

Date: March 3, 2004

To: Neighborhood Council Leaders

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

Subject: CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENTS. SELECTING THE NEW PLANNING DIRECTOR. NEW EMERGENCY INFORMATION ALERT SYSTEM. FINDING CITY COUNCIL RECORDS.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS AND THE CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENTS

The City, through its Information Technology Agency, has been working to update the franchise agreements between the City and various local cable operators. Bankruptcies, takeovers, and consolidations within the cable industry have slowed the process, but the Mayor has said that the City remains committed to renewing franchise agreements, and he instructed ITA to ensure that we are properly prepared for future negotiations with local cable operators.

Knowing that many Neighborhood Councils have expressed interest in providing more input into cable franchise agreements, the Mayor has requested ITA to formally include Neighborhood Council representatives in the process.

Shortly, you will receive notices of public hearings that will be held in each of city's seven areas. At these meetings, Neighborhood Councils will be given the opportunity to provide input, and receive an update on the issues and process surrounding the cable franchise negotiations.

It is the Mayor's desire that soliciting input from Neighborhood Councils not be limited to these meetings, but that it occurs on an on-going basis. More information to follow about the meetings and the input process.

The Mayor told ITA that since it developed the current cable franchise needs assessment document, Neighborhood Councils have been formed, and their active participation in the process will result in a stronger cable franchise agreement for Los Angeles, and set the precedent for increased participation by Neighborhood Councils in important city business.

INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS IN THE SELECTION OF THE NEW PLANNING DIRECTOR

The Mayor said that he wants to directly involve Neighborhood Councils in the selection of the City's next Planning Director.

Surveys will be made available, and public comments will be received throughout March at the following Area Planning Commission (APC) and Planning Commission meetings:

March 10, City Planning Commission, South Valley APC

March 15, South LA APC, Harbor APC
March 16, West LA APC
March 17, North Valley APC
March 22, Central APC
March 23, East LA APC
March 31, City Planning Commission

Additionally, the Mayor will appoint a seven-member Neighborhood Council advisory group to interview the final three candidates and make a hiring recommendation directly to him. One Neighborhood Council representative from each of the City's Planning Areas will comprise the advisory group. Details to follow.

The Mayor said he is looking for someone who will promote sensible, balanced and proactive planning to preserve single-family neighborhoods, manage development in key areas, promote affordable housing, and stimulate mixed-use development and 'green' construction, especially near public transportation. Which qualities are you looking for?

EMERGENCY INFORMATION ALERT SYSTEM FOR RESIDENTS BEING DESIGNED

Using funds received from the Urban Area Security Initiative, the City will begin developing an emergency information alert system to provide the public with immediate notifications on their cell phones, e-mail, or text pagers in the event of an emergency.

Called the Community Alert System, it will enable the City to alert thousands of people at once with real-time updates on any kind of emergency event, such as severe weather incidents, wild fires, and even a terrorist attack. Messages can reach people quickly, and provide them with critical information during an emergency, such as who to contact, what areas to avoid, or where to receive more detailed information.

Once it is fully functional about June, residents will be able to subscribe to the service free of charge through the City's website and customize the information as they wish to receive it, based on geographic location or types of event. And the service will be provided with the service for free, not including any charges that their personal service provider may charge for receiving text messages.

Once again, stand-by for more details.

HELPFUL HINT: FINDING CITY COUNCIL RECORDS

The Office of the City Clerk has embarked on the newest phase of the Early Notification System. And how they are doing this despite the last few year's of the fiscal crisis, I'll never know.

In an earlier newsletter, we explained how to use the Council File Index through the city's home page at www.lacity.org. The index is great. You can read the text of motions, and track the step-by-step progress of each City Council file.

But what many people need is to read the staff and other reports that are contained within each file. So, welcome to 21st century record keeping! Until this moment, getting your hands on those reports required someone to go to the Clerk's office and have a copy made, or find someone to do it for you. Now the City Clerk's office has been using their new scanning equipment to put the reports on the city's website. If you are in the Council File Index, and the supporting reports have been scanned, all you have to do is click on the right spot and the report is yours.

The Clerk has been scanning reports into the system on a "go forward" basis. In other words, they simply don't have the resources to back in time and scan the old files. So, week-by-week, more reports will be available on line.

Be aware that not all reports can be scanned. The process is quite automated, so odd-shaped pages, such as maps won't be available.

If you can't find what you need, the best person to call is the [Legislative Assistant](#) in the City Clerk's office who is responsible for that City Council committee.

Once a file is both inactive and five years old, it is sent to the archives at the Piper Technical Center a few blocks away.

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