boundary.

It's not their boundaries. It's a
geographic area that was drawn, which does not necessarily mean it's the boundaries of that particular organization.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: How do you -- how have you ensured, if there's geographical outreach, that everybody in that community in that area has been reached and that they do receive the information?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Because our fliers go to everyone door to door. Our newspapers, when we advertise in the newspapers, they go to every resident and every business in that area. We have a website that we reach out to people that people know to look on the website. Those are the ways that we have reached out to everyone, forget about the -- about the boundaries of an organization, but the geographical boundaries that we have drawn from the boundaries that we are representing.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: So you did go door to door in --

DIANA PLOTKIN: Oh, yes. We have walking man and different people who have block captains who walk blocks and distribute. I mean, you know, we have telephone committees for people who -- that we call that have participated in the past to remind them. I mean, we use a combination of everything.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: And you have had those at these monthly general meetings that you say that you've had since October?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: That you have had monthly general meetings in which there's been outreach to the total area of the council so that --

DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: -- they would basically know?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes.

JOAN CURTIN: Council -- Commissioner Duran, I would just add to -- just to correct some phraseology that you used. We don't rely on our neighborhood associations as our outreach. We utilize the benefit of their networks, but we don't reply on them as our sole means of outreach.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Did you also have places where you posted things on a regular basis?

You're supposed to, according to the application, have places where you post it regularly.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Well, we have our website certainly and we use the benefit of the Farmer's Market and certainly the library on -- is it Garden?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Diana, I'm unclear on one point. You said you had 55 percent residential or geographic-based representation versus 45 percent --
11 DIANA PLOTKIN: Uh-huh.
12 COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: -- non. In my
13 count, that's about 15 of the -- of the designated
14 representatives of the 27 who are geographically
15 based, and that would leave 12 of them who are --
16 who are not. That doesn't quite get to 55/45.
17 DIANA PLOTKIN: Well, we have three members at
18 large. Did you count those as well?
19 COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yeah.
20 DIANA PLOTKIN: Okay. Well, I don't know what
21 the calculations are.
22 COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
23 DIANA PLOTKIN: That's basically what we have.
24 I mean, it could be 56, but I'm not sure.
25 COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Commissioner
0072
01 Membre.
02 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Can I just -- on those,
03 the records of those meetings that you said that you
04 had between now and October, were they submitted as
05 part of your application or are they on record with
06 the -- with the Department?
07 DIANA PLOTKIN: No. The --
08 JOAN CURTIN: Nothing's been submitted since we
09 filed our application.
10 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And you filed your
11 application, I believe, in December?
12 JOAN CURTIN: I believe that would be November,
13 if I'm not mistaken.
14 DIANA PLOTKIN: Yes, November 21st.
15 COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
16 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: One question on the
17 selected individuals. You spoke very clearly about
18 the selection, or the folks who are actually holding
19 those elected positions at this time.
20 Since elections have to happen if you --
21 if your neighborhood council gets certified, how do
22 you see that being affected? Since you have these
23 great people who have been endorsed and who have
24 been -- obviously people wanted to be in those
25 positions, how do you see the elections affecting
0073
01 those positions, the elected positions?
02 DIANA PLOTKIN: Are you talking about people
03 who like are now on our board --
04 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: For example, that --
05 DIANA PLOTKIN: -- who like represent, say,
06 Carthay Circle or something like that?
07 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Actually there were a
08 couple of folks who were -- who were named as the
09 union appointee and the religious appointee.
10 DIANA PLOTKIN: Sure. And --
11 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: So how would -- how
12 would that after -- if your neighborhood council
13 gets --
14 DIANA PLOTKIN: If we get certified --
15 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: -- certified, and then
you've elections?

DIANA PLOTKIN: -- then what will happen?

Well -- well, certainly we would ask, you know, our representatives to go back and be ratified again by their constituency and we would want some documentation that they were. And that -- that ratification process is documented in our bylaws.

Is that what -- I'm not sure if that's what you're asking.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Yeah, that's what I'm asking.

DIANA PLOTKIN: We would certainly -- we would not just go forward without that ratification.

We've certainly received a lot of communications from DONE which have sort of stifled us from going forward because, you know, just certain things say don't elect officers, do elect officers, and we have find of been stymieing as to how to go forward.

But clearly if -- if we're certified, we're going to, you know, ratify any -- anybody that we've now put in a board position.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Right. But you have a combination of elected and selected --

DIANA PLOTKIN: That is correct.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: -- for your board.

DIANA PLOTKIN: Just as Barbara mentioned, we have three tiers --

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Right.

DIANA PLOTKIN: -- of election/selection process.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Right.

DIANA PLOTKIN: We would start from square one and go back through that with respect to filling all our board seats once certified.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: So the person who's holding the union seat right now --

DIANA PLOTKIN: May not hold it.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: -- potentially may not hold it again?


COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: All right. And the second question that I have is, if you do not rely on the homeowner associations to do the outreach for you, what other sources of -- what other sources do you rely on to get your outreach on the different zones?

DIANA PLOTKIN: Well, it's not -- it's not really -- I don't -- I really don't like the word "rely." What we do is we utilize the benefit of existing organizations who have been working in their neighborhoods and communities for years and years who know people who walk the streets, who see people at Starbucks and talk to them about the next coming meeting, you know, people who get together frequently.
That's a tremendously valuable network and we utilize that but we don't -- are not limiting ourselves to that. Other than that I would say we use public media, public media such as the internet, newspapers, you know, fliers, you know -- you know, the typical media processes that you would use if you're reaching out to the general public.

There are -- you know, we have the local newspapers, the Beverly Press and Hollywood Independent that we use for our publication notice of all our meetings.

COMMISSIONER Membreno: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER Christopher: Okay. All right. Diana, one last question before we go to the other side.

There in the -- in looking at the special interest groups that are represented in your neighborhood council, the youth are not named as a separate group nor are the seniors. What provisions are -- are there in your council to reach those two groups of stakeholders and to include them in the council (inaudible)?

DIANA Plotkin: First of all, senior representation is no problem on our board. Okay? It doesn't matter what geographic area you go to, senior representation is no problem on our board.

COMMISSIONER Christopher: Okay.

DIANA Plotkin: That's number one.

As far as the youth is concerned, we hope in the geographic area that we will elect people who are participant with youth organizations. But we don't have a special category for that.

JOAN Curtin: With the exception of the fact that we do have an education representative on our board and the thought very much there was to get him involved, he or she involved in bringing in the youth and students and --

COMMISSIONER Christopher: Okay.

DIANA Plotkin: -- people who are -- you know, he would have -- he or she would have contact with.

COMMISSIONER Christopher: Okay. All right.

Thank you.

Now what we're going to do is switch gears slightly and ask Romero to come back to the microphone and talk about the staff report for the Mid City West neighborhood council.

ROMERO: The Department received an application from the Mid City West community council and, at the same time, received a competing application from the West Wilshire community council.

The plan requires that there be a definition of boundaries, a rationale, and that there be at least 20,000.

COMMISSIONER Christopher: Romero, I'm going to stop you on one -- the question on boundaries which
Mr. Hahn raised earlier, what -- is there a boundary concern on one or the other of the groups we're dealing with?

DIANA PLOTKIN: The finding was that both groups had met the requirements of the boundary with the exception of the overlap.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes. Okay.

ROMERO: The plan does not allow for two neighborhood councils to claim the same area, and that is what generated the notice to both neighborhood councils to enter into mediation.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

ROMERO: Okay? The -- the definition of boundaries for both were the same, so you've -- you -- basically this applicant gave us a map, gave us a rationale, and has included and met the population requirement.

In looking at the applicant's outreach, the -- they submitted a profile of the community. That profile showed good knowledge of the -- of the community, and so they met that requirement. The key elements of the demographics was repeated before. We have 54,619. We have predominantly whites, 71 percent. We have within the lower income group 15,000 to 24,000 in income, 24 percent of the population, and the predominant age group is age 30 to 49.

The -- there was outreach that was conducted. The outreach program began in August of 2000. The council -- the proposed council set out for itself they wanted to outreach, their outreach to be inclusive, and they wanted all their meetings to be public and they wanted to gather their signatures within an eight-month -- 18-month period. in order to inform the community they used -- there were 26 general public meetings. There were 60 one-on-one presentations. There was mailing, regional -- use of regional media as well as door to door, e-mail, phone banks. They have a website. There were 4500 fliers that were distributed.

There was public posting of their meetings, and there was central -- there was signature gathering at central locations in the community.

They indicate that their meeting attendance varied from 22 to 196. They were able to collect 354 signatures. The signature collection vehicle allowed for them to capture other information.

There was 63 percent of the signatures said simply that they were in support of the Mid City West neighborhood council, community council, and 35 percent of those who signed on the signatures
indicated that they wished to be kept informed by
e-mail or newsletter.

The -- we went briefly over the --
their efforts to continue to outreach was they would
be using pretty much the same techniques. They also
indicated that they had engaged a stakeholder from
the Korean community who would be helping them with
their Korean outreach. They would be using a
regular newsletter to continue to inform.

They have continued their monthly meetings
since submitting their application in December of
2001 and they have sent their meeting notices by way
of e-mail and by -- through mass mailings. So in
terms of meeting the outreach requirement, the
applicant did meet the outreach.

The staff report indicates that the staff
is -- felt that there was a broader, more inclusive
outreach associated with this group, and we were
recommending approval on that basis.

The organizational structure, they have
proposed essentially a 50-person board, that 40 of
the members would come from specific categories.
And those categories included homeowners, renters,
medium- to large-sized business, small business,
non-profit organization, government, education,
religious, civic association, media, arts, medical,
environment, urban planning, cultural and ethnic
groups, lifestyle groups, seniors, youth, disabled,
and labor.

In addition to these special groups there
would be five members elected at large and five
representatives from geographic regions in the -- in
the boundaries. And the governing structure
included nine issue -- standing committees focused
on issues.

In -- in structuring their election
procedures, due to the controversy and having two
competing organizations for the bounded area, the
group did indicate that they would agree to a
neutral party conducting their elections.

In looking at the bylaws, we found that
the applicant had met the requirements of the plan
and it was the Department's position that their
bylaws represented a more open, inclusive
structure.

In looking at financial accountability, a
copy of the -- their accounting procedures was
submitted and it complied with the requirements.

On their public notice log they did submit
five posting locations. Each of the locations
targeted specific regions within the area, and there
were two locations that target the Jewish community
and one location target seniors and one youth. All
of the locations were in the bounded area. So the
Department finds that they met the requirement.
In looking at the positions in the bylaws, there is a position for a treasurer, and so they have complied with the requirement. They did provide a contact roster, and that, too, is in compliance with requirements.


COMMISSIONER STONE: Romero, something that jumps out at me on the staff report and on the structure, and I obviously would like to hear a little bit more from the applicant when they make a presentation, the board would have 50 members. Last week in Echo Park, I forget which one, one of the applicants --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The Echo Elysian.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Echo Elysian proposed a 50-member board, and I don't want to speak for my other fellow commissioners, but I know I had some concerns about a board that large. I believe some of the other ones that were present had concerns as well.

Given those concerns -- and I think those concerns stemmed from the fact that if they're having general public meetings with attendance as low as 22, that sometimes it could be difficult, or many times it could be difficult to get a quorum at a meeting like that.

Do you have confidence that they would be able to successfully deliver a quorum at each of their meetings, or do you believe that that number is too high and should be changed?

ROMERO: In the mediation sessions, that was an issue that came up between the two groups because the size of the respective governing bodies are different. The Mid City West presentation was that they felt they could do this.

COMMISSIONER STONE: And what does staff believe?

ROMERO: Staff supports it.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I'm sorry?

ROMERO: Staff is in support.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I understand, Romero, that from our analysis of groups that we've dealt with in the past, the largest board we've certified to date is 31 in Westchester.

Is that correct?

ROMERO: I believe so.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: And jumping to 50 doesn't cause staff any concern at this point?

ROMERO: Not at this point because I believe that the intent of the ordinance and the plan was to allow for experimentation in neighborhood councils and we have a credible application with bylaws and a structure and we have a group that has been meeting monthly for a considerable period of time, and so I
believe it can happen.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any other questions?

All right. Then let's have the Mid City West neighborhood council. Mr. Draper.

KEN DRAPER: Commissioners, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, city attorney's office, welcome to our Mid City West neighborhood. I'm Ken Draper. I'm a member of the Mid City West community council board. I'm an original member of the development committee for Mid City West.

Two years ago almost to the month, a small group of stakeholders, a Russian immigrant, a working mother of two, an artist, a long-time renter, and myself, met in a small artist's studio just a few blocks from here and discussed the formation of a neighborhood council to represent the Mid City West community.

What brought us together was the promise and the potential of the new Charter and mandated neighborhood council system. And what kept us together was the determination to see that the council that represented this community was open and inclusive and empowering to all stakeholders, including the voiceless, the disenfranchised, and the ordinary like us.

What made the formation of this council a success was the incredible response from literally hundreds of community leaders, business leaders, homeowners, renters, and caring ordinary folks who make up this community and have a passion for creating a community voice that involved, reflected, and represented all of the people. We believe the Mid City West community council is that voice.

STEVEN MAC DONALD: Good evening, Commissioners, city attorney, and members of the audience. My name is Steve Mac Donald. I'm a homeowner. I live a few blocks west of here. I'm also an employee of the city of Los Angeles.

Tonight we're going to be talking about several issues. One is our extensive outreach efforts. We're going to be talking about our board structure, our election, and our bylaws that we've established. We're going to be talking about our accomplishments to date. We're going to be talking about the diversity that exists in our council, and we're going to talk about the choices between the two groups here before you tonight.

Our outreach efforts began in August 2000. It's been more than a year and a half now that we've been undertaking an extensive outreach campaign. We started with a study of the census and demographics of the area. We met with community leaders. We developed -- we formed a development committee. We gathered over 350 signatures and we
held over 25 public meetings. All of this occurred before we held our first election. We held our election on October 2001 at CBS studios. Since that time we've had seven public board meetings, all of which have held a quorum. And in fact, each meeting has had an increased attendance since our first one.

The 50 number on our board has not been a problem. In fact, we find it is a strength of our board.

We have printed and distributed over 40,000 fliers. I think there was a mention of 4500. We have printed and distributed over 45,000 fliers. We have created, printed, and distributed two newsletters each with a circulation of 12,000.

We have created a phone, fax, and e-mail communication network which we are constantly updating and adding names to and improving. We have contacted a local print media and we have created a website which is under constant improvement as well.

Our future outreach plans play off what we've done to date and add new Elements. We're looking forward to creating a multilingual newsletter, both English -- all three: Korean, Spanish, and English.

We are going to be continuing to expand and improve our website with links to city agencies and links to other important information that people in the community need to be aware of. We're going to be initiating a phone hotline where people can leave messages if they don't have internet access.

We're going to be creating an office with office hours for people to come in and talk with one of our folks who will be there during certain office hours, and we're going to be continuing to expand our communication network which I mentioned.

Our board structure was created to reflect the community diversity. We have 50 board members, five of which are officers, 26 categories of interest, things like homeowners, renters, small business, non-profit agencies.

We looked at this community to see what was here first before we created our bylaws and our board structure so that we could reflect the community. We have five geographic regions. And our structure fosters new, fresh community participation.

Our bylaws ensure against domination by any single group or individual. Our bylaws ensure that stakeholders have direct access. Our bylaws ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to participate.

Our postcertification election will be held with third-party oversight. We will hold the
election within 90 days of certification. It will be 100 percent open to all stakeholders, and we will publicize the nominations and the election extensively.

Our accomplishments to date: We have engaged new, fresh participation. We've heard it time and time again for the people that are coming increasingly to our meetings that they've been in the area for a while, they've never been involved in the community, and now they are because we're reaching out to people. Many of these people have tried to get involved in the past and haven't felt welcome.

We have held seven public board meetings, all with quorums. We have had many guest speakers, including all the council people that represent our area. We've had Councilman La Bonge, Councilman Holden, Councilman Weiss. We've had the city attorneys, neighborhood protection plan, DOT, Building and Safety's code enforcement unit, and a number of other speakers have been to our meetings.

We've had our newsletters, our website, our fliers, our phone, fax, and e-mail communication network, and we are now underway in organizing a major traffic symposium which we'll be having in June of this year.

We've talked about the extensive outreach we've done. Our board structure was thoughtful and fair. Our bylaws and election are thoughtful and fair and represent the area. We have been a proven success to date. Everything we have done so far is consistent with the neighborhood council's intent as mandated by the City Charter.

SABRINA SIMMONS: Hi. My name is Sabrina Simmons. I'm a theater and television director, not a politician.

As you have seen and heard, the Mid City West community council --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Please speak into the microphone. Thank you.

SABRINA SIMMONS: As you have seen -- do you need me to start from the beginning?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: It's okay.

SABRINA SIMMONS: Okay. As you have seen and heard, the Mid City West community council is comprised of a widely diverse group of individuals. I am a Mid City West stakeholder and serve on the provisional board as an at large representative. I do not have a history of belonging to homeowners associations or community interest groups. But I am extremely interested in maintaining and improving the quality of life in the Mid City area.

This group reached out to include me in the process and showed that city government does
work. I originally came to this group with an issue regarding nuisance air traffic over my home. While this issue has yet to be fully resolved, I must commend the members of the Mid City West community council for their exemplary work to have councilman Tom La Bonge, Deputy Chief David Kalish, and Councilman Nate Holden, to name a few, attend our monthly meetings so that we could address our concerns to them directly.

Please note that these were not closed board-only meetings but open meetings. Any Mid City West stakeholder was welcome to attend and present their concern.

The Mid City West community council is the best avenue for learning to work with city government and having a forum in which to air important quality of life issues.

Thank you.

SIGMOND WAYS: Mr. President, Commissioners, my name is Sigmond Ways. I am an immigrant from the former Soviet Union. As a former refugee from a totalitarian state, I have developed a profound appreciation for democracy in any of its manifestations. I can emphatically testify that the creation of the Mid City West council was a truly democratic undertaking.

From the very beginning the founders of the council made every effort to be inclusive, to reach out to different interest groups in the area, including the Russian immigrant community which has a large percentage of seniors and low income (inaudible) immigrants.

As an immigrant, I was glad to make acquaintance with the members of the council who also are immigrants from such diverse countries as Ethiopia, Mexico, and Korea. All of us are actively participating in the council and our contributing to its success.

As a manifestation of a true democratic approach, the council founders rejected the model which was based upon the dominance of the existing groups. Instead, they fully implemented the intent of the Los Angeles voters and the city council by giving a voice to all segments of the community.

Now we have a system of true community involvement in place, and the system works. As somebody who lives and works in the area, I feel privileged to serve as a member of the Mid City West council and I strongly urge the commission to approve its application.

Thank you.

NICHOLE BURNSON: Good evening, Commissioners, city attorney, DONE staffers, and neighbors. My name is Nichole Burnson and I am a 11-year resident of the Mid City West community, a renter and a small
business owner. I am one of six people in this community that serves on the provisional boards of both competing councils. And, therefore, I'm uniquely qualified to provide the following contrast:

I was elected to the Mid City board as renters representative in a public election by the community to serve and be accountable to the entire community. By way of contrast, my residential association chose me to be one of their two representatives on the West Wilshire council, voted on by 13 nonelected and dues-paying board members. My appointment was ratified at a public meeting, though no one was given the opportunity --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: No. Harold, sit --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: No, Harold, sit down.

NICHOLE BURNSON: Though no one --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You stopped me from making (inaudible).
NICHOLE BURNSON: Though no one was given --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: All right. I understand. All right.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I agree.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Harold, please.

Nichole --
NICHOLE BURNSON: Though no one was given the opportunity --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Nichole, because I did restrict Harold from making the same type of remarks relative to the other group, I'd like you --
NICHOLE BURNSON: I ask for a bit of license because I serve on both boards and was witness to both (inaudible).
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I understand, but you are participating now in their presentation. So I'd like you to focus your remarks on the Mid City neighborhood council.

NICHOLE BURNSON: Okay. I'll reserve my comments for the public comment period then.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
JIM O'SULLIVAN: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Jim O'Sullivan. I'm a member of the board in Mid City West community council. I'm also the president of the Miracle Mile residential association, which is how I got involved in this process.

No one that I know of wanted this process to end up in a right-and-wrong issue. One group got it right, the other -- whatever. No one wanted
that. Staff did not want that. They tried their best to work it out. I know the negotiator didn't want that.

But we have tried on several occasions to reach out to the other group and we will continue to do so after we are certified. We've tried to -- to bring this together, this group together.

What we're asking you to do is to make a definitive decision tonight because, as you can see, we have a divided community here. This community must be allowed to go forward, to heal. I went to the -- I only have one question, and -- and -- and -- and it has nothing to do with the rights or the wrongs.

But I had a question of the -- because I'm the president of the association, I asked some questions. My question to the other group was, what do I do with my neighbor down the street who wants nothing to do with the Miracle Mile residential association? And there's a lot of neighbors like that, I hate to say. They're angry, they've been upset. Whether it's a personality issue, zoning issues, it doesn't matter. The fact is, you can build the neighborhood councils and they won't come not as long as the Miracle Mile or any other group is a gatekeeper.

So what do we do with them? Do we -- you know, I mean, every group has its supporters and it has its detractors. What do we do with the detractors? Do we say to them, "Tough luck. Go away"? Do we say to them, "We know you're being disenfranchised, but we know better. We've been at this for a long, long, long time and we know how to do this." I don't think so. I don't think that's what the Charter set out to do.

I'm getting a little emotional. I'm sorry.

So I think what we have to do, what I'm asking you to do tonight is to find a way for this community to go forward. This -- I think the neighborhood councils, what they're trying to do, demands the best of us. I think the people of the city of Los Angeles expect our best. And I think that we're all trying to give it. And I think that if we do, that we can go a long way in helping heal a lot of the wounds of this city and a lot of perceptions that government doesn't work.

I'm asking to you accept staff's recommendation and to ratify the Mid City West community council.

Thank you.

KEN DRAPER: We're prepared, we're qualified, we believe we have the -- we've proven our leadership, that we understand the spirit of the Charter and that the system works. We have a plan
for the future and we are this community's council. We're here tonight asking you to approve our application and to certify the Mid City West community council. Any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Questioning for the applicant?

Commissioner Luchente.

All right. Again, I'd like to ask you to hold the applause.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Yes. It was stated that -- it was stated that there's been no difficulty reaching the 50 member quorum at these meetings, but is that quorum as outlined in the bylaws --

KEN DRAPER: Yes, it is.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: -- in terms of all those representative groups?

KEN DRAPER: That's right.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Ken, (inaudible).

KEN DRAPER: In addition to the -- in addition to meeting a quorum at each of those meetings, those meeting also -- you'll also find from 15 to 30, 35 members of the public in attendance. So we've had -- first of all, those meeting are public, they're -- they're not only not (inaudible).

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: So that's a simple majority? Is that how you define a quorum?

KEN DRAPER: That's right, yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The question I was going to ask you is of the -- of the members of board -- of your provisional board, how many typically have been attending your board meetings since the October election?

KEN DRAPER: 33, 35.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: How many are here today?

KEN DRAPER: I'm sorry?

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And how many are here today?

KEN DRAPER: How many members of the board are here in this room?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner --

KEN DRAPER: I might add one other. I know that's a question for you, but we didn't start out on a bigger is better principle to build a board. We really started out wanting to make sure that we could guarantee that the interests of this community were reflected on the board. And if you -- if you consider the cat -- mandatory categories on our board and if you also
24 presume the constituencies of each those categories
25 is not equal, for example, in education versus
0100
01 homeowners or versus business, so if you start with
02 the smallest group possible, you do your outreach
03 and you figure out what the interests of the
04 community are, and then you proportion the number of
05 representatives that ought to be on that board to
06 represent the size of constituency, we arrived at
07 50.
08 So we didn't start the other way, saying
09 how big can we make this and then fit a lot of
10 things into it. We started the other way. What are
11 the -- what are the interests and needs of the
12 community, how can we guarantee and not leave it up
13 to chance that -- that the minorities are
14 (inaudible).
15 COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I'm going to
16 restrict the speech making and go back to the
17 questions we're trying to ask.
18 So Commissioner Membreno.
19 COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Yes. We talked about
20 last week's Echo Park experience in terms of the
21 number of board members, and one of the things that
22 we discussed was the -- not so much the number but
23 the structure as to how they were put together.
24 And I think that maybe in this case it's
25 -- and if you guys have a clearer picture of how the
0101
01 board on the Echo Park -- Echo Elysian was, I don't
02 think it was as structured as this. We can't really
03 compare the two in terms of the 50 members -- for
04 those of us who were there, the 50 members who were
05 being allocated, if you will, into different places
06 than is here.
07 And by ordinance -- and the city attorney
08 will be really proud of me that I can cite a section
09 of the ordinance, which is the section 2-BC-1 which,
10 you know, obviously it reads and it doesn't say
11 anything about the number -- there's no limit as to
12 board members that can happen in any one of the
13 board -- governing boards.
14 So with that in mind, I think we need to
15 look at the structure. And in talking about the
16 structure of your board, one of the questions that I
17 had is the -- by the numbers that the Department has
18 given us, 79 percent of residents in this area are
19 renters and 21 percent are owners. I believe that's
20 -- those are the numbers. Or 27 percent, 21 or so.
21 But yet on your allocation of slots, you have the
22 same number for both homeowners and renters.
23 Can you talk a little bit about why that
24 was -- decision made in such a way?
25 KEN DRAPER: Yes. It's because when -- at the
0102
01 time we were -- at the time we created the
02 categories, we really had estimated renters at
somewhere around 60 percent and -- and was -- it continued outreach and the -- and the final statistics from DONE that had the figure even higher.

So (a), it's conceivable that that needs to be adjusted in the future and (b), because of the at large categories and the geographical representation, renters in addition to the renter category will be represented on the board as well.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. And in terms of the businesses, you have small businesses as being specific seats, four of them for small businesses. And these are from the bylaws given to us as dated received was 4/15.

KEN DRAPER: Yes, that's right.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: So I think they are the most recent. But yet you have other groups such as media and medical and environmental. Are those more advocacy groups or are those also business groups that you're giving a seat to?

KEN DRAPER: No, we didn't think of them as business groups. We thought of medical in terms of service element of medical.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay.

KEN DRAPER: And also in terms of the -- of the issues related to medical and not -- as with seniors -- in fact, all of those categories were interest-related categories and weren't designed to -- as a matter of fact, when we think of business we think of it as interest-related and not how many businesses can we get on the -- on the board.

There are 3,000-some businesses in this community and 50,000 employees, and so 79 -- 79 percent of the people are renters, those people have a right to be represented and need to be represented directly on the council.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. The last question that I have is, in your bylaws you talk about the initial postcertification election and you speak about within 30 days of the formation, the election committee should prepare information materials.

What type of materials were -- were you envisioning, the -- is that like a slate or --

KEN DRAPER: No. I envision preparing nomination announcements, opening the nominations, explaining how the process works, explaining how people can participate in the process. And that --

that's what I'm talking about.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. Thank you.

KEN DRAPER: Sure.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: First, just in response to Commissioner Membreno, I agree that there does appear to be some difference between -- when I
mentioned the 50 board members from Echo Park, Echo
Elysian, it was before seeing the -- both hearing
Mr. Mac Donald's comments and seeing the support out
here tonight.

So also remember in Echo Elysian the -- I
think there were about three or four board --
(End of tape B, side B)

COMMISSIONER STONE: My question to the
applicant, the staff reported and I believe your
presentation mentioned more inclusive outreach for
your group versus the other group.

Could you lay out some examples of --
specific examples of outreach that you believe were
more inclusive?

KEN DRAPER: I'm really not sure -- I'm going
to answer your question. I'm not sure where we said
it was more -- that our outreach more inclusive, but
in any case --

COMMISSIONER STONE: I think that was more in
the DONE staff presentation.

KEN DRAPER: They -- yes. The -- I believe --
a great deal of the development of Mid City West
came out of public meetings, and those meetings were
fliered and announced and continue to grow.
The people who were ultimately were
nominated and -- and elected in public election grew
out of those public meetings. And those meetings --
the size of those meetings range from 25 to 75.
Election time was 180-some. And that's how that
process grew.

And as you sat around that table you saw
all ages and all colors and all ethnicities and all
religions responding to those fliers and attending
those public meetings and becoming assimilated in
the process.

COMMISSIONER STONE: And then kind of a
follow-up question, could you describe for us your
group's outreach to the residential associations
that make up the other group?

KEN DRAPER: Sure. In the first place, there
are -- we -- we also went to -- to all kinds of
members of the establishment, including homeowners
and residential associations. As you just heard,

the president of the Miracle Mile resident
association is on the board. And so is the
president of the Rancho La Brea homeowners
association.

We have -- as a matter of fact, we have
representatives from the Beverly Wilshire homeowners
association on our board. If -- if you -- if you
look at the packets that I left for you and you look
at the -- the outreach, the responses to the
newsletter, for example, that you see in those
packets, you see people coming from other
associations, responding to that newsletter with
those coupons from other associations and other
areas in the city.
So we went to established organizations
and associations also, including homeowners
associations and renters associations. The Miracle
Mile action committee is a renters organization, for
example. They -- a member of that group is a part
of the -- of the board. So we reached out to those
establishments.
Well, we don't -- we're not contending
that -- that people with experience or the people
who have served this community over years don't
belong in a neighborhood council. We're simply
arguing that the establishment doesn't have a right
to dominate the council or that to simply transfer
the establishment onto a neighborhood council that
belongs to all of us. I should have a direct line
to my neighborhood council. I shouldn't have to go
through anybody.
If I were a business and I had just -- I
just finished a hearing with a homeowners
association contending some issue, I might not feel
very comfortable about going through that homeowners
association to have to vote or run.
So we reached out to those -- to
associations that are in existence today.

COMMISSIONER STONE: And then in your
presentation, you express, if certified, that
outreach would continue.

KEN DRAPER: It is -- not only will it continue
but -- but it has continued since the election in
October. The -- the coupons that you see and
e-mails that you see in those packets that you have
in front of you all examples of outreach and
response that's occurred since the election.
And -- and, also, you'll see in there
mentions of issues that the -- that this provisional
council has dealt with, the plan at the moment for
the traffic summit, those -- those -- this has been
an operating council.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner
Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: I specifically like the
fact that you're going to have a hotline that allows
people to communicate with you, and that's -- I
think that's unique to your group. I don't think
we've had that input from any of the other councils,
I don't remember. But I congratulate you on that --
KEN DRAPER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: -- issue and on your
outreach.
KEN DRAPER: Thank you. We're going to try
one other thing that I think is -- is helpful, too.
The -- and we're calling them communications
coupons, but I'm not talking about coupons where you
fill out your name and return it. I'm talking about a coupon where, you know, for the working mom with
the two kids and who doesn't have time to get to meetings, there's an opportunity through what -- the
coupon will be released in media and in the newsletters, and you'll have a opportunity to simply fill out that coupon and express your concerns and
your needs.

Also, there will be open office hours where people can actually come in person and communicate with this -- with this council.

So we believe very much -- in fact, it says somewhere in our application that we don't believe there's anything more important than success
of a council than communication, two-way communication.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Membreno.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I have one final question on the -- or a question on the signatures.

Of the 354 signatures, do you have any idea how many were businesses that turned in information -- or signed the signature, I guess, petition or information poll?

KEN DRAPER: No, I don't know the answer to that. But I can tell you how we got them.

And the petitions were signed at locations like the Farmer's Market and Beverly Center and -- and so on, CBS and so on. And we went into the neighborhood and did one-on-one signature gathering.

So I'm not suggesting that there weren't some people directly from business who signed those, but if you're asking me in relation to businesses, I don't know the answer to that.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Luchente.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: On -- on that note, is -- on your signature, the map that plots where the signatures, there's a large area where there are only three or four signatures, so it seems like the -- while you -- you had those signatures gathered at those public places, it seems to be centered into specific -- heavily centered into specific areas of the community.

KEN DRAPER: Now, I'm aware of that. And the -- and I can't -- I can't tell you exactly why that's the case.

If -- if you're -- if Beverly Center, for example, is adjacent to the area you're talking about, and -- and so why those signatures wouldn't have -- from the things that we've submitted so far, wouldn't have included more in that area, I'm not sure.
But I -- but I believe, again, if you look at those signatures that are coming in from the coupons that you have in front of you, you'll see that we're -- we're -- we're getting into the area that you're talking about.

I mean, we recognized going in that with an area with an estimated population of 65,000, that it was going to take a while to get to everybody. And funding and other things do limit you in the ability to reach everybody.

We also know that one -- one effort at outreach doesn't -- I mean, you folks have been working for two years now to get people -- make people aware of neighborhood councils. We know from our own experience there are people who not only haven't heard of any council yet but they haven't heard of neighborhood councils. That takes a while. So we have --

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Well, the reason I mention is that you're make -- you're basically, you know, resting your application on outreach.

KEN DRAPER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: But it doesn't seem to be outreach to the entire community.

KEN DRAPER: Well, again, I think if you'll look at the coupons, you'll find some -- that those signatures are beginning to fill in that -- that area, the ones that you have in your packet.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Mr. Draper, I have one follow-up question. The -- one of my concerns is the -- the design of the board in that you have eight slots which are designated for homeowners or renters. You have then 32 slots which are what I would term individual interest or special interest groups, and then you have 10 at large positions as far as I understand the breakdown.

Of the 32 special interest groups, do you have any idea as to how many of those slots are filled by nonresidents?

KEN DRAPER: No, but I can hazard a guess for you and it would be pretty close. Of the nonresident categories there, my guess is that maybe three, four, five of those would be people who are -- actually, I'm thinking of the whole board because there are -- there are -- it's conceivable that one of the business representatives doesn't live here but he's represented (inaudible).

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: That's what I'm -- what I'm asking is that of the 32 positions which are either not at large or not homeowner renter based, which include your business groups, your non-profits, education, everyone else, how many of those are filled by nonresident?

KEN DRAPER: I don't know the answer to that.
But my — my belief is that it does not — it wouldn't be half, it wouldn't be 75 percent; it would be less than that. I don't know the — I don't know specifically.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Given the fact that -- I should ask again, the -- the break on the board between resident, either homeowner or tenant and other interests seems to weight the board in favor of those other interests, so people would be represented on the board for the purpose of voicing the concerns of their -- their interest as opposed to general resident concerns of the neighborhood.

And can you give me some additional rationales to why that -- or why -- why that is this way and --

KEN DRAPER: You think, for example -- just so I understand the question -- that disabled or seniors has to do with -- does not have to do with the --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I'm not -- I'm not posturing it that way. I'm asking how the board, from your perspective, will function that way, and how you arrived at the split to say that there would be eight essentially resident positions, eight business positions, large and small, and then another 24 interest positions, I'll call them.

KEN DRAPER: Because we wanted to make sure that the -- that the interests in this community, that the disabled and the seniors and the people who are listed there, got guaranteed representation, that it wasn't left up to chance and that -- and we did not do it because we thought these were issue groups. We did it because we thought they were groups of interest.

And if you go out and do research here you come up with something like the group that you see represented in those bylaws.

And so this is not -- this is not committee work, you know, things of interest that belong in committees. We're talking about -- about interests and needs in this community that need to be represented.

And we didn't want to leave it up to chance that that happened. We don't want to make sure that minorities are represented by chance on the board. We wanted to mandate that it had to be -- they had to be represented.

And -- and that's the reason of -- if you -- if you sit down and say what are the interests and needs in this community and if it turned out to be six, then there would be have six categories. As it turned out, it was the number that we came up with as a result of outreach.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any other questions? Seeing none at the moment, then let's
move to the next phase of our -- of our evening.

The next part is public testimony, and we're -- we will allow public comment, based on the speaker cards that I have in front of me, on a two-minute basis per speaker. And we'll begin with the people who are in -- marked their cards in favor of the West Wilshire community council. Once we're finished with those cards we'll move to the people who are in favor of the Mid City West community council, neighborhood council.

So I'm going to call three names, and I'd like each of you to come to the -- to the microphone. And we'll begin with Harry Sasson, Kathleen Winslow and Philip Freidman.

Now, I will give my usual admonition. Anyone this evening who is either throwing insults or furniture will be sent to the principal's office for detention. But we would please ask you to maintain the decorum, and we'll try to move through the evening as quickly as we can.

So let's start with -- again, with Kathleen Wins -- wait. And Harry Sasson and Philip Freidman.

Okay. Harry Sasson. Okay. We have Harry.

HARRY SASSON: Hello. My name is Harry Sasson, and I'm on the board of the West Wilshire community council. I've listened to most of the testimony and I find there's a little -- a few discrepancies. They said that there was 25 meetings, Mid City West had 25 meetings. I was only aware of the last two monthly meetings and the election.

We -- our area is comprised of approximately 65 percent of residential homeowners, residents, renters, and Park La Brea tenants, and that's how we came up with our -- our board of 55 percent, 55 percent of residential and 45 percent businesses and other social, hospitals, schools, businesses, et cetera.

I think that in democratic things, like congress has its committees, well, our neighborhood is the residential associations where they'll come up with issues and bring it with -- and the representatives, bring it to the West Wilshire community council to vote on or act on.

So we've got actually a two-pronged situation. Our neighborhood associations work for their individual communities and will bring their problems to the West Wilshire community council.

So we're -- we're working for the betterment -- the benefit of the community and -- and that's our philosophy.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Kathleen Winslow, Philip Freidman, and
Susan Stetson, or Sasson.

KATHLEEN WINSLOW: Good evening. My name is Kathleen Winslow. I'm director of community service for AFTRA, and I'm representing the union section.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Could you speak up a little?

KATHLEEN WINSLOW: Yes. I would like to support Diana Plotkin's concern that we postpone a decision tonight. I've heard wonderful things on both sides, but I think that the group needs to consider more things rather than accept the staff's recommendation tonight. I think there are discrepancies on one side. I would like to hear more and have a more mediated response.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

PHILIP FREIDMAN: Committee members and my neighbors, my name is Philip Freidman. I am a resident of the area, a homeowner. I work in the area. I'm a member of the religious community in the area. So I belong to several of the special interest groups as well as being an at large member to the West Wilshire community council.

Our philosophy is consistent with the government of the United States. It's a representative philosophy. Rather than trying to hold a general election on every issue, we have asked the community to select a workable number of representatives that they trust to come together to discuss the issues and to represent them.

We -- we have public meetings that are open to the public to bring their concerns to us. They can bring them to us through any other number of other means including through a website.

We feel that 27 members is -- considering that this is a volunteer organization and considering the difficulties in getting people together evenings or weekends or whenever --

whenever you can, we felt that that was a workable size group.

We also chose not to Vulcanize the community into every single special -- possible special interest group. We wanted to bring the community together, not pull it apart. Most of us belong to more than one special interest group and, therefore, I have no trouble in seeing us representing a variety of special interests equally and with the same fervor.

However, I also want to say that I am deeply gratified to see that there are so many people who want to represent my community and I feel comfortable in knowing that whatever the committee decides, we will be well represented.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Susan Sasson, Laurel Sevanas, and Arturo Martinez.

SUSAN SASSON: My name is Susan Sasson. I am a homeowner in this area. I work in this area. I shop in this area. I do everything within a five-mile radius in this area.

In case I run out of time, I think what you should do as the board is have both of these groups go back, put their heads together -- they both have good points and they both have misrepresentations from what I've heard -- and mandate that they both come up a bylaw, a governing process, an election process that satisfies you as a board, put them together, put the good and the bad from both, put them together and come up with one neighborhood council.

I also want to state that I have only received one -- and I'm not saying it was not sent out -- one notification from the Mid City group. I haven't seen seven. And I've only known of them for about a year. So I'm a bit -- I'm a bit ambiguous about who they really are and who they really represent.

And as I said, I think what you should do as a board is have them go back, put their heads together, come up with a good council that will represent all of us.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Laurel Sevanas, Arturo Martinez, and Hilda Goldsmith.

ARTURO MARTINEZ: Good evening. Thank you very much. Buenos noches.

I'm also an immigrant. My roots go back it Cuba. I also left a totalitarian regime. I embrace American system of life, of democracy and its freedom. Maybe the greatest sin that I committed for what I overhear is having given up of my time, volunteering, carrying for a community and fighting for it and fighting for that freedom.

I stand here before you as a person of the Miracle neighborhood association and as the president of the Miracle association mentioned, we have sometime have difficulties in getting people involved. I think it's more due to apathy than personality. A lot of people lack the interest because they have never missed the freedom that we enjoy and, not having that taken away from you, they don't really have that necessity to get involved.

I believe that the (inaudible) a stakeholder of a community is those who live in it. And I believe that the format of the West Wilshire community council represents that and on a strong
basis without taking away from the transient stakeholders representation.
If you look at the bylaws, if you look at everything that has been worked for during these two years of formation, jointly with the staff of DONE, we have done everything that is possible to try to accommodate the mandates and the designs of the staff and the Department of Empowerment.

We feel that by empowering us, the members of the West Wilshire community council, we will be able to represent this community in a very effective way.
The (inaudible) neighborhood association represents the corridor between Melrose and Willowby and Fairfax to La Brea. There was no outreach from the Mid City council to our area, and if there was any, it was nil. We distribute 3,000 newsletters all the time around that area. We communicate with some of our neighborhood as well as with the businesses.

And Mr. Ken Draper, who used to write the newsletter for us, knows me personally. He never tried to contact me or in any way tried to get me involved in any of the mediation or negotiation with his association or with his council.

I hereby would like to have all of you, the commissioners, to take all of these comments into consideration when you make your final decision and make sure that you weigh, in fairness, everything that happens (inaudible).

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Hilda Goldsmith, Sam Frank, and Carol Villa Senior.

HILDA GOLDSMITH: I'm Hilda Goldsmith, and I live at 852 North Detroit Street, which is at the very far northeast part of this neighborhood council -- proposed neighborhood council. I have never gotten any information from the Mid -- whatever that is, the other -- the rival organization.

I just want to tell -- say one thing. You guys over there on the board, you're going to go through this whole -- this, this, and then you're going to be gone. But we're going to have to live with whatever your decision is.
We have had a long experience with all the problems and all the good things about our neighborhood. We believe in the neighborhood council because we know that if we get -- all get together and we do things and we ask our government to do things for us, we're going to get something done.

We find that it's very difficult to be single and alone, and we feel that this particular kind of an organization where we get a number of neighborhood organizations together to represent the
whole area is going to be effective.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
Sam Frank, Carol Villa Senior, and Joel Post.

SAM FRANK: My -- my name is Sam Frank. I've been a resident of this area since 1960. I'm a World War II infantry combat veteran. And so I know something about being involved both politically, actively, and in many other areas in life.
I've been involved in the synagogue in the area, the largest, I've been involved in the day school establishment in 1960, I've been involved in veterans affairs.
I say to you the West Wilshire community council has the following: It has experience, it has history, and it has accountable representation.
I would not like to see people who don't live in the area, whether they be residents or whether they be homeowners, have an opportunity to represent me. I can't vote in another councilmatic district.

There's no reason why people who work in this area should vote for me, because their jobs change. People leave; they don't have the same vested interest that I have or my neighbors have.

I would strongly urge you to take into consideration those points that I just made. It is very important for people to feel they are being represented by people who are their neighbors, not visitors.
Thank you very much for your consideration.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
Again, I'd ask you all to please contain the applause.

Carol Villa Senior, Joel Post.

CAROL VILLA SENIOR: I move my (inaudible).

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. We're going to allow Mr. Hahn to speak anyway so, Carol, if you want to speak.
CAROL VILLA SENIOR: (Inaudible).

I'm a bit new to this process, but I found in listening to both these sides a bit of a conflict if -- first of all, I've never received anything from -- from Mid -- Mid -- Mid West? I'm sorry. Mid -- Mid City. Never received -- I've lived in the same house for 25 years. So I've never received any.
But what I found sitting here tonight was a conflict for the regular resident here of even knowing that these two were in conflict, so that if you did get a flier and you went to a meeting, you may have very well thought that that was the only association or the only council that was going to be available, so you would listen and maybe get
involved and not even aware that there was this conflict going on.
So I don't even know if that came up at these council meetings, but I feel it was an issue that needed to be addressed.

ROMERO: And state your name again.
CAROL VILLA SENIOR: Carol Villa Senior.
ROMERO: Thank you.
JOEL POST: Hi. Good evening. My name is Joel Post, and I'm a renter. But I've lived in this community for 30 years and I think I have a -- a good sense of what's going on.
I'm concerned because I received not a single notice from Mid Wilshire about any meetings or activities. The only time I heard anything was from friends who happened to mention it, that they heard something.
I heard about all this massive outreach, but I don't see it. And if it does exist, I'm wondering who's paid for it. Because after all, nobody has a budget. I know that they said they sent out 12,000 newsletters. Well, I know that -- I know that West Wilshire sent out 25,000 and paid for it by the neighborhood associations, from their own pockets.
Another point is, I'm an educator.
Because I was asked to represent educational interests on the board of West Wilshire, I contacted principals at the schools in the community and I talked to them on an ongoing and regular basis to make sure that they started to know me and that I could get a feeling for their school and their -- and their particular needs.
Only one of the principals over the course of the last nearly year that I have been in contact with them has indicated that they were at all knowledgeable or informed about what was going on from Mid City West. Only one of them had received any information.
And I think it's -- I think it's just really, really important for neighborhoods to have a sense of neighborhood.
I've been involved with a lot of boards.
I've never seen a board of 50 function, not without creating layers and layers of bureaucracy within itself. It just doesn't happen. A few people end up dominating by virtue of the fact that they are loud speakers.
And I'll stop now.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
Louise Wexler, Doris Lee, and Tonya Shaffer.
LOUISE WEXLER: I'm one of the elected members
of the West Wilshire community council. I have lived in Carthay Circle for more than 50 years so I sort of know this area. And I'm unable to understand why we have to have one neighborhood council. What -- where is it written that we can't have two? I don't understand it.

And also, the Mid Wilshire say they reach out to everyone. I can tell you that my president of my homeowners association spoke to me because I'm a past president and he said he'd seen something about it in one of the papers and he wondered what it was all about.

Also, in the beginning they had cut Carthay Circle in half. They didn't even know our area. They had it go from Wilshire to San Vicente. Well, we go all the way to Olympic. So you know they don't even know what they are doing. Now, on the new map, I see they have included the whole circle.

So I have no confidence in this group. And I feel that we should -- both sides have their own group. I have attended many Charter, before, meetings and I went to many, many, many DONE meetings. I recognize some of the members of the commission, spoken to many of them, and I don't feel that you are doing the right thing at this time.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Tonya Shaffer.

I'm sorry. Doris Lee first.

DORIS LEE: Hi. I'm Doris Lee. At the time I'm retired, but I've been a resident and homeowner here for 50 years and active in the community. I worked for 26 years at a local bank and, after I retired, I got another job at another local business for another 10 years. At the present I am just very active with community groups.

I'm also a co-block captain of our association and very well knowledgeable of all of the people in our association and the neighborhood. We are a good -- a good, cohesive group.

I have never received a notice, flier, or any type of communication from Mid Cities. I attend the Farmer's Market for shopping and lunch weekly. I've never seen anything posted there. So I'm not even aware that there's another agency like that.

Now, this may have been gone over before, but of the 50 board members, I'd like to know -- the gentleman didn't have the exact figure on businesses -- what participants are resident owners or transient owners or businessmen.

As a resident, I believe residents have more at stake in this neighborhood, encompassing neighborhood, because we are permanent and we're not transient residents -- renters rather, and we're not just businesses. So I see the group of the West --
the Wilshire -- Wilshire -- Wilshire -- the Wilshire
group that spoke first as really and truly
representative of all the neighborhoods and the
desire to make it a better neighborhood and the need
for working with the city as we -- you know, as
we're proposing.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Tanya Shaffer.

Mr. Curtin, it's -- let's just stipulate
we don't need to play parliamentary games of that
nature tonight. We're -- if you want to speak,
we'll let you speak.

DAN CURTIN: I'm sorry I didn't preregister.

My name is Dan Curtin. I live at 166 South Hayward,
which is about two blocks from here, and I'm also
the president of one of the condo associations in
the area. I'm also president of one of the condo
associations, representing my building. There's
about 12 residents.

The only thing I wanted to say is I've
been involved in community activities but just
starting to get involved in Los Angeles. But I was
previously involved in the Chicago area for many
areas and especially in the concept of regional
health planning. Some of you may have been exposed
to that.

It had large matrix boards similar to the
Mid City group. And we never had
quorums. Half the time they couldn't even fill a
lot of the various special interest seats because it
was just so difficult to find people that were
willing to put the time in. That's my biggest

concern about the Mid City application as opposed to
West Wilshire application.

I also am on that board so I'm -- I want
to make it clear I am (inaudible) a member of that
board.

But that's -- was the main thing I wanted
to get across. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Is there anyone else who would like to

speak in favor of the West Wilshire -- Ms. Hupa.

SHIRLEY FUQUA: Thank you very much for hearing
me because I didn't put in a speaker's card. My
name Shirley Fuqua, and I worked with the League of
Women Voters on this Charter education project and
went from one end of the city to the other talking
about and educating people on what neighborhood
councils were about.

I felt -- I heard a lot, I saw the
existing neighborhood councils, and read many models
of neighborhood councils throughout the United
States. It's my belief that a council built on
transient people is not going to work totally when
the majority is transient.

We have to be inclusive of everybody. We
have to be cognizant of our neighbors that may or
may not even be in our neighborhood council area,
but we absolutely have to include everyone.

If you're going to be in and out of an
area because your business fails or changes
locations or whatever, you're not going to be a good
representative.

We've been -- all of us, all of the people
in the West Wilshire community council have been
fighting issues and standing up for issues and for
our neighbors and for businesses as well as -- as
residents in the areas. And I think that it's
incumbent upon you to take into consideration that
we're going to be there for the duration, not just a
short-term kind of thing.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Mr. Hahn.

HAROLD HAHN: Mr. President, members of the
commission, thank you for letting me speak as the
last speaker.

First of all, I would like to congratulate
the -- the Mid City group for a very professional,
very well presented, and very slick presentation,
which is precisely the point I want to make.

Because looking at the application for
this group, for the Mid Wilshire -- Mid City group,
we find that about approximately 70 percent of the
signatures are from business owners. Approximately
30 percent are an "other" category. And of that
"other" category, about one-quarter live along the
Wilshire corridor.

When we look at the map as to where these
signatures were gathered, they were gathered along
the Wilshire corridor and the Miracle Mile area. In
other words, this is a very narrowly defined group,
whereas the West Wilshire has an outreach over the
entire general area. There was no outreach, even
with the 45,000 fliers that were mentioned, into an
area which went north and further south of Wilshire
Boulevard.

And that brings me to another question.
We are not funded. 45,000 fliers, we're going to
have an office that's going to be staffed. No money
is coming from the city. Where is this money coming
from? Who is financing this? This further
underlines that here are groups that have a special
interest that are elitist, if you will, as far as
funding is concerned.

We cannot do this. We are basically
residents. We grow organically out of the
community. We are volunteers. We are there because
we are interested in this issue or that issue. And we come together really on a voluntary basis. When we go -- when we do outreach, our outreach is foot power. We walk the streets. We ring doorbells. We go to our neighbors. I think that that needs to be taken into consideration.

I would like to further renew my request from the West Wilshire organization that you do not reach a decision this evening but allow for some further discussion with staff to maybe come to some sort of conclusion as to the bylaws that were in question and give us a further opportunity to perhaps compromise some of the potential conflicts that staff sees.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. All right. Now we're going to switch over to people who have marked in support of the Mid City West neighborhood council, starting with Allen Burcutt and Rosalee Wayne and Ronnie Goodkin.

RANDI O'SULLIVAN: Good evening. My name is Randi O'Sullivan. I am representing Mr. Allen S. Burcutt. He's not able to be with us this evening. So if I may, I'd just like to read from a prepared statement of his little letter to Whom It May Concern.

"Due to circumstances, I am unable to attend personally. I would, however, appreciate your consideration. I have been a part of the neighborhood since 1946. I attended Hancock Park Elementary School, John Burrows Junior High School, and Fairfax High School. I live in the neighborhood currently and my office is here. Simply put, my life is in this area.

"I have been working with the Mid City West community council and believe that they, as a group, will be the most appropriate of the two groups which have applied. The basic philosophy that they support is most in keeping with my own.

"Mid City West appears to be more open in attitude and structure, which would allow for all segments of the community to be represented to whatever extent they would want to be involved."

I thank you very much for your time.


ROSALEE WAYNE: My name is Rosalee Wayne. I have lived on Orange Street near Sweetzer and La Jolla for approximately 17 years and in other
I'm here tonight to ask you to certify the Mid City West community council to represent this neighborhood for the following reasons: In 1989 I became a community activist. I did this because there was a booming economy that had caused all kinds of quality of life issues for this neighborhood.

Along with Mindy Lake, I got support from neighbors by collecting 650 signatures and formed a residents group comprised of renters and owners known as the Orange La Jolla Sixth Street residents coalition.

For the next few years we attempted to deal with issues that impacted our area such as traffic, crime, homelessness, and overzealous real estate development on Fairfax and Wilshire Boulevards. We tried to get the city to enforce various conditions that had been placed on businesses that abutted these residences.

We worked with the Beverly Wilshire homeowners association which claimed us within their boundary but found that they were not interested in addressing problems in our part of the neighborhood. We ceased working with them when their president stated to us, "To hell with Orange Street," which is the street where I and many, many other renters, mostly renters, live.

We were issued the ultimatum that we could continue with work with them or work with our councilman, Xavier Zevlowski. We were already aware that the Beverly Wilshire homeowners association had a very hostile and adversarial relationship with our councilman, who we believed was willing and in a position to help us. And I think you know that the council office, until now, is the way to resolve these community problems and that’s why we now have community councils, because we’re trying to empower areas to not just rely on the council office.

For the next few years our coalition worked on solving neighborhood problems. We worked with Councilman Feuer's office in an attempt to solve problems related to two 99 Cent Only stores, okay, and basically found that the Beverly Wilshire homeowners association had written a letter supporting the store against the local -- the neighbors.

Anyway, so I don't -- I don't mean to rehash these past grievances. I'm here to ask you to support -- to endorse the Mid City West group because they are inclusive, they will invite -- they will represent everyone, they will include the other group in the organization but no one will be left out. And we really all need to be represented at
this time to move forward in solving our problems.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Ronnie Goodkin, Mindy Lake, and Don Batches.

RONNIE GOODKIN: Yes, my name is Ronnie Goodkin, and I'm president of the Rancho La Brea neighborhood association.

I'd first like to say it's very serendipitous that we are meeting at a school that the Los Angeles Times characterized as the most diverse grammar school in the city of Los Angeles. Over 50 nationalities are represented at this school.

And I think that the Mid City group that I'm a board member of really reflects that. And I think your choice tonight is really very clear. It really doesn't matter who's sitting on their board and what their certifications are or our people because we're going to have another election. They can run for our board; we can run for their board.

I think what you need to look at is, what do you want this council to be made up of? Do you want it to be run by neighborhood associations, of which I'm the president of one, or do you want it to reflect the entire community and the entire diversity of this entire community?

Now, I have to say that I've worked with a lot of people on the other side of the aisle and I have a lot of respect for them. They work very hard for their community, very selflessly.

But I also recognize the same thing from our group. And I don't think there's a problem with 50 board members. I mean, I've been to all but one of the meetings and there's always a large member -- large percentage of the members at those meetings, and I think that those people are just as selfless and just as giving as the people on the other side of the aisle.

The only difference is, is that when I'm at our meeting, I really see a lot of views represented. And I'm under the opinion right now, or at least I thought, that these councils are supposed to be made up of not just people who live but people who work and people who have a real stake in this neighborhood, and Mid City really has that. And I hope you vote our way.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Mindy Lake, Don Batches, and Laurel Querry.

MINDY LAKE: Good evening. My name is Mindy Lake, and I am a vested community stakeholder. We lived on Blackburn Avenue when I was born. My parents owned and operated the first children's shoe store on Fairfax Avenue directly across the street from in school and then later relocated to Third
Street.
I attended this elementary school, Hancock Park, and graduated from Fairfax High School in 1972. After buying my duplex on Sixth Street in 1985, I started the first neighborhood watch program for Sixth Street, served for five years on the Wilshire CPAB as a charter member, two of which I served as the civilian co-chair under Captain Mutz, co-founded the Orange La Jolla Sixth Street residents coalition with Rosalee, who spoke earlier, to deal with major development issue on Wilshire Boulevard, and I also co-founded the Wilshire to Third Cop residents association created to develop relationships within the community and work with city officials and surrounding businesses to truly enhance the sense of community on our streets. I also acted as the executive director of the Beverly Fairfax community patrol west for seven years, which was a volunteer community patrol who served as the eyes and ears for the LAPD.

In other words, my heart and energies have been devoted to this neighborhood for nearly my entire life. I even got my first car loan from Gilmore Bank when I was 17 years old. I love it here, I raised my children here, and I've seen the community change, diversify and grow. Not all the changes have been for the better. But we live in the middle of a thriving city and would be foolish to think that change would not happen here.

That is why I chose to work toward certification of the Mid City West community council. I believe that our philosophy embodies the true spirit of a neighborhood that is accepting of others and willing to work through the issues that impact us.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Donald Batches, Laurel Querry, and Rochelle Ventura.

DONALD BATCHES: Good evening. My name is Donald Batches. I am chief of operations at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and we have a stake in this community council district. We've been there for 35 years and, as many of you know, we're planning to build another museum and we don't plan to move.

I'm here tonight to ask your support of the Mid City West Wilshire council, the ratification of this, because we have found that for two reasons they have, in our opinion, exemplified a sense of inclusion based on the diversity of their board and the -- the complexity of the way -- the organizational structure and, secondly, because of the professional system in which the group has been
organized and managed.

We've had the pleasure of hosting several
of the last council meetings at our museum. It's
our pleasure to do so and we will hope to continue
to do that in future. I might add every week -- or
every month, excuse me, as we provide the space for
these meetings, the attendance grows; we have to add
10 or 15 more seats every week. So there's a clear
strength in numbers, and it continues to make us
proud to be a host to this group.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Laurel Querry, Rochelle Ventura, and David Gershen -- Gershwin.

LAUREL QUERRY: Good evening, I'm Laurel Querry. I'm the general manager at Beverly Center
and a member of the Mid City West community council board.

Is that better?
I am very impressed with the people that I
have met through this community council. I -- every
time I attend one of our board meetings and I sit
there and see not only the members of the board but
the people from the community that come in and join
these meetings and speak freely at them, but I am so
impressed with the positive attitude in the room,
the way people react to one another, they listen to
each other, they seem to embrace the differences
within the community and truly welcome the fact that
there are differences and those differences are also
our strengths.

I feel very strongly about supporting and
moving forward with the certification of Mid City
West community council.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Rochelle Ventura, David Gershwin, and Tony Callan.

ROCHELLE VENTURA: Good evening. I'm Rochelle Ventura, and my family -- I think I'm the oldest
resident in the room -- moved into this area one
block from here in 1944, 58 years ago. I, too,
attended Hancock Park School, Fairfax High School,
and so did my kids, my son and my daughter, 25 years
later. I've also spent the majority of my life
working in public service. I worked for the County
of Los Angeles for 25 years providing services to
disabled adults, children in foster homes, people
with alcohol and drug program, and I've lobbied the
state and federal government for millions of dollars
for services for this area.

I worked for Councilman Mike Feuer as his
chief field deputy during his entire six years in
office, and he represented this area, the majority
of this area.
In our office we handled about 50 calls a day on all kinds of issues: Trash, barking dogs, special events, new developments, paramedic services, and I worked with Susan Berst to set up the South Robertson neighborhood council and visited the neighborhood council director in Portland, Oregon.

Based on my long-term residency in this area and my experience with the constituent groups, I'm here this evening to strongly recommend that you certify the Mid City West neighborhood council. I've reviewed carefully the applications submitted by both groups, and I believe the Mid City West neighborhood council is the most dedicated and best qualified to address the wide range of issues facing my community. It's also a very, very exciting group, and I'm thrilled that they're in the neighborhood.

I've had lots of personal contacts with their board members while I was working for the city. They would come to the council office not just with a problem but with some suggested solutions. With their help we changed the parking restrictions on Sixth Street, added a crosswalk at Fairfax High School, new stop signs were installed, cleanup days were held. It was a constructive relationship.

As commissioners, you're going to have extensive contacts with your neighborhood councils. The members of the Mid City West neighborhood council are committed to working with you in a respectful and productive partnership, and I request that you certify them tonight.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

David Gershwin, Tony Callan, and Jeffrey Fisk.

DAVID GERSHWIN: Good evening, Mr. President, commissioners, city staff and members of the public. My name is David Gershwin, a resident of the Miracle Mile, a Los Angeles City employee, and a elected member of the Mid City West community council board.

My father graduated from Fairfax High School and my grandmother once worked for the old May Company at Wilshire and Fairfax. This neighborhood is my home. And this neighborhood has plenty of landmarks that we can be proud of. We have Farmer's Market, art deco apartment buildings, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, historic preservation overlay zones, Spanish Colonial homes, numerous synagogues, coffee houses, El Coyote, and on the La Brea border, Pink's Hot Dogs. And I think Pink's will even be open after this meeting is
adjourned, later this evening.

I have extensive experience on various non-profit governing boards, and these boards often have varying degrees of conflict and difficulty in their operation. The Mid City West board, on the other hand, as a synergy and spirit of cooperativeness that I believe bodes incredibly well for the future of area businesses, residents, and community organizations.

Based on the Mid City West community council's diversity and its cross-section of community stakeholders, we have a collective pride in our neighborhood that is truly second to none.

I urge you commissioners this evening to adopt the DONE staff recommendation and certify the Mid City West community council.

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Tony Callan, Jeffrey Fisk, and Sasha Swartzcoff.

TONY CALLAN: Hello. Excuse me. I'm not a public speaker, but my name is Tony Callan. I've lived in the neighborhood since 19 -- well, 1948 I moved to Los Angeles. I've been in the Miracle Mile for 34 years now. I'm member of the Miracle Mile residential association. But I'm also on the board of the Mid City West neighborhood association.

Now, I don't see a conflict between neighborhood associations and this council concept. The council covers the whole area. Neighborhood associations cover small areas. After all this is over, neighborhood associations will still be together and they will still be able to work out local issues.

Now, somebody mentioned a slick presentation of this group over here. Slick, professional, competent. I'm not a professional. I haven't been professional since I retired after 32 years at Hughes Aircraft Company. I don't even have a suit that fits me now, and I appreciate you guys being here because I'd rather be watching the Stanley Cup right now. I'd like to know if the Kings won tonight.

I think this concept, this council, this group here, is diverse. And when you mentioned 32 distinct groups or distinct categories, I hold one of those positions as a senior representative over here. I'm also a homeowner. And I think many of those other 32 also live in the area but they wear more than one hat. And I think that's very important.

I think it's important that we as a group get together and solve the area's problems. And there are quite a few. I've attended every meeting of this group, and the attendance has grown every
time, and neighborhood problems are being brought to the group. And instead of just one neighborhood group being concerned about a small section of street, other people concerned with the next section and the next section, the council can work together.

Anyway, I think the Mid City West is a great group. I'm proud to be a member. And after the elections I may not be, but I'm willing to take that risk. I suggest and I wish you'd vote for our group, the Mid City West.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Jeffrey Fisk, Sasha Swartzcoff, and James O'Sullivan.

JEFFREY FISK: Good evening. My name is Jeffrey Fisk. I live in Carthay Circle. I teach at Fairfax High School, and I'm on -- a member of the Mid City West council.

I urge you to vote for us. I believe we are all inclusive. And I believe that we hold the community's interest at our best heart.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Sasha Swartzcoff, James O'Sullivan, and Debbie Epstein.

SASHA SWARTZCOFF: Good evening. My name is Sasha Swartzcoff. I'm a renter in this community as well as a 10-year resident. I'm also a co-chair with the urban design committee of the Los Angeles Chapter of American Institute of Architects. This is through this by which I was introduced to the -- to DONE as well as the idea of the neighborhood empowerment.

In the very beginning I had participated in both sides and I had gone to both their meetings and I had to make a decision to myself which side would I continue with. I had chosen Mid City West because for me it had presented a stronger as well as healthier platform for what I think community involvement and representation.

And by this, I think so far my involvement with them and the way it's been growing has been a very positive thing and I see a lot of great things coming out of that.

So with that, I pledge my support to Mid City West. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

James O'Sullivan, Debbie Epstein, and Judy Machato.

JAMES O'SULLIVAN: James O'Sullivan. I put in my card first because I wasn't sure if we were going to get cut off on our presentation because --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: You don't have to speak a second time.
JAMES O'SULLIVAN: I know. I just want to say --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: It's not required.
JAMES O'SULLIVAN: I am begging you, do not put this off. And I've heard people say let us go back again. We've met, we've sent letters, we've tried. We need to have healing in this community. We need to move forward.
I guarantee you that we -- if you certified us tonight, we will not stop. We will continue to reach out to the other group. Quite frankly, in the mediation session I met some people that I really want to work with, got some nice people. We have to make a choice here.
I look forward if -- you know, if you do certify us, at our election running against Kathleen -- with Kathleen. I mean, if she's a union member and she's a member of AFTRA, there's no reason why I as a member of Screen Actors Guild, AFTRA, and Equity, and a long member of steam fitters union 602 can't run as the -- as the union rep.
I think we look forward to a time, quite frankly, when there may be five people running for union rep. I think we'll be successful if we get to that point where we -- where I could be voted out.
I think that's pretty much all I have to say but, please, please, we've all done our work here. I beg of you, do yours, make a decision.
Thank you.
JUDY MACHATO: Good evening. My name is Judy Machato. I am originally from Curacas, Venezuela. I am a renter and a small business owner. For the past 16 years I have lived in the Miracle Mile area.
When one of the community member approached me to become a part of the Mid City West, I decided that it will be a good opportunity that will allow me to use my interest to better the neighborhood and community I live in.
I remember before I joined this group I did not know where to go or who to ask for help and support with different ideas I had. Since joining, I have come to believe that our community group is a strong representative of the community itself. Members are from all walks of life and position, from renters to homeowners to business owners.
Based on what I have experienced over the past few months since joining, together I feel we can provide our neighborhood with the support and a system that's needed to foster a positive sense of community. I hope you give us the opportunity.
Thank you very much for your time.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
I draw two clear distinctions between the applications that you have before you. One is on the diversity and the inclusiveness that I believe that the Mid City West application brings to you in their broad representation of the community and that it speaks to the -- not only the diversity but also to the broad stakeholders throughout the community which are not just homeowners, but a broad, broad range of folks that need to have a voice and need to be able to be heard in this community.

The other distinction that I would like to bring to your attention is the bylaws themselves. I think you really need to look deep into the bylaws. Though both of these groups and the folks that are representing them at this day are all fine folks in the community and have the best interests of the community in their heart, the bylaws are going to be the long-term guiding light for both of these groups.

And I think that the bylaws that are represented in the Mid City Wilshire speak to a broader diversification, clear lines of representation, and a much smoother well thought out election process of representation.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Debra Hobson, Irving Levovicks, and Michelle Rose.

DEBRA HOBSON: Hello. My name is Debra Hobson, and I didn't really plan a talk so I'll just say a few things.

First of all, somehow every time I heard that word "boundary" I start itching. That's been a long talk for us, I think for both groups. Anyway, it really isn't about boundary. And from what I hear from the West Wilshire group, sounds like you guys have done a lot of detailed work, just as Mid City West.

And it really isn't really about throwing darts at each other and saying who has done and who hasn't, but it's for the community. And my thinking is that if your group wins, I'm going to come over and work with you. It doesn't matter. Because we're for the community. We all live there.

I've been in the area for 30 years. I'm a member of the Bahai faith for about 30 years, so it's right in my line of work anyway. I'm obligated to
24 -- to work with the community.
25            So it all looks good. I'm really happy
0157
01 that this has come to the city of Los Angeles. The
02 community is changing and it does need a council and
03 it needs positive minds. It needs all of our
04 assistance and our work in the community, and it
05 doesn't matter which group.
06            Thank you very much.
07       COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Irving
08 Levovicks, Michelle Rose, and Hyam Fossman.
10 And I'm going to make this short because I was
11 taking notes throughout the whole -- you don't want
12 to hear that. But I do want to hit on a couple of a
13 few points.
14            One of them is, Commissioner Stone, I
15 would have said the same thing you said: How can 50
16 people come together and even have a conversation?
17 But it -- it happens because I -- I go to the
18 community meeting.
19            I'm a resident in the area for over 30
20 years. I went to Fairfax school. I live here, I
21 shop here, I drop here. This is it. And so for me
22 it's really important to have civic representation.
23            And I only knew about the Mid City West
24 group because I got a -- a flier in my mailbox and,
25 hey, I'm interested in what's going on so I went
0158
01 down there and I -- I saw that -- that group
02 functioning.
03            But I'm jumping ahead of myself. I went
04 to the first group's -- the West Wilshire group's
05 election at the CBS studios. And I actually took
06 Barbara Martinoff, who was the lady who got up and
07 spoke on their behalf.
08            And I don't think that I have ever seen a
09 such a zoo of an election in my life. And you'd
10 have to be an immigrant who had lived under fascism
11 to really appreciate how badly that was run. I
12 mean, to me, they think it was great but I thought
13 that the elections were scary.
14            And I -- I'm not a part of any of these
15 groups. I'm not a board member of any of these
16 group. I'm just a resident and a concerned citizen.
17 And I talked to a lot of the people on my block, all
18 the seniors because a lot of them have language
19 barriers and things and I help them figure out how
20 to vote, where to vote, and all of the civic stuff.
21            So I started to attend the Mid -- the Mid
22 City group's meetings. They actually had meetings,
23 and I went and I took some of my community -- my
24 neighbors with me.
25            So they're an up-and-running group.
0159
01 They're happening. They are functioning. They are
02 producing results. They're addressing problems that
actually are for everybody.

I don't see how we can have a bunch of bickering. I think that one thing that is important that I need to say is that this is a group of 50 people of peacemakers. I have never seen such a cooperative effort in my life of people working together with respect to differences of opinion, and I would feel very safe and very good if Mid City West represented me and my community; I could really rest with that.

So thank you very much, and I hope that you have the courage that it takes to vote for a council tonight so we can go forward in this community, and I hope it's Mid -- Mid City Wilshire.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

MICHELLE ROSE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I think we missed Irving Levovicks, then Hyam Fossman and Rodney Nardi.

IRVING LEVOVICKS: Thank you very much and thank you for the opportunity to address your group. My name Irving Levovicks, and I have worked as an advocate on behalf of the orthodox Jewish community in the Los Angeles area and the state of California for well over 20 years.

We have a very vibrant orthodox community within the boundaries of this community council. We have well over a thousand families, well over 30 institutions -- buildings of institutions within these borders.

We have been leery of the whole concept of neighborhood councils because in the past, in the old structures of homeowners associations, we have not done well. We haven't been represented as a community and often we have been at odds with the homeowners associations. We even looked into starting our own at one point.

The issues that we have as a community, we are stakeholders here; we're not going anywhere. We're invested in this community. We're a walking community. We're a community that's on the street.

It is important that we as stakeholders be recognized as stakeholders, and I think that the Mid Wilshire group has recognized us as such. They've welcomed us, we're been a part of their group, we get along well, we speak well with them, and it's been a wonderful experience.

At one point I was offered to be a part of the other group. I don't know from who exactly, but I had gotten some communication. And frankly, for our community to be represented as a religious seat together with all the other religions in the community is almost laughable.

All these groups need to be represented.
We all need to have a seat. We all need to have a say in what goes on in this community. We are all invested here. We are all stakeholders here.

And I would urge that you approve our community council. I'm a board member there. I've been really enjoying the sessions that I've attended. And I would urge that you would approve it as well.


HYAM FOSSMAN: My name is Hyam Fossman. I'm administrator of a graduate Talmudic institute which has an extensive program of study groups and classes for members of the community. I've been here 27 years living on Formosa and Third.

I want to make three points that I would like to stress. The first is I've always been tremendously impressed by the mover of the Mid West council, Mr. Ken Draper. His sincerity, his dedication, his honesty, his impartiality, and his dedication to make this truly -- all-inclusive isn't the only word -- to really make a genuine democratic organization in a different way. It's really a grassroots kind of a thing.

Let me create -- let me try to change a perception that I sort of sensed here as if all of the members of the council represent various vested interests. I don't think that a doctor on the board represents the medical association. He represents himself but he reflects the view of a doctor.

If there's a blue collar worker, he doesn't represent the unions; he's representing himself but he reflects the perspective of a blue collar worker. And if I'm there, I don't consider myself as a representative officially in any sense of the orthodox Jewish community; again, I represent myself but I give the perspective of many orthodox Jews in the community. That's point number one.

Point number 2 is I want to say is that what I sort of stressed is, it's the grassroots nature of all of this is what makes it so special.

And finally I want to say, as already has been stressed, I've attended most of the board meetings, and the spirit of cooperation is very, very noticeable. There's a wonderful spirit among the people that are there and that's what makes it so encouraging.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Rodney Nardi, Nichole Burnson, and Jo Prabu. Okay.

NICHOLE BURNSON: Good evening again, commissioners and DONE staffers, city attorney. My name again is Nichole Burnson. As I said before,
I'm an 11-year resident of the Mid City West community and a renter who takes issue with the characterization of renter as a transient resident. Many of us have been here for many, many years as renters. I'm also a small business owner and, as I mentioned, one of six people in the community that serves on the provisional boards of both competing councils. I was elected to the Mid City West board as a renter's representative in a public election by the community to serve and be accountable to the entire community.

By way of contrast, my residential association chose me to be one of their two representatives on the West Wilshire council, voted on by 13 nonelected and dues-paying members. My appointment was ratified at a public meeting, though no one was given the opportunity to nominate themselves for my position nor offer public comment for or against my election. West Wilshire further indicates in their application that our neighborhood association will be responsible for doing the outreach to select a zone representative in our area because, presumably, we have the mechanisms in place. My question is, what is our incentive to reach out beyond our own dues-paying membership?

Mid City West has four dedicated renters positions on their board in addition to four homeowners positions and geographical zone representation. Since renters make up 79 percent of the stakeholdership, this is only appropriate. There are no dedicated renters position on the West Wilshire board and yet there is a dedicated condo associated position in addition to the existing zone representation, making condo owners arguably the most prominently represented faction on their board.

Additionally, Mid City West has had seven public board meetings not only open to the public but publicized and well attended, all with the full quorum. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month on the fifth floor of Blackma West. Parking is free and meetings are handicapped accessible. There is always a guest speaker and ample time for public comment. West Wilshire has had no public meetings since their election in October, only sporadic board meetings at various times dealing with certification, not community issues.

Based on my experience with both groups, it is clear there is only one real choice. Mid City West community council, open to all, reflective of the community it represents, and accountable to the entire stakeholdership.
Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Jo Prabu and Ricki Evrutin.

JO PRABU: Hi. I'm Jo Prabu, and prior to 1989 I was one of those foreigners, and I settled in L.A. in 1989. And I've been here ever since. I live north of Melrose and south of Willowby.

And one of the reasons that I'm here as part of this group is because of an article that I saw in the Beverly Press with -- where Ken Draper was appealing for members of the community to come out and reach out to others. And that's why I'm here.

I represent a very dedicated group of professionals, namely notably Steve, Mindy Lake, Nichole Burnson, Jim O'Sullivan, and Ken Draper, Steve Mac Donald most notably.

One of the reasons I'm here is because I want to mention that part of this group is -- we have a larger and wider array of officers and representations, and the election selection process is more democratic. It's -- none of the members are appointed; they're all selected. They're more elected.

I'm very proud to be part of this group and I wish after this meeting that this group will be elected and I'll be a proud member of it.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Ricki Evrutin.

RICKI EVRUTIN: My name is Ricki Evrutin. I'm a member of the Mid City West regional council. I was born and raised and schooled in this area, Carthay Center Elementary School, John Burroughs Junior High, Fairfax High School, and now I find myself living in the very house I grew up in on the southern end of our boundaries of our area.

To say that this is a tough act to follow is an understatement. I don't think I can add anything to the eloquence of the speakers who have come before me except to say that having heard them, I am all the more proud to be in a position to participate with -- with such devoted and idealistic and hardworking individuals.

What has been said about these board meetings seems a bit hard to believe. I, like many of you and many of the people here tonight, have participated in various non-profit or other association -- associations. This group is the most professionally run. And I don't mean business, I mean intelligently run, civilized, respectful.

There are many opportunities for dissention, but everyone is heard and heard in a very respectful manner.

Even though we were not -- we have not
been certified, this board, this group, governing
that commitment to behave as though we are already
certified so that things are not dropped through the
cracks, so that we treat ourselves as -- as -- as
professionally and already -- and in business. And
it's just tremendous honor to work with these
individuals who come from all walks of life.
And that's all I have to say. Thank you
very much.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
Okay. Is there anyone else who wishes to
speak in favor of -- okay.
DANIEL DEGNAN: (Inaudible).
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Well, we have cards
for people who either have general comments yet, and
we haven't gotten to those.
DANIEL DEGNAN: (Inaudible) for general
comments, but anyway I'm here for the Mid City West
community council.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: And your name?
DANIEL DEGNAN: My name is Daniel Degnan. I'm
here for Denise Monroe Robb, who was not able to
attend.
I met Denise through -- through fliers
that she put out and tacked on doors around my
neighborhood to help drum up support for keeping the
"Q" condition in place, which a year ago somebody
brought a proposal to try to knock it off. "Q"
condition is basically is maintaining the beauty and
integrity of our neighborhood and historic quality
rather than allowing rampant overdevelopment.
And I'm here to read a speech that Denise
composed.
"Gentlepersons: As a renter who
has lived in the Miracle Mile since 1989
and as president of the Miracle Mile
action committee, a non-profit dedicated
to renters rights and the preservation of
architecturally and historically
significant area that Borders La Brea,
Houser, Wilshire and Third, I urge you to
certify the Mid City West community
council.
"I've been a activist working
for renters rights in this community for
13 years. During that time there has
generally been a chasm between homeowners
and renters interests. It's not that
homeowners are not interested in renters
rights or vice versa. However, the issues
affecting renters are often quite
different than homeowners, as you're
likely aware.
"We're concerned about many
issues facing this community including
rent control and the preservation of the
existing and affordable and historical
housing that defines the character of
Miracle Mile.

"We are also faced with parking
shortage, crime, traffic, overdevelopment,
and lack of parks and open space. Many
senior citizens have lost their homes
because landlords will renovate their
units and then charge triple the rent.

"Renters are politically
disenfranchised \for a myriad reasons,
including lack of resources and time,
unavailability of child care, and city
council meetings which are only held
during weekdays. The Mid City West
community council is an opportunity to
change all that.

"I first became interested in
this council because its main goals was
and still is inclusiveness. The competing
council, the West Wilshire community
council, did not make any attempt to meet
with my organization nor did it outreach
to other renters organizations. Unlike
the Mid City West community council, the
other council did not even reserve a place
on their board for renters.

"The majority of the residents
in the area purportedly represented by
Beverly Wilshire homes are renters, and
yet this organization is a homeowner
group. The exclusive nature of that
organization is evident from its name.
The alternative council has a seat for a
condominium residence but no seat for
apartment renters.

"The Mid City West community
council is extremely diverse and has
delineated categories for renters, senior
citizens, youth, non-profits, businesses,
alternative lifestyles, the stable
community, homeowners, religious groups,
and many other categories that have
traditionally been underrepresented in
Los Angeles.

"I ask that you endorse the Mid
City West community council because we
speak for the majority of the Miracle
Mile. It is for this reason that I
sincerely request that you certify the Mid
City West community council. The
ensure renters and many others will
finally have a voice.

"Sincerely, Denise Monroe Robb,
president of the Miracle Mile action
committee, renters representative of the
Mid City West community council."

And speaking for myself, I'd like to say
that I'm a renter living in that area for five
years. My neighbors have lived in my building from
anywhere from one to dozens of years. And whether
we come through as students and only stay for a year
or two or stay on for as long as we can, the issues
that affect the people that have just arrived or
people that have been there for years are
practically one in the same, and I believe that this
group is acting in their best interest.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
CHARLES CAPPLEMAN: My name is a Charles

Cappleman, and I'm a business representative and
member of the administrative council. I'm an
executive vice president of CBS operations and
engineering for the West Coast and I've worked at
Television City for over 48 years. About 1600
people work at Television City and we host over
200,000 people a year who are audience members who
come to our shows.

CBS has a vested interest in this
community. We want to see that the neighborhood is
clean, safe 24 hours a day, well lighted,
attractive, and accessible. And CBS is proud to be
a part of this community. And over the years we've
made our facilities available to civic and community
meeting groups.

CBS is celebrating 50 years at Beverly and
Fairfax and we're broadcasting a two-hour
anniversary special this Saturday night hosted by
Carol Brunette. I feel -- that's not a plug. We
are proud to be here.

I feel that the Mid City West community
council is diverse, experienced, competent,
involved, enthusiastic, and quite capable of best
representing all of the diverse constituencies of
this community.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. All right.
Those are all the cards that are in favor of either
of the two councils. We still have a few cards that
are in opposition to one or the other, and we had
some general comments.

However, we've been at this for a little
over three hours now, and I think it would be
appropriate to take about a five-minute break, and
then we'll come back and start over again.

(Pause in the proceedings)
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Let's come back now. I'm going to start with John Osborne, Don Mitchell, and Rita Ruben, any one of which may approach the microphone. Okay, we're assuming they're all not here. Jeanne Miller, Jack Cash. Jeanne Miller or Jack Cash. This is going much better than anybody expected.

Carol Carvel, Olga Carvel.

Don't everybody rush to the microphone at once.

Okay. Mr. O'Sullivan, you've had two bites at the apple so far. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Cornwell. Mike, please join us.

MICHAEL CORNWELL: You caught me with a candy bar.

Michael Cornwell. I'm with the Mid Wilshire neighborhood council. We have a lot of tongue twisters here on neighborhood councils. And we are the noncertified forming neighborhood council to the east of the groups we're discussing tonight.

The L.A. Business Journal arrived at my office today. The headline under the (inaudible) column is "Westside Homeowners Believe Councils Will Dilute Their Clout."

"As the rest of the city rushes to form neighborhood councils, two large Westside communities, Westwood and Pacific Palisades, have decided not to join the bandwagon and another community, Brentwood, is on the fence."

I think this -- this trend -- and I think the trend is continuing here tonight -- should be of concern to those who are concerned about what neighborhood councils are all about.

I found tonight very troubling. And frankly, if I were a commissioner on this commission, I would have trouble voting tonight.

In the Mid City neighborhood council --

and I've been active there for many years -- we're a grassroots organization and I -- I don't, frankly, know many of the people tonight who were speaking and are part of this West Wilshire group, but I do know the -- the West Wilshire community council people. And they've been there for us on issues that go back 15 years and longer.

I think if it weren't for that group we'd probably have a subway going up Fairfax right now. We may have an elevated train running down Wilshire Boulevard. We could have a very large, large, large Farmer's Market development, and God knows what we'd have at the Beverly Center. But because of those people I think we've got possibly some control.

But I do know where I'm going to be at Tuesday night at Blackma when I have issues with the
Beverly Center and CBS and the Grove, and I'm not sure I'm comfortable that this emerging council will look at those issues objectively, but I certainly hope they will.

But I think the grassroots nature of the intent of neighborhood councils has been lost here tonight, and I'm just troubled by -- by what happened here. And I would urge you to look at it the very closely. And I'm not sure tonight is the time to rush into this.

I think we should have one council here. And I was troubled when I heard the representative from the West Wilshire say that no staff member had attended their meetings. I blame the Department and the staff for not getting -- having the mediation work, frankly. I don't think you had the proper horses there to work the mediation.

And I urge you to go back to the drawing board with professionals that can work this thing out and bring these two groups together. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: All right. Steve Corbin and Joan Lux.

STEVEN CORBIN: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Steve Corbin. I've lived in the area for six years now, three years as a renter and about the same as a homeowner. And I want to echo the sentiment of the gentleman who just spoke a moment ago.

Now, I didn't read the legislative history behind it, but I can only imagine that the folks who conceived of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment had in their minds the intention of empowering neighborhoods.

And I can't think of anybody who has a more vested interest in the quality of life and the conditions in their neighborhoods than people who live there. I certainly don't feel the same way about the neighborhood where I go to work as I do where I live.

Now -- I'm sorry. I lost my train of thought.

I -- I don't believe that the intention behind the creation of these neighborhood councils was to advance any particular special interest. I think the only special interest here that counts is those of the neighborhood. And what does your neighborhood consist of? It consists of your neighbors; the people who live to the left of you, the people who live to the right of you, the people who live above you or below that. That is your neighborhood.

This is the one opportunity for the special interest group known as a neighborhood to speak collectively. I think any proposal or any structure that could conceivably weigh the votes of
people who do not live in the neighborhood more heavily than those who do is inherently undemocratic, unrepresentative, and very unempowering and very disenfranchising.

And I urge you to -- to consider the rationale behind the very notion of the creation of these neighborhood councils and the people who they are intended to benefit.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Joan Lux, Teresa Feldman, and Robert Churno.

JOAN LUX: Good evening. I'm speaking as an individual tonight. I lived in this neighborhood, I bought a home for eight years and have done business here since 1982 before I moved to another neighborhood which you all may identify me with. And I feel that I am also a stakeholder here, maybe not to the same degree as I am in the Hollywood Hills area.

But I would like to raise an issue that the complex -- the actual constitution of the two areas, this area which has more businesses than the Hollywood Hills area, which is more residential in nature.

The same thing, as an outside observer, I believe is happening here that is happening in the Hollywood Hills area. Businesses here, there are many more businesses here than there are residents. The Mid Wilshire group is sitting here allowing basically four-to-one ratio of representation, and I don't feel that that's fair.

I also don't feel like the literature that I've asked Taneda to hand out to you for -- that she's about to hand out now, which gives you the proof that the Hollywood Hills West neighborhood council is 90 percent homeowners and residents group.

You're doing the same thing in reverse, or the Department is doing the same thing in reverse that they did with Hollywood Hills West. Basically the potential here is allowing businesses to have more of a say in an area that should permit homeowners and residents to have equal parody because of the quality of life issues.

Where do you think the mitigations came from for the -- the new complex that just opened? And I'm drawing a blank on the -- at Farmer's Market.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Grove.

JOAN LUX: The Grove. Thank you. And I was there opening night and I can't even remember the name of it.

Where do you think the mitigations came from? They came from the people that have got 25
years of background and -- and working experience
with the city of Los Angeles. Those mitigations
delete the quality of life issues to remain. That
doesn't mean that they're not business oriented.
   This issue that's happening here between
two groups with the same boundaries is a
business/resident fight. And I am saying that the
Mid Wilshire area group, as hard and professional
presentation that they gave you, will give an unfair
parody, unfair pudding, and I say that the
literature that they've passed around is very
flowery, but I don't feel that they can operate in
the best interest of the community without the
experience of the other group.
   And I ask that you reconsider their
constitution the way that they've got it structured
because I don't feel that it is in the best interest
of the community and I think it's long on promise
and short on substance.
   Thank you.
   COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
   Teresa Feldman, Robert Churno, Brad
   Hickman. Teresa Feldman, Robert Churno, Brad
   Hickman.
   BRAD HICKMAN: Good evening. I'm Brad

I came to this meeting not knowing really
very much about either one of these groups. But the
thing that I, in a short sentence, want to make a
statement about is that I am a resident. I live on
Detroit Street. And I have a lot of issues with
parking, lighting, businesses in the neighborhood.
   But when I look at the West Wilshire group
-- is it the West Wilshire? -- the first group that
spoke, I don't have a voice because I'm a renter.
And I take offense to the fact that I'm considered a
transient when I've been here four years and have no
intentions to move out of the neighborhood, yet I
don't have a voice.
   And I look at the Mid Wilshire group
where, as a renter, I do have a voice and I see more
diversity. If I were inclined to favor one over the
other -- one over the other, I would favor the Mid
Wilshire group.
   Thank you.
   COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.
   And last word this evening, John Grishom.
   JOHN GRISHOM: Good evening. I've spoken to
you before. My name is John Grishom, and I live at
696 South Bronson, which is the Boulevard Heights
tract just south of Crenshaw and east of Wilshire.
   I'm a board member of the Wilshire Park
neighborhood association, which was borne out of a
long-standing grassroots effort to involve all
stakeholders in our community of interest in our
neighborhood to strive, sometimes fighting, to maintain our quality of life in the middle of the city.

Our neighborhood discovered a long time ago that other nearby neighborhoods face similar issues? And again, as part of a similar grassroots effort, we endeavored to work together. Since then we put together the Park Mile Specific Plan 20 years ago to form an alliance of neighborhoods to work together on issues that are common to all of our -- all of our communities. And as time's gone by, it's happened more and more frequently that we've had to work together.

The idea of a neighborhood council came rather naturally to us because we had -- our neighborhoods were formed in a grassroots effort. And in the spring of 1999 we got together and realized that what we had to do was to be more inclusive in order to make this work.

I was elected president of our first board meeting last January in 2001, and it's in that capacity that I'm speaking to you on behalf of neighborhoods in this city.

I have become more and more troubled by what I've been reading and hearing that dismisses neighborhoods as part of the neighborhood council process. In our neighborhood we're striving to reach consensus over differences that we have with competing groups with overlapping areas, but we're working at it. We're working hard to make sure that everybody is included.

So reading the two reports, I note that you as the board are in an interesting position again this time. You're considering grassroots efforts from the relative past and grassroots efforts from the relative present. And I only ask that you avoid throwing the babies out with the bathwater.

Clearly, the intent of the Charter is not to disempower those who have been active for such a long time but to include them in this new effort. So therefore, in whatever decision you make tonight and in whatever follows from everybody involved here, I implore all, everybody to include the communities of interest that not only reflect the history of empowerment in this city but are in fact the namesake of the neighborhood councils you are certifying.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. Okay. Is there anyone else in the audience tonight who would like to address the commission on these two completing applications? That was probably not intended to be an open invitation, but go ahead anyway.
RICHARD USTER: My name is Richard Uster. I've lived in a mile of this school all my life. I'm a homeowner, dues payer to West Wilshire. I resent the fact by being a board member of Mid Cities that they're trying to place us as an image as business against residents.

Looking still at a great number of our board here, I would venture to guess there's two people on our board of 50 people that do not live in this area. They might represent unions, they might represent a business, they might represent whatever, but they are still homeowners, home renters that live in this area.

And you should keep that in mind also. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. With that I'm going to close the public hearing and invite the applicants to come back and rebut for a very brief period of time.

Who would like to speak on behalf of West Wilshire?

BARBARA MARTINOFF: Good evening. My name is Barbara Martinoff. And good evening, Commissioners, again.

On behalf of the West Wilshire council, we recognize that both groups have a lot to contribute and you have a very tough decision in front of you. You have -- in our half, you know, you have people who have experience and you have new leaders, you have grassroots organizations, you have representation through different tiers of elections, and bottom line is we're all committed to trying to make a difference and work on the quality of life issues. Okay? Those are really the differences here.

And we feel that whatever the Board decides -- you know, I know some of our members have asked for a continuance. If you decide tonight to move on, you've heard from different speakers tonight to make a decision, you know, this is really your time.

And I know that members of our board have worked very hard to do the outreach, to have various levels of participation and election, and we feel we are ready to work and to support whatever the decision is.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

STEVE MAC DONALD: Steve Mac Donald. And I will be brief. I have a couple of points. One very quick. I hope this is the last point on the issue regarding the number of people on our board.

Of all the points that is raised tonight, that is the point that is probably the least important and is a nonissue. We've had seven public
meetings and we've had a quorum in every one. What we're doing works. What's point number one.

Point number two, the decision here in front of the commission today, to me, is very clear. The people in this city voted in the Charter because they felt that things were working. They weren't working right and they wanted to have a new way to have the community contact with government and get involved.

That being said, what we're faced here with is, for the most part, a -- a homeowner based group that's melded and changed some and -- and brings together a number of homeowners groups and, on our end, you've got something that's been built from scratch, from the ground up, with the intent of what the voters voted in in the Charter, the intent of what this Department was established for, the intent I believe of what you're here to do, which is to bring new leadership, bring new ideas, and bring new ways of doing things; not the old way of doing it, this new way.

And that is -- that is what the decision that's in front of you. It's stick with the old concept of homeowners groups or come in with what the intent of the Charter is.

KEN DRAPER: This is the finish of our rebuttal and it is brief.

ROMERO: Excuse me. Can you state your name again on the record?

KEN DRAPER: Yes, this is Ken Draper.

ROMERO: Thank you.

KEN DRAPER: I think it's -- it's important that you just take a look at what worked. Take a look at what's happened already. This provisional council has been existence now since October. It has performed. You can see the results of it.

You can see the results of the -- of the bylaws system and -- and of the outreach and of the continued communications effort. I think it speaks for itself. If you have a question about does this work or will it work, it's already working. You can see it working.

Appreciate your time, look for your consideration.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.

Romero?

ROMERO: Just by way of summary, the staff report made findings on boundaries, on outreach, on organizational structure in the case of both of the -- the applicants.

In the case of the West Wilshire community group, on the boundaries we found that they were in compliance. However, there was the overlap. A decision one way or the other to approve one or the other would, of course, eliminate the overlap.
In terms of the outreach, the staff found that the competing application more fully incorporated the broadest array of stakeholders. And in the case the organizational structure, it found that the Wilshire -- West Wilshire community group didn't incorporate the fullest array of stakeholders and that the voting structure limited participation.

Now, the board can accept the staff reports and -- and approve the recommendation to certify the Mid -- the Wilshire -- the Mid City West, or it could disapprove the staff report or it could disapprove individual findings in the staff report.

There was, of course, the suggestion to -- to not approve at all and to go back to the drawing board on -- on mediation. Well, those are some of the options before the board.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. And basically, Romero, we have -- there are five choices so that we can make. We can accept the staff's recommendation to certify Mid City West. We can request a continuance, basically, from both groups such that they go back and continue to mediate or look for another solution to the situation.

We can reject outright both applications and allow them to appeal to the city council should they choose. We can attempt to split the territory if we so chose. There is a -- since there are 50,000-plus residents in the area, there are effectively enough for two neighborhood councils if we were to -- to look for a way to physically separate the two councils.

We could also reject the staff's recommendation and certify the Wilshire West community council. So there are a range of options before the commission at this particular juncture.

Any other questions for staff at the moment?

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Yes. (Inaudible) want to address the statement by -- could you redress the statement by someone tonight that they had not had staff assistance from the Department.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Wilshire West.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I think it was Wilshire West.

ROMERO: I don't know the context of that because staff has had involvement with both groups, have responded to their -- their inquiries, arranged for the mediation.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I think it was attending meetings.

ROMERO: Okay. We had -- there's a discrepancy here and if the -- if the group wishes to clarify it, it can.
Our understanding of the meeting of the Wilshire West group was that they had not had a meeting since their election. And so, no, staff did not attend a meeting because we were unaware meetings were being held. This is general membership meeting.

Now, at the -- and the statement was made that two weeks ago there was a meeting with the Councilman La Bonge. That would have been prior to when we finalized our report. But our understanding was that there were no general meetings since the election was held.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I thought I understood them to say that they had monthly board meetings.

ROMERO: Mid City West had monthly meetings.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I understood that -- I heard the other group say they had regular -- had monthly meetings also.

ROMERO: That was not something that was --

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Is there anybody here who can say -- maybe someone from that group could clarify it.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Mr. Curtin, if you're going to speak you have to come to the microphone.

DAN CURTIN: We had -- we have had monthly meetings and they've been -- we've had -- all of them have been published in all of the general media in the area.

So I don't know exactly who would have contacted staff regarding those meetings, but the general outreach was done on those meetings. So I don't know what else to say about that.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner --

ROMERO: Please identify yourself for the record, state your name.

DAN CURTIN: I'm sorry. Dan Curtin.

ROMERO: Thanks.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Do you have sign-in sheets for those meetings?

DAN CURTIN: Yeah, we do. Yeah.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Were they (inaudible) can you (inaudible)?

DAN CURTIN: I don't have them here but --

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: And were they -- these were board meetings or they were neighborhood council --

DAN CURTIN: They were open meetings for anybody that wanted to come to them. (Inaudible)

predominantly board members did come, but we had other people from outside come as well.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: I was the one who
asked the questions about community meetings and the
group. Both groups have claimed the meeting with
Councilman La Bonge, and it seems to me that that
was a general community meeting.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: There were two
separate meetings.
COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Yeah. Were
there?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.
DAN CURTIN: We had one meeting with Council --
Councilman La Bonge, and that was called by our --
COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: That was a
neighborhood council meeting announced as a
neighborhood council meeting?
DAN CURTIN: Yes. Yeah. But he was our guest
at that meeting to talk about local issues. And --
and in the neighborhood council itself context. And
it was announced to the whole public.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Commissioner
Luchente has a question.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Yes. A representative
of West Wilshire neighborhood council has said that,
you know, some members may request a -- or may
desire a continuance. I wondered what the purpose
of that continuance was. Is it for negotiation or
to respond to staff report?
DAN CURTIN: Be both. It could be both. We --
we -- we want to work together with the staff to
identify the issues that were -- they brought up in
that report and resolve those issues. And mediation
could be one of those possible solutions,
absolutely.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Okay. Okay. Thank
You.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Mr. President.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes, Tammy.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: If you don't mind, sir,
it just strikes me that your question regarding
going back to the table and -- and having a
discussion, it's a little -- it's a concern to me
because I heard clearly from the presentation that
-- or from the report, at least, that the mediation
did not work for you guys before.
So if you guys come back to the table
because you want to mediate at this point, how would
that be different than the last time?
DAN CURTIN: Well, considering that you have a
staff that's recommended against their application,
I think it would be incumbent upon us to be -- work
with the staff to try to address those issues.
And since we just found about -- you know,
we got the staff report on this past Thursday, we
haven't had a chance to fully explore that.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: But I believe the
meetings through -- of mediation lasted through February, I believe, or --

DAN CURTIN: Well, we thought we had answered all of DONE's objections to our application and that was what -- our impression all along, so we were kind of surprised, frankly, that we were not recommended for certification.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And the other -- question --

DAN CURTIN: -- irregardless of what the other group did.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And the other question that I have is, your group stated that staff was not present at general -- my understanding is general meetings of the neighborhood council group.

Correct?

0197 DAN CURTIN: At our meetings, yes. At our public meetings, they were -- there were not staff there, that's correct.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And the last -- the last time that staff was present was in October; is that correct?

DAN CURTIN: That's -- that's my understanding, yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. Was there any -- any different ways of informing the Department of the meetings --

DAN CURTIN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: -- before, why did they go before, not after?

DAN CURTIN: I wasn't part of that process so I really can't answer the question.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Is there anyone here who can answer that question?

DAN CURTIN: Not right now. Not right now, no. I don't think so.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Thank you.

DAN CURTIN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner?

NICOLE BURNSON: I'd like to clarify --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Nichole, we're --

0198 this is our time, so we get to ask the questions and we'll call on you if you want to respond.

NICOLE BURNSON: I'm sorry. I was at same meeting, though, and I would like to --

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: No. Please.

Please, ma'am. I would like a clarification of the --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: -- meeting that was supposed to be a community meeting or neighborhood council meeting. I'm still not clear on that. If there's somebody who can clarify that and speak to it.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: She's from that
group.

NICOLE BURNSON: Yes, I'm -- I sit on the
councils of both groups, and I was at the meeting
with Councilman La Bonge. I can tell you it was a
board meeting. There was no public present or
invited. And I challenge West Wilshire to produce
their sign-in sheet from that meeting because there
was one there.

ROMERO: State your name again on the
record.

NICOLE BURNSON: My name is Nichole Burnson.

ROMERO: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Would you care to
respond?

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I remember hearing
the other side say that they publicized those
meetings. And they were all open to the public.

DAN CURTIN: That is correct. They were open
to the public. It was publicized to the public that
the councilman would be there and it was a -- it was
sponsored by our group. And we can -- we will
produce that, that sheet, if we need to.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Well, not at
the moment, but don't leave -- don't wonder too far
from the microphone.

All right. Now comes the fun part. This
is when we as Commissioners actually get to weigh in
on the question. And clearly, we are not paid
enough to do any of this. And in this particular
situation we are clearly not paid enough to -- to
try to weigh the questions that we're being asked
this evening.

This one is particularly challenging in
that we have two groups of people who represent
somewhat differing views of the neighborhood,
somewhat differing views of neighborhood
councils.

The idea, as a number of people have
articulated this evening, behind neighborhood
councils is to bring the government closer to the
community and to form a group of people who can
represent the community throughout the city
bureaucracy and be effective advocates for their
neighborhood.

We have a situation here where we still
have a split in the community. And there was
someone earlier who asked that -- that the community
heal and go forward on the basis of an action
tonight. I'm not sure how that's possible given
what I've heard and seen here tonight. I don't know
how choosing one side over the other works to heal
the community.

That's a problem from the -- from the
perspective of the Board. We have a group, the West
Wilshire group, who is deeply rooted in the activism
of this community for many, many years. We have the
group, the Mid City group, who are activists who
have come to the neighborhood council program
looking to make a change and looking to make a
difference in their community. And somehow we've
managed to not work together. And that's deeply
troubling.

The points made by Mr. Cornwell late in
the evening relative to the perception of what we're
doing in the larger context of the city are also
deploying troubling. The message that we send by our
actions here tonight to some of the other activist
organizations in other parts of the city is of
concern to me.

It's somehow troubling that we would
define a program of neighborhood councils which
would manage to supplant or ignore or marginalize
the work and the efforts of community groups who
have been involved in this city for -- for many
years.

What I see from Mid City West is a group
that's come together that's been frustrated at times
individually with some of the things that have been
done by a number of neighborhood leaders over the
years and have defined a system or a structure that
defines 32-odd interest groups in the city -- or in
the neighborhood but doesn't define a category for
neighborhood associations and doesn't define a way
for -- for those neighborhood people to be involved
in the system in some manner.

And Ronnie, I understand. Don't worry.

And I see on the Wilshire West community
council side a desire to -- to build on what -- what
has always been and the status quo and to use some
of the neighborhood groups to develop a neighborhood
council.

And there are clearly arguments on both
sides to the way neighborhood councils should work
in this neighborhood. But there ought to be a way
that the neighborhood can work to serve all of those
interests.

If we were to certify Mid City West in
this situation we would be leaving out the West
Wilshire groups and we would leave that schism in
the community and thereby to some extent hampering
or -- or hurting the chances of the Mid City West
neighborhood council from being the true voice in
the community.

To the extent that the neighborhood
council -- and it's the neighborhood council, not
this one or that one -- can speak for all of the
people who live and work and own property in this
neighborhood, ultimately that's our goal. And I'm
not sure we have a clear path to -- to get there
tonight.
I have a lot of respect for all of the people who have spoken here tonight. Many of them are friends and colleagues and -- and sometimes adversaries for -- for 25 years. But I'm troubled by a couple of things. I was troubled by the fact that both Don Batchess and Hank Hilty got up and spoke in favor of Mid City West and not in favor of the Wilshire West council. That concerned me with regard to -- to the Wilshire West application and their ability to -- to work with and talk to some of the major stakeholders in the community.

I'm troubled by the fact that Park La Brea isn't here tonight on either side, that that's somewhere missing in all of this. No one came tonight to the microphone and said, "I represent the Park La Brea tenants association," or -- or "The Park La Brea property owners," because that's a major piece -- a major missing piece in the community.

So it's a question of trying to strike the balance between people who want to -- to join in and make a difference and change and people who have a vested interest over time in their neighborhood and melding the two into something that becomes the neighborhood council.

One group, the Mid City West group, is essentially people centric. It identifies 50 stakeholders and makes them their board of directors and challenges those 50 people to go out and represent and speak for and communicate with all 50,000 homeowners, or residents and tenants and business owners in the community.

The other group is essentially organizational centric where it tends to build on existing organizations and contacts and -- and infrastructure that's been in the community for years and doesn't necessarily face the same challenge to have to go out and reinvent the wheel or reinvent the basis for communication.

Ken, for all of your fliers and things that have gone out, the only information that I've received as a resident of the neighborhood has been from the Melrose neighborhood association and through the outreach efforts that have come from West Wilshire.

Be that as it may, I'm one mailbox in -- in 50,000, so it's not necessarily indicative of coverage on one side or the other.

(End of tape A, side B)

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: -- about the -- the spread of the signatures in -- on the different lists of groups, where Mid City West signatures tend
to concentrate in certain areas and West Wilshire's
tend to cover the neighborhood in general.

During the course of the Charter debate
and the subsequent debate over the plan for
neighborhood councils, many groups argued vehemently
that signatures shouldn't be required, that it was
demeaning to have to go out into the streets and get
people to sign petitions and do things like that
when groups have been around for years.

Yet we, as commissioners who view these
applications week in and week out, the signatures
and their plotting become one of the key factors in
how we look at the neighborhood council applications
in our test as to whether we think the outreach
actually reaches the places it's supposed to reach.

So it's become a key tool to us to
evaluate neighborhood council applications. And in
this case, it tends to tell a little bit of a
different story between the two different groups --
now, recognizing that it's a very small sample on
both sides and it's not a lot of people.

And that's part of the other question of
balance in the neighborhood. While can you get 50
to a hundred people to a meeting and you may get a
quorum of your board to every meeting, that still a
hundred people out of 50,000 -- 50,000 residents
plus 50,000 employees -- so it's still a large task
to go from representing -- being a representative
body of 50 to communicating with the mass of 100,000
people in this area.

Where do we go from here? I'm not sure.
And it's 11 o'clock and we've been at this for four
and a half hours, and I'm not sure that I'm any
closer to a conclusion than I was when I walked in
here this evening.

So I'd like to hear from my fellow
commissioners as to what their take on this
evening's events have been.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Thank you,
Mr. President. As someone who like many, many of my
fellow commissioners and those of you in the
audience tonight and someone's who's been involved
in a grassroots community participation and
organizations for many years, I'm very aware of the
need to continue -- for existing organizations to
continue to grow and bring in new people, new
leadership.

And that's how I -- I've found in my own
personal experience that that is how an organization
remains representative of the community which --
which people, you know, claim to represent.

And it's interesting tonight, though, that
we have two applications that seem to be a reaction
really to the other -- the competing application.
And unlike one of the speakers, I strongly disagree that this is a choice between the old and the new. Rather, I think it should be something that is -- that pulls from all the elements of the community, both old and new. And certainly this whole process provides for increased inclusiveness and linkage with city government.

But I -- I think that the forms of representation that are outlined in the bylaws are not necessarily -- that neither one of them is necessarily bad. There is a representative form of government and there is another form that provides for general inclusion of everybody in elections by all the stakeholders present. But neither one is necessarily better than the other.

I was certainly impressed by the diversity of the interests here tonight, but I was struck by one of the comments that I wonder how many people at the different meetings were necessarily aware of the other group's existence and whether it was really placed to the community as a choice; rather, one was just kind of presented as this is the only choice that is before you.

And I think that the staff's findings were relative to the competing application, not the threshold that's been established in other applications reviewed by staff and approved by this commission.

The staff -- you know, our general manager Greg Nelson has mentioned on many times, you know, this isn't a process to commit to try to create winners and losers, but I think that it seems that both groups were kind of strung along here and that that indeed is what is the possibility before us.

Two more comments. For all the outreach that was done, the flaw is that the outreach for either groups is not substantiated based on the distribution of signatures. As President Christopher mentioned, they seem to be isolated into certain areas.

But most disappointing is, for all the vision and dedication that I witnessed tonight, neither group has been able to transcend the special interests that are in both groups. And so I think that the community at large would suffer by certification of either group in its current form.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Well, I thank both groups for being here tonight. I thank you for your enthusiasm and the way that you've worked and the way in which you've come here and presented your -- your issues.

I have a serious problem, though, with the outreach in terms of the group who indicates that they did have open meetings for six months yet the Department didn't know about it. Some way, if there
-- if those meetings are announced, if they're wherever, the Department should find out somehow. I just don't understand why the Department wasn't at those meetings if they were properly announced, if there was outreach, if there was -- and the meetings were open and public. And I -- I find that very difficult.

However, I did find that the Mid City people did tell what they had done during that time. They did talk about their meetings and about their outreach.

And I find even though -- and we know how difficult it is to reach out into a community where it is diverse, where people are volunteering their time, where it is costly and it's not reimbursed. I do know and all of us know, I think, how difficult it is to reach out and to not have some kind of problems in terms of the reach-out and it always, always, always needs to be improved and outreaching into the community is something which is an ongoing process and will always be there. We can't -- we can never stop that.

I -- I'm concerned that people will get the idea that if we certify one neighborhood council, the other one can't participate or won't participate or shouldn't participate or we're leaving out somebody. We're not leaving out anyone.

Everyone has and has the obligation and has the opportunity to participate in the neighborhood council if one is selected here. There will be a public and open election, and everyone can be nominated and can participate in that election and be part of the governing board.

I personally do not feel that negotiation at this time will make a difference. It was offered in the past by professionals, not by -- I think there was a statement here that it was done by nonprofessionals. That's not true. From what I read it was done by professionals. Yet nothing came of that.

I don't see the reason for continuing to do that if nothing came out at a time when -- when it was important that a unified council come to present it's application here to the Department. I personally don't -- don't rely a lot on that.

I appreciate the fact that the Mid City is diverse. I appreciate the fact that there have been people who have been working in the community for a long time who say they are experienced. But that's doesn't mean their experience can't be on another -- on a neighborhood council that is in the neighborhood anyway and not just their own.

I appreciate more the diversity of the Mid City and I think that although I had a problem last
week with the 50 on the -- on the board, I think
that Commissioner Membreno did bring out the fact
that this particular -- these particular articles
are structured differently and it seems to be
working, and they certainly had a decent
representation here whereas the group last week did
not. And I think I had to take a look at that in
terms of -- of the 50 for the governing board.
I personally feel that we should decide	onight on one group so that they can move ahead,
and I would invite those -- whichever group it is, I
would invite those who -- who say that they are
really interested in the neighborhood to
participate, to come together, 'cause that's the
important issue.
This is not a win-win. It is not a
win-lose. I mean this is a win-win. It is not a
win-lose situation in the neighborhood. And it
shouldn't be a win-lose.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Woods
Gray.
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Yes. I'd like to
thank both groups for all of the work that you've
done. Ultimately our goal is to have organized
neighborhood councils that will help to empower
neighborhoods, and that means all the people in the
neighborhood whether it be homeowners or renters,
homeless, and all of the various other groups that
exist within your neighborhood. They all need to be
a part of the neighborhood council.
I believe that in organizing a
neighborhood council you begin to look at what's
first in your neighborhood and what strengths you
have to build upon. And for that reason I saw no
problem with the West Wilshire group going through
their homeowners groups or residential groups -- as
I've learned tonight, they're not just homeowners
but residential groups -- to begin laying a
foundation for a neighborhood council because you
have to start organizing someplace, and that's what
you're most familiar with probably.
I am concerned about the 50 member board
because I realize that from community to community
we've heard people talk -- they have many smaller
boards, and I believe that it's very difficult
sometimes to get people out. That would be a
concern of mine. However, I know it's not a concern
of the Mid City West group.
I believe that somehow all the various
viewpoints in this community must come together and
there must be cooperation. I think that what I hear
is that there are various political Ideologies and
there's the -- I hate calling it the old versus the
new -- experience versus the new leaders maybe or
something to that degree. However, some may not be
as new.
And I could understand why some groups may not be as concerned about having a special category for certain people, because some of us who belong in certain groups don't think that we -- we are there already so we didn't think of adding that as a special group.

I realize that this community has been together, this is a community of interest, it's historical. It has a history of working on different projects. And many of those projects we're grateful for because they would have had an impact on the rest of the city.

And I just believe there's value in working together with experienced and new leaders coming together. So somehow that -- that has to happen.

I found that the presentations were different. The Mid City group had a very polished presentation, but while I sit -- sat carefully and listened and heard both sides, I realize that I think I heard both to be saying basically about the same thing. Things were larger in some areas and smaller in some areas, but you were all striving toward the same goal of empowering neighborhoods, the same neighborhood.

And it's my belief that -- that I could --

tonight would have the courage to say I think you need to go back and work together to come together for the sake of an united community, because it -- it it's not -- it shouldn't be on me to bring you together. You should bring yourself together. And I shouldn't be there to divide you either.

So I want to -- I believe that you need to go back. I would certainly think that things are different after tonight and that mediation might work in a way this it has not worked before and that people need to come together. It should not fall on me to divide you, but I offer the opportunity for to you united yourselves.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Anyone else?
Commissioner Membreno.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Well, one of the toughest choices is always to decide for one group or the other. But one of the toughest choices is to also come to a community, and someone earlier mentioned that we as commissioners will be gone in a few years, and some of us sooner than few years, and you will all stay to work your communities.

And that is a very -- that is key to understanding why a community needs to come together for the betterment of your communities.

And I think one of the toughest part that I see here is how one group talks about residents as
It's a tough decision overall for all of us who sit here because some of us come from these communities and -- and to see neighbors and to see folks who we know, who we've worked with, not get along on an issue of such -- such importance, I think it's always very hard to -- to see.

And as Commissioner Woods Gray says, we are here to really support what the neighborhood councils are doing, not divide them or not to -- not to bring them -- not to bring you guys together either.

So it's a tough choice and -- but we need to have the courage to make a decision tonight whether it is to unify this neighborhood council and how we will do that as a group and as a community and -- or to see what are the better ways of bringing together the groups to -- to define who -- who will better represent this neighborhood council.

So that's where I want to stop.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I think -- well, I want to thank both groups, just like my fellow commissioners did, for putting on a great presentations and clearly making the case. Each group cares deeply about this neighborhood.

I think tonight is the -- at least in my mind is the toughest -- toughest decision that we have faced. The Hollywood situation ranks right up there, too.

And actually the Hollywood situation has a little bit of precedential impact for us to consider, which was two -- two groups that represented the -- the same area that did not want to mediate. We urged both groups to go back to the drawing board, and they are in the process of coming forward with a unified application. So that was -- that was a success story or in -- hopefully, probably after midnight tonight we're going to hear a little bit more about it. But --

I think, following up on what Commissioner Membreno said about the concept of bringing the community together, I think in making a tough decision tonight we need to do everything in our power to bring this community together. And that could go a couple of different directions. That could go requesting that both go back to the drawing board.

It could be to certify one group. And to
do that -- at least if I were to do that, I would
have to feel confident in my mind that the group
that we certify will reach out to the other group
and do what's best for the neighborhood. And I
can't say with certainty either way right now.

I guess I'll lay a couple of things out on
the table because we've discussed it a little bit.
The issue of Mid City West's 50 board members, I
raised it as a concern when we questioned staff.
I feel comfortable based on what I've
heard tonight that that is not necessarily a
problem. It maybe -- it may make for burdensome
meetings, but that's up to a neighborhood council to
decide. I think they've -- they've shown that
through past meetings they've met quorums, and I'm
just taking that one off the table, at least as a
concern of mine that we can't move forward with
that.

I guess the other thing that I looked to
tonight with a favorable eye toward Mid City West
was testimony that we heard. And I thought we heard
that between the two groups, if we had to pick one
of the two groups, that the Mid City West was the
more inclusive, that it wasn't just an old versus
new, or isn't just an old versus new, in my mind,
because we heard from a couple of neighborhood
association presidents that spoke on behalf of the
Mid City West group.

I also think that the idea of -- the idea
of who's a resident, that's kind of a red herring
because I feel pretty comfortable based on what I've
seen tonight that a substantial majority of the
board members, or the future board members of a Mid
City West neighborhood council, would indeed be
residents of this neighborhood and even if they
happen to represent the medical community, the media
community.

So those are my thoughts. And as I said,
I think I'm -- I'm open to -- to more discussion. I
-- if we were to -- we on our own could not force
both groups back to mediation. One group has --
has said that they would voluntarily withdraw their
application. I think we would need to hear from the
other group whether they were prepared to do so.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Uh-huh.

Commissioner Longoria?

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes. I appreciate the
presentations that both groups made. They're
certainly very different than what we've had
throughout the city of Los Angeles. Both groups are
very educated, very committed, very eloquent in
their presentation.

But what I found very troubling is the
fact that there was an underlying discontent with
each other as people. And neighborhood councils are
about people. And if we can't communicate at this point, at this level when -- when -- when you're forming these neighborhood councils, what is it going to be when you have your own neighborhood council and want to share ideas, information, businesses, friends across -- and I don't even want to say boundaries because this wasn't a boundary issue. In other places that we went to there's been a boundary issue. This time it was a matter of communication and outreach.

So in looking at what I would do tonight, I'm still thinking about two areas. And I'm thinking about approving and accepting the -- the staff's recommendation to approve the Mid City West and let them proceed, but I'm troubled about the fact that Wilshire West has an outreach concern.

I didn't -- I heard about the renter who had not been notified, but of course it's unreasonable to assume that everyone in the whole area is going to be reached. I mean, it's practically impossible to do.

I would consider the Mid City -- let's see. I'm making sure because this is kind of complicated here -- the West Wilshire to look again to see how they can manage to outreach to the community and be inclusive, because I noticed and felt that it was not as inclusive as it could be in such a powerful community where so much can be done and I felt was not being done.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay, Pat.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Just as a sidebar, when we get later in the evening, all of us, we start -- stop calling each other Commissioner. We call each other by our first name. We do that. That happens when we get tired.

Based on the information that -- and the input from the commissioners and of course from the public, and from both applicants, I personally feel that the outreach that was done by the Mid West application is more inclusive. I feel that -- and from the reports that I've heard, that they were willing to mediate and were open really to open their meetings to include the rest and the people from the West Wilshire area.

And based on the information that the staff has presented to us, I would move to approve the Mid City application and all the findings that are prepared by the Department in the field operations division.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I'm not so sure that I would be in favor of the rush to judgment tonight.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Did we ask for a second? (Inaudible) your opinion. I'd like to --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: If that's a formal
motion, do we have a second?

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I -- that was a
motion. I would like it to either fail or pass as a
motion.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: A second?

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: I'll second the motion.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. The motion
and a second. Discussion of the motion.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I think that one only has
to look at the distribution of those signatures that
are provided in the maps that the staff -- that were
provided in the maps that the staff provided us to
see a confirmation of the deep divisions that I felt
very strongly here.

I mean, you have one -- you have bylaws
that don't -- that -- that in my view perhaps
intentionally exclude groups that are -- that are
represented by the West Wilshire group. And if
we're really here to bring, you know, a more
community-based system of government to the city of
Los Angeles, I think we have to ensure -- it's
incumbent on us to ensure that the groups that we
certify are truly representative.

And while they demonstrated significant
outreach, I think it was isolated to a certain -- to
a certain segment of the community, perhaps
geographically and otherwise.

But you've got an existing group -- series
of groups that are -- were represented by the West
-- West Wilshire community council application that
have a long-standing history of opposition to many
of the projects and proposals that have been, you
know, represented by the -- some of the stakeholders
who testified tonight in the Mid City's
applications.

So I -- I just -- I sensed in the
testimony -- as Commissioner Longoria said, I sensed
the exact same thing: Long-standing and deep
divisions in this testimony. And I can't in good
conscience certify an application that I think will
make those divisions even deeper.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: And I heard people
from both sides say that they had not been
outreached to who lived in both neighborhood, who
were members of both councils or who spoke for both
councils. And we realize that it is difficult
sometimes to outreach to every person, but that was
a fact that was stated here tonight.

I'm really concerned because of the -- the
breakdown in communications of both sides. You
cannot have a functioning neighborhood council if
people are not able to communicate and work together
on projects that are of interest to them.

I really believe that the best thing for
us to do is to send staff back to try to really work
with this group because it seems as if perhaps there
was a breakdown in that communication also on both
sides so that we could go back and try to assist
these people in coming together and being able to
communicate and function as one group.

And I would find it difficult to actually
certify a group when I don't believe that they would
be as inclusive of all of the whole neighborhood
who clearly had two divided groups here.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Membreno.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Well, one of the
things that I see here is -- I mean, I agree that
there's a lot of division, whether it's a personal
discontent with one another or just the entire idea
of how two groups are going to run something.

But at the same time I did not hear from
the -- the West Wilshire group their intent or
strong opinion about coming back to the table and
discussing and making that happen. I mean, it was
-- it was at the very end, if I may -- if I may
finish my sentence, it was at the very end where
that was a solution, not really a -- I did not hear
that at the beginning of the -- of the presentation.

I did not hear that as part of the presentation.

It was after all of the comments and all
of the presentations that were made on the rebuttal
that it came out as being an option. I -- I did not
hear that before.

So that -- that's troubling to me because
if the -- the people who came and spoke on behalf of
the -- the Wilshire -- the -- not the Mid City but
the West Wilshire group, it was very evident that it
was more of a "I don't like that group" kind of
attitude as opposed to "What are we going to do to
make this neighborhood council inclusive of the
other group if we get certified?" I did not hear
that.

So that's troubling to me. It was more of
a personality and a challenge that they were giving
to each other as to how to come together and making
a neighborhood council work.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: I -- I heard the -- I
heard at least four people in their testimony from
West Wilshire mention that they thought that the
whole community should be represented.

And I would say even further that it's
very easy for -- if you have a staff report that
recommends the approval of your group, it's very
easy to stand up and say, "Hey, we want everybody to
be inclusive."

And I would say that the West Wilshire,
while they're -- you know, it may not appear that
they're -- that their intentions in mediation were
sincere, I think there's a compelling reason for them to take it a little more seriously by virtue of the fact that the staff has recommended disapproval of that application.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: But I also think that this could have happened in the mediation piece before these applications came before us, so I'm still struggling and, you know, by no means am I going to sit here and say one application, it's moving along than the other.

I'm just struggling with the fact that these two groups are from the same area that the interest groups -- and based on the -- on the just on the signatures, again, this is a point that -- that is made as to the interest of a neighborhood council to -- to -- or members to participate in a neighborhood council. It doesn't really mean anything other than people collected signatures for one way or the other.

So there's probably blocks and blocks of this area that neither group has talked to and people are not represented so we can't -- you know, if we're going to advocate on behalf of those who are not plotted on these two maps, then it's going to take us another six hours here, you know. So thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Well, I have a concern that -- that we move more quickly than we need to move to define one group or the other group in this situation.

The process that we began started about almost two and a half years ago now to develop neighborhood councils throughout the city. And each of these groups has been organizing for probably 15 to 18 months in different ways and in different forms.

Whether we reach a judgment tonight or whether we reach a judgment next week or the following week or the week after, this is a decision that we're making that will affect the community for a long time to come. And I would hate to -- to take that step without knowing that we've tried everything that we can to, as someone said, heal the community or to bring the community together.

And I'd be very much interested to hear from the West Wilshire group if they're at all interested or willing to spend a little more time to try to -- to work some things out that may be possible now that weren't on the table prior to this hearing or prior to the staff issuing their findings in this situation.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Are you (inaudible)?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: No, that's my comment at the moment. The motion is still on the table and we still have to deal with the question.
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY:  Mr. President.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER:  Yes.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY:  I was also concerned about the fact that Mid -- the Wilshire group, whichever, I know it's Mid City and Wilshire something -- didn't receive their -- the Department's report until a few days ago.

So -- in neighborhood councils, we think that we need to call meetings and talk to people and, you know, it takes a few days. And so that to me also indicates that there wasn't enough time put into this to allow people to really make rational decisions about what to do and which way to move and how to organize.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA:  On the other hand, they knew.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO:  That's not just a feature of the neighborhood councils not receiving the reports on time. You know, I mean, we can speak for this board as well that we don't get them with plenty of time to review them, but that doesn't mean that maybe they weren't talking or dialoguing with the -- with the neighborhood councils about where the Department was going with their recommendations.

And I would have, you know, Romero come up and, you know, answer that question. Because if the issue is whether that -- the writing, you know, the document did not get to them, it's one thing that the recommendation, either orally or in another form, got to them before with plenty of time to this hearing, that -- that's what I would like to find out.

ROMERO:  It's my understanding that the report was sent out on Thursday just like the commissioners'. Our practice is as soon as we send them out to the commissioners, we send them out to the leadership that's been identified in the application.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE:  But prior to that did they have any indication that they -- their application would be disapproved?

ROMERO:  Prior to that we did not have all of the information to make a determination.

Part of -- everything that was in the report was taken in consideration. The mapping of the signatures, the -- the evaluation of the final version of the bylaws, all of those are very key components in how we reach a decision.

So I would have to say that a final decision really wasn't known until Wednesday of last week because we were weighing the signatures, the plotting, and also the final versions of the bylaws.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE:  And both groups by -- by the fact that we have multiple versions of bylaws
including up to April 16th, I think, or 18th for some indicates that there was some -- some discussion going back and forth between staff and these groups, because they were modifying their bylaws in response to staff recommendations perhaps.

ROMERO: That is correct. And I think the other thing is consider is that they're -- as both groups express, they are very different approaches to neighborhood councils.

So it's not like these bylaws are wrong. The bylaws express how the neighborhood council wish to approach the whole question of being a neighborhood council. So it's not like this is wrong.

And to the extent there was dialogue, the dialogue in relation to the bylaws were expressing your governance in a way that was consistent with the plan. When you put the two together you start to make comparisons.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: And I just want to make sure that it -- it's slid out on the table that it's -- that one group was not informed of a decision before the other because I -- I mean, I don't want it to be understood that, you know, one group didn't know until last Thursday that one -- one decision was made over the other.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Both groups found out the staff's recommendation at the same time. All right. We have a motion, we have a second. I'll call the question. All those in favor? Commissioner Membreno.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: No.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Whoa.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The motion is to certify the neighborhood Mid City West neighborhood council per the staff report.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Herrera-Duran.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Woods Gray.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: No.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Luchente.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: No.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: And I, no. So the motion fails. So now we're back to further discussion.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Mr. President, could you
request Mid Cities to see if they're willing to --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes. I'd like to --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: -- to bring a

representative from the Mid City West council back
to the microphone and ask that question.

KEN DRAPER: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Mr. Draper and

Mr. Mac Donald, given the discussion that we've had

here tonight, the concern on part of several of the

board members as to whether or not there would be a

willingness or interest on the part of your board to
take one last shot at talking through the questions

of -- that you're at odds with over the West

Wilshire council, in an either independent session

between the two of you or a mediated session that

the Department would bring together --

KEN DRAPER: As you're aware, we've -- we've

been willing to participate in that mediation

process all along.

We've been willing to participate in the

mediation process all along. We weren't -- we

weren't the group who decided not to. There's a

proposal there which is one of three efforts on our

part to bring the group together. So it's apparent

that our attitude is that the group should come

together.

What I -- my question to you is, if we --

if we do that again, if we talk to the group here

for a moment and agree that that's a good idea, and

there still is no -- we still don't get together,
tell us what happens then.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: This is not intended
to be an open-ended process, if that's what you're

concerned about. We're asking that a -- that an

additional step be taken so that we're comfortable

in our own -- in reviewing the situation that we've

made every effort possible to bring the neighborhood
together in -- in the views expressed here tonight.

KEN DRAPER: I think it would be helpful for us

in making our decision about this if we heard from

the other group. And I mention it only because in

all of that mediation and in the proposals that we

extended, not once was there ever any return

effort. No one ever said, "Well, here's an idea.

Here's a possibility for making change. Some of

your ideas aren't quite right, but could you do this

instead?" And so there wasn't any effort there.

I think we -- it would help us to know

that they're ready and prepared to try to do that

with us. We would like to do that. We would like

to get it together. But we'd like to know that the

other group is interested really in doing it, too.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Mr. Curtin.

DAN CURTIN: I'll speak for myself because I
certainly think that we should get the community together in this whole process. And I can't speak for our whole board because we don't -- unfortunately I don't have a quorum here.

But I certainly am willing to put forth the effort to see if there's some common ground that we can work with. And yes, previously there was -- mediation did not seem like a good -- because of the philosophical differences, we didn't see the wisdom in it. But this is a different situation now. And we want to -- we want to be a participant in the process, so I think we -- I think I could convince the rest of the group to participate in that process.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
DAN CURTIN: So --
MS. POINDEXTER: Excuse me. Just for clarity, though -- this is Gwen Poindexter, city attorney.
As an applicant, he's -- he can consent to the continuance.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.
MS. POINDEXTER: It's not necessary for him to speak on behalf of the board, just so we understand for the purposes of the plan, the ordinance, and to continue the case.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Okay. Mr. President.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.
COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Okay. Mr. President,

is a motion required then on our behalf?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Well, first we would have to have a -- a formal response from both applicants to consent to a continuance. And so, Mr. Curtin, I'm going to --
COMMISSIONER STONE: Mr. President, a point of order. And I'm all in favor of making this work, but we have just disapproved the applicant. So is it even right --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The motion formally was to approve and we -- the motion failed.
COMMISSIONER STONE: Okay. Thanks.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. So Mr. Curtin, I will -- I will acknowledge your acceptance of the -- or willingness to a continuance.
KEN DRAPER: Could I ask one other question?
Could I ask one other question?
KEN DRAPER: In terms of time, how -- how much time are we talking about here? I mean, is this -- is this a thing that could -- we could be another six months, or if we make a honest effort here to get this together can -- will it be -- will it be
heard again?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I would assume that it would take no more than say 30 days to conclude your process and that you would -- that staff would report back to us with the result of that and then we would reschedule the case for further consideration.

KEN DRAPER: So it could be like 60 days before we're back?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Something in that -- in that range at most.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Mr. President.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: In the past I believe that we have requested 45 days turnaround in terms of mediation, and I believe that's the time that we've requested before. 45, correct? So -- Romero?

ROMERO: Commissioner, we need to verify. The application identified several contact persons --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

ROMERO: -- that could speak for the group.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

ROMERO: We just need to verify whether this gentleman is one of the contact persons.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I believe he is.

Okay.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: So --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Assuming that we have a 45-day time frame within which staff will report back to us as to the outcome of your attempt at mediation, is that acceptable?

KEN DRAPER: All right. I'm not -- please accept, I'm not trying to be difficult about this and I'm not trying to make it personal.

We went through this before where people weren't -- somehow they're never available to meet. And yes, an honest effort we're -- we're willing to do that. We've been willing all along and want -- and want to get together. But --

DAN CURTIN: So your answer is yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The assumption, Ken, is that --

COMMISSIONER STONE: I mean, it's pretty simple.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We're -- we're -- we will hold to the time frame. If --

KEN DRAPER: All right.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: If you cannot meet, if for whatever reason the sides decide not to meet --

COMMISSIONER STONE: Mr. President.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: -- during that period --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Then do they come back with their applications that they have submitted --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: -- we do that all over again?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Without the hearing.

KEN DRAPER: The answer is yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Point of order, please.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Commissioner Stone had a question.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Yeah, I have -- I just want to clarify what the 45-day period would be. Because I certainly -- I think Mr. Cornwell, in quoting the business journal article, made some very valid points.

But I think it's -- what could happen is if we don't have a neighborhood council in this area and we -- the west side part of the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles as a whole could be a much worse place, and I would not be happy about that being the commissioner that has the regional representation from the west side.

Now, what I'd like to clarify is what the 45-day period would be. Is that just for staff to report back for us?

I would be -- further on the point of order, be interested in seeing if the commission feels comfortable enough to schedule a date certain or a time certain where this application will be back before us.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I'm happy to set a date certain that would be no more than 60 days out to recalendar the -- well, assuming the 45-day period and that there will be a time frame that the staff would have to prepare a report and formally circulate it to both -- both sides and the commission in order to be able to get back here.

MS. POINDEXTER: Yeah, thank you. Gwen Poindexter, city attorney.

Just a point for your information, that when you continue to a date certain, it alleviates the need to have to repost the hearing. So that is an advantage, so to speak. Otherwise we would have -- if it's an unknown date, you have to repost and renotice and provide the written notice.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Well, if we pick a date that's eight weeks from today, which would be somewhere around the 20th of June -- yes?

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I believe that we're scheduled through May 27th or thereabouts.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We're actually scheduled through June 11th, last time I looked.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: May 28th. So if we're going to begin to -- and I agree with Commissioner Stone, we need to give a date so that the applicants
are comfortable coming back after working with the
Department and after working among themselves.
I want to make sure that we're being
equally -- or that we equally give the time to all
of the other neighborhood councils as we move on.
Because as an example, when we did Glassell Park we
gave a 45 day when we -- I believe Franklin and
Hollywood, I don't know where we're at. I don't
think we gave a number of days.
So we need to standardize at least here
some way of asking the applicants to work through
this and, you know, come back to the Department with
an answer.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: As I said, I think
today, which would be about the 20th of June on a
Tuesday, which -- pardon? June 25th? Okay. So it
would be June 25th would be the date that we would
come back.
DAN CURTIN: I'm sorry. The date again?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: June 25th would be
the date that we reconvene.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do we go through this
whole process (inaudible)?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: No, we do not. It
would not involve a public hearing at that point.
So --
KEN DRAPER: You would make your decision based
on the staff reports?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We would take -- we
would have a presentation from the applicants if we
-- if we so chose at that point. But we do not
necessarily have to reopen the public hearing.
MS. POINDEXTER: Well, I beg to differ. City
Attorney Gwen Poindexter.
Since it is going to be a unified
application, we would have to take some testimony,
limited public comment. You're right, not a
full-blown hearing, but we could limit the time and
limit it to two -- just the issues related to the
unified application. But we would have to have some
sort of hearing process, or testimony.
KEN DRAPER: Excuse me. What --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We'll work through
that.
ROMERO: This is if they become back with the
unified application. If they come back --
MS. POINDEXTER: That's if they came back with
a unified application, correct.
KEN DRAPER: What happens if we come back and
it's not a unified? Do we have to go through this
or will you -- will you make a decision? That's
what we want to know. Will the council make a
decision? If we come back in 60 days and it's not
unified, we've gone through this all over again --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We will make a decision.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Mr. President, I would like to make a motion to, in 60 days, on June 25th at the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, make a decision on which neighborhood council will exist in this area, whether it's one group or the other or a unified application.

MS. POINDEXTER: Point of order. That wouldn't be -- that motion would be predetermining the commission's action. What you can do is make a motion to continue both matters to the date certain, assuming the consent of the applicants.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay. We'll do that. To continue it and to make a decision at that time? Or just to continue it to that time?

ROMERO: Just to continue it. The matter's --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: It will be continued in agenda as it is at this point for action.

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Okay.

ROMERO: Excuse me. I --

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: I'll second that motion.

RICKI EVRUTIN: I'd like to get a little bit of clarification. I'm a little clear -- my -- my understanding is that within 60 days of the date that you mentioned a decision will be made. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We will have every intention of making a decision.

RICKI EVRUTIN: All right.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: However, we can't prejudge our actions at that point.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will -- are we given maybe -- it may be something worth considering -- a cut-off date, a mandatory final date by which we are to resolve, to complete our mediation process?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I would suggest that 45 days from now that that process be complete in the manner in such the staff can report to us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm wondering if it might be -- it might be more productive if we have a firm date, final date set by you to urge -- so that to induce both sides to -- to come to some resolution so that it's not dragged out and dragged out.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: As I said, I would expect that within 45 days you will have completed the process such that staff will have time to transcribe the actions and report back to the commission before the June 25th date. So six weeks from now the process will be complete.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Six weeks from now we will -- we can be mediating up until that -- end of that sixth week?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Up until, yes, the process --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The staff has to have the report.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We have to have two weeks roughly to prepare the report and communicate --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you give us a date by which we will finish? I know it sounds picky --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Subtract 14 from 25.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But I realize --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: So it would be the 11th of June.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The 11th of June our mediation shall have been completed. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER STONE: But Mr. President, realistically it's on the agenda for June 25th. If they are at a crucial point on June 11th, you know, it could go on. The key date is June 25th.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STONE: For -- it will be placed on this agenda for action.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: For our instructions to the group such that they're comfortable, we would expect staff to have -- begin preparing the report on June 11th for presentation on the 25th.

JIM O'SULLIVAN: Could we ask for some input?

Will we get any input because -- I do value what I'm hearing here, I mean, and I'm -- you know, and we know the differences. We know what separates us. And it's a big gulf.

So my concern is that we don't get locked into the community room at the Farmer's Market again with the mediator and, boy, that wasn't fun, you know, and nothing really came out of it. So I think we really, really would appreciate some input.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I think we've given you a certain amount of input in the last 45 minutes or so. And you have the option at this point which we asked Mr. Draper a few minutes ago to say whether or not you would be willing to go into that extended process.

And those are the rules at this point, if you choose to say yes or you choose to say no.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Excuse me. Can you both who are at your podium, just identify yourselves for the record again? We just have to make sure that we can identify the speakers. Thank you.

JIM O'SULLIVAN: Jim O'Sullivan.

ROMERO: Thank you. And yourself, madam?

RICKI EVRUTIN: Ricki Evrutin. I'm on the
provisional board.

    ROMERO: Great. Thank you.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: All right. We understand that both applicants at this point --

    Mr. Draper, will you confirm that the applicants will consent to a continuance?

    KEN DRAPER: Yes, we will.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. With that, we have a motion and a second before the commission to continue the -- these two applications to a date certain of June 25th, and is there any discussion of that motion?

    No discussion. Poll the commission.

    Commissioner Membreno.

    COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Yes.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Longoria.

    COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Herrera-Duran.

    COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Yes.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

    COMMISSIONER STONE: No.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Woods Gray.

    COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Yes.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Luchente.

    COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Yes.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: And my, yes. Okay.

    I wish you luck. I understand that the hurdles are considerable, but please take the extra step and we'll come back on the 25th. Thank you.

    COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Mr. President, is it possible that the Department can give us updates on the -- on the mediation schedules, the meetings that are scheduled to go ahead --

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We can --

    COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: -- so that we have some idea as to how they're moving along.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We can talk about that in commissioner comment --

    COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Okay.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: -- later on.

    UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Commissioner.

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: All right. Thank you all.

    UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: May I be recognized?

    You mentioned five alternatives. I didn't see any discussion on the -- one of the five, the three that you -- about the third one of maybe having two councils. You said the population was over 50,000.

    We could have two --

    COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: We -- the public
hearing has been closed. The commission has taken
an action for tonight. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, why didn't this
come up?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: There is a mediation
that will be scheduled to go forward. That's one of
the ideas that could be discussed in that session.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Where -- where can we
attend this and how?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Staff will get --
will let you know.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Believe it or
not, there are still other items on the agenda for
this evening, so we're still here for a while. All
I have to do is find an agenda.
Let's see if there's anything here that we
have to deal with. The items number 3 and 4,
continued discussions of adoption of general
manager's recommendation regarding encouraging
neighborhood councils to organize around smaller

population groups and discussion of possible
recommendation to amend the ordinance regarding
moving neighborhood council areas from one sector to
another or one neighborhood council to another.
And we've talked about scheduling a
special session to discuss board policy in a
separate meeting other than certification hearings.
The two discussion items at the discretion
of my fellow board members can be continued.
COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Mr. President, I move
that we table those two items.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: The rest of the
agenda.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I think we have a
motion and a second.
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I second.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes. All those in
favor, yes.
(Ayes)
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: The discussion
regarding a special meeting to discuss board policy,
there was a poll by Taneda regarding a separate day
versus starting a meeting early, and I don't -- is
she here?
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Taneda?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I didn't -- I suggested
a third thing, that we have a meeting in lieu of
hearings.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Can I --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner
Membreno.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: First of all, I want to
thank all the commissioners for being here tonight
because this is an important issue that came up at
the last time, and it's the issue on taking some of
the policies and procedures on a separate meeting.
It has been a little difficult to get -- let me try
to speak over the --
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Can I ask everybody
to take the conversations outside so we can actually
continue our agenda.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: It has been a little
difficult to work on policies and procedures, so I
brought this item up at the last meeting so maybe we
can take a look at different days or a combination
of things to be able to do that.
I think it's -- it's crucial for us to
move along in those veins and making -- now, after
23 neighborhood councils, to make some path of
trying to give it a try to make some policies and
some standardization of procedures.
So I believe, Taneda, you took a vote on
-- or not a vote. A poll. Sorry.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: And what was the
result?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was the poll?
(Inaudible)
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I didn't answer.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Did anybody respond?
TANEDA: Yes, I had two responses, or three.
Ron said either one was fine with him. That's
either one, four o'clock -- meet at four o'clock and
-- for our 6:30 meeting or the other one. And for
give me because I don't remember.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: It's a different day?
TANEDA: Oh, a different day. Exactly. Pat
wanted further discussion and --
COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: No, I didn't. I
wanted a day in which we don't have a hearing,
application hearing, can we use those days instead
of adding an additional time.
TANEDA: Okay. And then -- forgive me, I don't
have a note. And that's all I think I got a
response from.
COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I actually answered
you. I said four o'clock.
TANEDA: Four o'clock. Okay.
COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Can I respond to that?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Yes.
COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: I don't really believe
we have enough time from 4:00 till meeting starts to
discuss all the policy that we need to discuss. I
mean, we haven't had any policy discussion at all.
And --
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: We'll take one policy
at a time.
COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Huh? Take one policy
at a time?

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I would prefer to probably set a separate session to talk about the policy issues on a separate day just to be able to get in enough time and to -- to get in enough discussion.

I also think that while we have seven commissioners here tonight, that in order to make up for some the off time that we all spend trying to do all this, the fact that we may not need to have all commissioners present for all meetings and we can --

we can help each other by sort of covering it at various times and try all to make the policy meeting that -- that we can set up if we can try to canvas for a particular day, that would help us out.

If there were -- if there are any preferences for days of the week --

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: I would like to ask if there's any days in which we could, instead of having the application hearing, that we could schedule it in the very near future.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Our problem is that we're calendared out through almost the middle of June at this point with -- with regard to our pending applications.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Is that (inaudible).

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: I would -- I would agree with having a different day just because the issues are -- you know, we still haven't answered Romero's question on boundary overlaps and we -- I mean, it came to the table and it died there. So I mean, I really --

(END of tape C, side A)

COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: -- comfortably with -- to the next hearing and have some -- some idea where we're going.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any days of the week preferable to the commissioners?

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: I think perhaps we can e-mail some dates and do it that way. I don't have my schedule here.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: Yeah, 'cause I don't have my schedule with me.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. All right. Well, let's ask Taneda, and I'll work with Taneda to try to pick a date. We can -- we can schedule a separate session on policy questions. Okay?

And Jim, we've already tabled 3 and 4, so --

JIM: I wrote you a note.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Oh. Okay. All right. General manager's report?

Thank you, Greg. That was good. You really --

GREG NELSON: If you want me to.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Briefly.
COMMISSIONER MEMBRENO: Come on, we've been here already six hours.
GREG NELSON: Greg Nelson, general manager. On a couple of handouts that I gave you that we felt were kind of important, number one, we got a chance to finally -- to look at the brand new proposed budget on Monday and we provided you with some material showing you the features of that, which may end up making us one the most disliked departments in the city.

I don't know if we are the only ones that got an increase in our budget, but certainly no one got an increase the size that we did. But of course, being a growing and evolving department and somebody who's on the upswing, I really honestly don't think anyone's going to complain about that because it's all quite understandable what we're doing and where we're going and the increased workload.

So the important dates to remember is that the city council's budget and finance committee will begin having its hearings starting Monday. The City Attorney's office will be on Monday. Our Department will be on Tuesday afternoon between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.

And that's -- the reason I mention the City Attorney's hearing, 'cause that's of special importance to us perhaps even more so than our own budget because the City Attorney's budget did not include additional funds to support the City Attorney's neighborhood council advice division, which consists of Gwen Poindexter. And that is a separate issue that is going to be tackled between now and then as to how to get additional support for her that we are going to need and that the neighborhood councils are going to need.

The second part of the report that I have in writing for you was a report on the first seminar that we had on elections that was actually attended by a couple of additional groups other than the ones that I mentioned, so it looks like there's probably a dozen different neighborhood councils came and got some direct training and questions answered by the City Attorney's office and the League of Women's Voters and the City Clerk's office.

So they -- that was very helpful and we're going to be continuing that for the other neighborhood councils.

And then the third part was we're going to be having a more in-depth analysis of what happened at the first very official election that was held in Central San Pedro. And there was some interesting developments there.

But staff is going to be getting together
very shortly discussing all of that, looking at the
lessons learned and then being able to use that to
guide us through the subsequent elections so
hopefully they will go more smoothly.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.
Commissioner comment? Commissioner
Membreno? Commissioner Longoria? Commissioner
Herrera-Duran? Commissioner Stone?

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you. Just Jim Mc
Quistin passing notes, I have this feeling that your
house -- that little notepad by the telephone is the
city comment card. And that's what you write notes
on all the time. Just -- just to -- I don't know
why I'm speaking because we're past midnight. But
with Greg, you know, after midnight I go nuts.
The meeting that Greg mentioned,
Commissioner Membreno, Commissioner Longoria and I
attended that budget -- that budget briefing. It
was impressive to me in that not just that we
received such a strong increase but that the Mayor's
office was there, the CAO, the CLA 's office,
Department staff, and some members of our
commission.

So clearly this -- even though I'm new to
the commission, this appears to be quite different
than what's happened in the past. So I was very
happy to hear that.

Then the other comment I wanted to make on
what transpired tonight would be my hope that the
Department staff, since they are -- since things are
fresh in everyone's mind, that outreach to the two
groups can happen as soon as possible. And in my
mind we're already into the next day, so today if at
all possible to start laying the parameters for the
mediation and how we move this process forward.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Woods
Gray.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I would like to know
if it's possible, Greg, that we could get just a
little update to know when mediations are scheduled
and so we can see the time line of how you're moving
ahead.

I think we have some others from the past
that you're working on. Perhaps if we just had an
idea as to how you're moving ahead.

GREG NELSON: Okay. We will get you that.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: And the other thing
is that I -- I'm not sure because I'm not that
familiar with the mediation, but there seems to be
some concern in the community about the mediation
process, or the people that come to do it or
something. There's -- I just brought the -- I'm
just bringing that to your attention so maybe you
could look into it, too.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER LUCHENTE: Yes, it always seems that we get to the general manager's report late in the evening, so I know we've recommended for a written report, but I had questions about like the outreach contracts and a number of the previous items. Even if we could get some kind of bullet -- you know, a summary even in bullet form would be really helpful, Greg.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: One last one. I want to thank all the staff for all the hard work. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: Thanks for dinner.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Clearly our staff does not get the recognition that they deserve for putting up with all of us and all of the people out there and hopefully making this program work in the long term. So thank you all again for -- for your efforts.

The last part of the evening we always come down to are the accepting of public complements, and we have three or four people who have waited it out to talk to us.

George, you're first, followed by Russ Brown, Doris Lee, and Joan Lux.

GEORGE ABRAHAMS: George Abrahams, Franklin Hollywood Hills community council.

At last night's bylaws mediation meeting between Franklin Hollywood Hills community council and the Hollywood Alliance, Andrew Glazer, speaking for the Hollywood Alliance said, quote, "If I hear that anyone from the merged neighborhood council is speaking against Yucca Corridor being included in the merged neighborhood council I will walk and no one will get certified." End quote.

Three points: First, there is a misunderstanding that our neighborhood councils have merged. We are still two independent organizing efforts who have designated negotiating teams to, (a), establish a protocol for Yucca self-determination, (b), resolve the boundary differences other than Yucca, and (c), to draft a common bylaws. Until that is completed we are not one merged neighborhood council organization.

Second, this is an attempt by the Hollywood Alliance to use duress to squelch free speech. Very unAmerican.

And third, there is the belief that the Hollywood Alliance has the power to endlessly thwart certification. Franklin Hollywood Hills has been in mediation with the Hollywood Alliance for six months. We've served our time in hell.
Furthermore, Andrew Glazer is a former DONE insider, having participated in the drafting of neighborhood council ordinance, and the swagger that he exhibits is upsetting to me. I ask the BONC to affirm the right of Franklin Hollywood Hills community council supporters to express their opinions to Yucca stakeholders to confirm that the Hollywood Alliance cannot tie up certification by such an action and, if the Hollywood Alliance does make good on their threat, to approve the Franklin Hollywood Hills community council application.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

RUSS BROWN: I'm with Franklin Hollywood Hills Hollywood Alliance, too. Welcome to Wednesday morning.

George is correct that it's been difficult. I'm willing to give it a very different take than where he is, at least at this point. We've had some really, really good meetings. We've reached agreement on almost a hundred percent --

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: You were in the same meetings that George were in?

RUSS BROWN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Just checking.

RUSS BROWN: We've reached agreement on a hundred percent of the bylaws. We did have a really difficult meeting last night.

I had a lengthy conversation with Michelle today. One of our last points of disagreement, which I think is part of the emotions of what we're going through because people realize that once we resolve this issue we truly have to work together through all of this and I think we're well on our way, we're presented with sort of a unique position that we're doing Yucca stakeholders meetings as a unified group. It will be ourselves, Franklin Hollywood Hills, Hollywood Alliance, and Hollywood Hills West doing presentations to the Yucca community.

And what I request is we really need to work with the DONE staff -- and Michelle has said she's willing to do this -- to really get some mandates or some guidelines or some --some help here to help us format these meetings in a way that we're not having to make decisions as individuals that are both trying to work together but we both have very divergent opinions of where Yucca needs to be.

So if we can somehow work with your staff in the next week or so to work through some of those issues, I think we're well on our way to having the last issue finally resolved.

COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What do we need -- do we need to take a step to ask the staff to work with them, Greg, or -- no?
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I think they'll --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're going to do that?
Okay. Thank you.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Okay. All right.
Doris Lee. Okay. Then Joan Lux.
JOAN LUX: Good evening. Joan Lux. Thank you.
I'm so sorry it's late. I'll try to be very quick.
In response to what Russell was just speaking about in the -- this unique situation where over Yucca that Franklin Hollywood and Hollywood Alliance and Hollywood Hills West neighborhood council, I am a stakeholder clearly in Hollywood Hills West and, again, I have been excluded from the process. I have not been included in these meetings. I have not been notified. I have requested over and over again.
I mean, I beg upon you to understand that Hollywood Hills West is not meeting the benchmark of the certification process. I am not allowed to go to these meetings. I have not been notified of these meetings.
And I am in the process, Hami Nasser from the City Attorney's office is in the process of arranging mediation between our group and Hollywood Hills West, and I was just told this evening that the Department is going to agendize them for May 7th. And I'm requesting that you postpone that because we are in mediation.
And I know it's unusual because I am not -- our group is only an association and it's not a neighborhood council, but Hollywood Hills West is agreeing to mediation and they're in the process of working out the final details and we've given them dates. And I think that the issues can be resolved in two meetings.
So I don't know how you can do May 7th when you seem to be booked already. If you look at your calendar, I see through here May 21st, May 28th. So I'm asking if you would consider making that request to -- you know, to postpone this until we can get -- there's no sense in having us mediating if they are already certified. And they're clearly in breach of the inclusive policy, which is our issue. I haven't even been told about these meetings.
I appreciate your help with this. Thank you.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. Okay. That concludes public comment for the evening.
I will entertain a motion to get out of here.
COMMISSIONER HERRERA-DURAN: So moved.
COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER: I think we have a motion and about seven seconds. And all those in favor, let's leave.

(Ayes)

(End of tape C, side B)

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