

Date: January 19, 2004

To: Neighborhood Council Leaders

From: Greg Nelson, General Manager, Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment

Subject: FORM 700 – FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE. CITYWIDE ELECTION PROCEDURES. SAFER COMMUNITIES MEASURE.

FORM 700: FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

The Education and Neighborhoods Committee met yesterday and unanimously approved the report (that is still on our home page) which would exempt Neighborhood Councils from having to fill out the Form 700 financial disclosure form. If you subscribe to the City Council agendas through the city's Early Notification System, you will likely be among the first to know when it is scheduled for the full City Council.

As you probably already know, the Political Reform Act, the state's financial conflict of interest law, continues to apply to Neighborhood Council board members. This information is included in the board orientation folders that are distributed by us whenever new boards are installed, and it is on our website.

The Office of City Attorney will be designing special training sessions on the very complex issue of what may constitute a conflict of interest, and "take it on the road."

Now, and after those classes are provided, the golden rule is always, "When in doubt, ask the City Attorney through your Project Coordinator." They will get the information to the City Attorney so that an answer can be provided to you in the quickest and more accurate way. Remember that it is highly unlikely that the City Attorney will be able to respond to suspicions from third parties, because rarely if ever does the third know enough facts to allow the City Attorney to provide accurate advice.

It is up to the person who feels that they might have a conflict of interest to provide the facts. Based upon that information, the City Attorney can help. The danger of not bothering to act, is that you might find yourself in violation of the law or losing the trust of the other board members and the public.

The reason that the City Attorney requests that inquiries, such as this and others, go first to the Project Coordinator is simple. If the Office of the City Attorney finds itself having to answer the same question over and over again, their time is wasted. If the information provided is incomplete, then would have to spend even more time getting the additional information.

CITYWIDE ELECTION PROCEDURES

Acting as a committee of one at that point, Councilwoman Janice Hahn sent the proposed citywide election procedures to the full City Council, but the date hasn't been set yet.

She is recommending two changes to "Draft 24," which is on our home page. She is recommending that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, not the City Council, make the final decision on amendments to the citywide election procedures. And she recommended that the commission be able to propose changes.

The two main goals of the procedures are to make it easier for Neighborhood Councils to design their elections while still having the broadest variety of election choices, and ensuring that the stakeholders are given a reasonable amount of time to sign-up to run or vote for those who do.

SAFER COMMUNITIES MEASURE

The joint meeting of the Public Safety Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee is best summarized by the professionals. There were almost as many proposals as there were people in the room. Please visit our website and click on [Newsroom>Articles and Releases](#) to read what happened.

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