

Date: November 21, 2001

To: Neighborhood Leaders

From: Greg Nelson, General Manager, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

## GOVERNING BOARD QUESTION

A question has arisen regarding the ability of developing neighborhood councils to elect their governing body before they are certified.

The City Attorney's Office advised the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners at a previous meeting that this cannot be done.

The reason is that there is no official governing body of a Neighborhood Council before it is certified. Therefore, it is not possible to legally ratify a body that has been selected and/or elected since there had been no right to create the governing body in advance within the meaning of The Plan to Create a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils ("Plan").

Since some group's elections will likely have been held after the City Attorney expressed this opinion, the Board feels it is very possible that many stakeholders may not vote, or run for a position, in a pre-certification election, feeling that the election would not be binding. Therefore, an additional reason exists to not allow a simple ratification vote of governing board members who were elected before certification. So, a new election would have to be held during which new candidates may run, and new stakeholders may vote. The idea is give all stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the process.

So here is the official message (please remember that the database I inherited doesn't allow me to send e-mails to just those who are in the process of forming a neighborhood council, so this message might not be important to some of you):

"Any selection and/or election of officers that occurs by community groups forming neighborhood councils before becoming certified as a Neighborhood Council by the City of Los Angeles will be considered by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment as an interim or a temporary body. After certification, Neighborhood Councils will need to conduct the selection and/or election of their officers by the community stakeholders, whichever method is used by the certified Neighborhood Council to create its governing body.

Therefore, it is possible for an interim or temporary body to serve as the official governing body of a certified Neighborhood Council if it is selected or elected by the community stakeholders after certification, in accordance with its by-laws."

## WHO'S IN THE BALL GAME:

To date we've received applications from:

1. Coastal San Pedro  
December 11, Banning's Landing Museum

2. Wilmington  
Ditto
3. Glassell Park  
January 8, Fletcher Drive Elementary School (tentative)
4. Granada Hills North  
January 15, Van Gogh Elementary School (tentative)
5. Westchester/Playa del Rey, January 22, Location TBA (tentative)
6. Franklin-Hollywood Hills, January 29, Location TBA (tentative)
7. West Hills, February 5, Location TBA (tentative)
8. Westside Neighborhood Council
9. West Adams Neighborhood Council
10. Mid-City Neighborhood Council
11. Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council
12. Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council
13. Old Northridge Community Council
14. Hollywood Alliance Neighborhood Council
15. Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council
16. Northridge Community Council

Shortly, despite the hiring freeze, we hope to have all this information and more on our Web site.

#### MORE MONEY FOR PRINTING AND POSTAGE

On Wednesday, November 21, 2001, Councilwoman Janice Hahn introduced a motion that asked the City Council to allow the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to use \$300,000, which was earmarked in the budget for the department, for additional printing and postage that is so badly needed by the forming neighborhood councils, and by the about-to-be certified Neighborhood Councils. As many of you know, the amount that was set aside in the current budget has not been nearly enough to allow groups to do adequate outreach.

The motion was referred to the Education and Neighborhoods Committee (Hahn, Padilla, LaBonge) and to the Budget and Finance Committee (Pacheco, Weiss, Hahn, Miscikowski, Garcetti). Since Councilwoman Hahn introduced the motion, it is likely that the motion will sail through that committee. Therefore, the important committee becomes the Budget and Finance Committee which has recently be enlarged to include five members. It is the practice of the City

Council that the chair of the committee (the first name listed here) determines when each matter comes before their committee.

Should you wish to express your feelings about this motion, and the one below, you should contact the City Council members of your choice. Those who support or oppose the motion will welcome your support, and those are undecided also welcome your comments. This is what democracy is all about. You can send e-mail messages to the City Council members from the city's Web site at [www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org), or by using the list that we'll be sending in the next message to you. .

The full text of the motion is also toward the end of this message.

## IMPROVING TRANSLATION SERVICES

DONE knows first-hand the need for providing adequate translation services. This applies to its written materials, and its public meetings, and well as the similar needs of the forming and certified neighborhood councils. But the need is just as great within other departments.

Currently, every department funds for itself when it comes to translation services. It shouldn't be that way.

On Wednesday, November 21, 2001, Councilmembers Janice and Tom LaBonge co-presented a motion that was seconded by Councilmember Eric Garcetti to address this problem on a citywide basis. Several solutions are possible. They include making better use of city employees, and possibly making the City Clerk responsible for a citywide policy on translation services. The motion asks the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), City Clerk, and Personnel Department to address the issue and make recommendations to the City Council.

This motion was referred to both the Education and Neighborhoods Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee.

The full text is at the end of this message.

## CITY COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION NEEDS OUTREACH SPECIALIST

Every 10 years, the City must draw new boundaries for the City Council and Board of Education Districts. That time is now. The City Council Redistricting Commission needs to, almost immediately, contract with someone to help them with outreach until March 1. It will be an exciting and challenging job. The following is the job announcement. Interested parties should call the commission's executive director, Frank Cardenas. Things are moving so fast that he doesn't have an office yet, so you can only reach him on his cell phone at 213.220.4444. Serious applicants only for this high-level position.

Summary of duties: Directs, organizes and implements public outreach activities of the City Council Redistricting Commission; participates in the development of an outreach plan that utilizes various means and media to stimulate active public participation in the redistricting process.

Distinguishing features: The Outreach Specialist of the City Council Redistricting Commission will have extensive experience in designing and implementing community outreach programs in highly diverse communities. The Outreach Specialist will need to devote her/his full effort in the support of Commission outreach activities, including planning and overseeing all aspects relating to public hearings and meetings, preparing written outreach materials, managing as-needed contractors, and making public presentations. The Outreach Specialist will report to and operate under the direction and supervision of the Executive Director of the Commission.

Examples of Duties: The Outreach Specialist for the City Council Redistricting Commission:

1. Maintains liaison with public and private organizations concerned with City Council

redistricting, including non-profit and community-based organizations;

2. Provides information to the public on Commission activities;
3. Oversees and supports the activities of outreach activities by Commission members, such as a Commission Speakers Bureau;
4. Participates in the development of Commission materials and messages across a variety of media, including brochures, press releases, website content, advertisements and briefing materials.

Qualifications: It is desirable that the Outreach Specialist have the following;

Good knowledge of:

1. Communities of interest in the City of Los Angeles;
2. Public and private organizations interested in the redistricting process;
3. Event planning;
4. Message development;
5. Media relations.

The ability to:

1. Organize public meetings and hearings;
2. Deal tactfully with elected officials, Commissioners, representatives of community organizations and employees;
3. Make effective oral presentations to a wide variety of groups.

Minimum requirements: Two years experience in an administrative position with community outreach responsibilities. Secondary language ability desirable.

Licenses: A valid California driver's license may be required.

As provided in Civil Service Commission Rule 2.5 and Section 4.55 of the Administrative Code, this specification is descriptive, explanatory and not restrictive. It is not intended to declare what all the duties, responsibilities and required qualifications of any position shall be.

## REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MEETING

There will be a big public hearing of the commission on Tuesday, November 27, 2001 at the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies, 5931 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Los Angeles. The commission meeting will be from 6-7:00 p.m., and the public hearing from 7-8:30 p.m.

## FULL TEXT

### MOTION RE: PRINTING AND POSTAGE FUNDS FOR DONE

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) was established by the new City Charter, which was approved by voters on June 8, 1999. The Council approved the Department's Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils in June 2001, and DONE has been engaged in assisting forming Neighborhood Councils (NC) in their efforts to become certified Neighborhood Councils. To date, 15 groups have applied to become certified Neighborhood Councils.

A critical component of organizing and providing outreach to under-represented communities includes developing, copying and circulating notifications to all stakeholders within anticipated

NC boundaries throughout the City. The current DONE Budget (\$3,696,908) was based on 10-20 Neighborhood Councils being certified during Fiscal Year 2001/02, however, it is estimated that as many as 90 forming NC's are preparing to apply for certification in the coming months. Given this trend, the current budget allocation is therefore not adequate to provide the required level of copying and outreach resources for both forming and certified Neighborhood Councils.

The Education and Neighborhoods Committee is dedicated to ensuring that forming and certified Neighborhood Councils receive an increased level of service from DONE for this purpose. To that end, the \$300,000 in the Unappropriated Balance already earmarked for DONE would be sufficient to provide the additional copying and outreach support to assist the forming and certified Neighborhood Councils.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:  
Instruct the Controller to transfer \$300,000 from the Unappropriated Balance to DONE Fund 44B for purposes of providing additional copying and outreach resources to forming and certified Neighborhood Councils and their stakeholders.

FULL TEXT  
MOTION RE: TRANSLATION

As the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) begins to certify the city's first official neighborhood councils, it is becoming apparent that there are some areas where the city needs to do more to ensure the new system's success.

One of the most challenging requirements placed on DONE is to provide translation services for neighborhood council meetings (Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils, Article VI, Item 12D). With up to 100 neighborhood councils projected to be formed and over 100 languages spoken in the city, it may be unrealistic to expect DONE to take on the major task of providing translation services on top of all the other important work that the Charter requires of it.

A better option might be to place responsibilities for translation services with another office that has more experience providing these services. The City Clerk already provides a Spanish language translator for City Council meetings and prints election ballots in multiple languages, and seems a logical place to perform these services.

With the City's new emphasis on bringing government to the people other departments beside DONE will be holding meetings in the community. Surely they could also benefit from access to better translation services. As examples, ITA could use translators to offer Spanish language versions of City Web pages; numerous city departments could use help translating materials and correspondence into multiple languages; the City Council would benefit from the services as well, whenever it or one of its committees holds meetings outside City Hall; and the mayor's office could use translators for meetings with foreign dignitaries.

The city need not hire a large number of permanent employees to provide these services. One way to inexpensively provide translation services is to take better advantage of our own city resources. A survey could be completed of city workers to find out what languages they speak

and whether they would be willing to attend evening meetings or translate documents in their spare time for a small honorarium.

Another option is to produce a list of licensed translators who can be called in on short notice to attend meetings. The County Courts system uses private companies for its translation services, as does the City Clerk. Developing a list of private contractors would provide another, albeit more expensive, way to access these services.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the CAO, CLA, Personnel Department and City Clerk report on the feasibility of establishing a translation division within the City Clerk's office to provide translators for public meetings and translate materials into multiple languages.

I FURTHER MOVE that the report assess how many full time translation and support employees would be needed to staff the new division and provide basic services needed by DONE and other departments.

I FURTHER MOVE that the report compare the costs involved in hiring staff, using contractors, and paying stipends to city employees to provide translation services.

I FURTHER MOVE that the report address what steps it will take to survey the entire city workforce to ascertain what languages employees speak and whether they would make themselves available to attend evening meetings for reasonable compensation.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Personnel Department report on the personnel issues involved with this proposal and whether providing compensation to city employees for work performed in addition to their regular duties would be permissible under existing City, state and federal law. The Department should offer suggested solutions to allow maximum flexibility to provide translation services using city resources to the best extent possible.

#### IMPORTANT MESSAGE:

1. Our records show that you expressed an interest in receiving information, such as newsletters like this, from the department. If you wish to discontinue receiving this information, simply type the word UNSUBSCRIBE in the Subject line, and e-mail it back to us. Your record will be removed from the mailing list as soon as possible.
2. The new City Charter requires the department to create a database of neighborhood organizations, and make it available to the public through various means that could include the Internet. This is so everyone can have an opportunity, perhaps for the first time, to communicate with each other on a grand scale, and build strength through unity. Telephone numbers will not be included on the public database, which will be different than the database that we use to keep you informed. If you would like to be removed just from the public database, please type the words NO PUBLIC in the Subject line, and e-mail it back to us.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Greg Nelson

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