

Date: October 25, 2005

To: Neighborhood Council Leaders
From: Greg Nelson, General Manager
Subject: TRACKING CITY COUNCIL FILES TRACKING CITY COUNCIL FILES

Good News!

In February and April, 2003, an Early Notification System Working Group comprised of Neighborhood Council leaders and city staff proposed 16 ideas that would give the public additional early notice about actions and decisions that are about to be made at City Hall.

Some of those recommendations were approved by the Education and Neighborhoods Committee, and were sent to the Rules and Elections Committee where they sit.

However, one of the recommendations is being implemented anyway. It is the recommendation that the City Clerk publish its list of all the files that are pending in each City Council committee. The City Clerk stated at the time that he felt that publishing the list twice a year would result in a better informed public.

On September 13, 2005, the City Council adopted a position that all files that have not been placed on a City Council or committee agenda for two years, be deemed "received and filed." The City Clerk placed a list of the pending files on its website, and notified City Hall people that they have until November 10 to notify the clerk of each committee if they don't want certain files to be automatically tossed into the trash bin. That report can be found by going to the City Clerk's website at <http://cityclerk.lacity.org> and clicking on Council File Status Report. (Danger, danger Will Robinson! This report is 145 pages long!)

Ironically, the Council File mentioned above (C.F. 03-0157) that calls for the public posting of the pending files is one of the ones that will be automatically "received and filed" if a City Council member doesn't notify the City Clerk that they want it saved. Through an apparent oversight, this file does not appear on the list of the files that is pending in the Rules and Elections Committee, but it's there.

The original idea was this: Neighborhood Councils can keep up with new items only moments after they are presented to the City Clerk and referred to a committee through the city's Early Notification System. All they have to do is go to the City Clerk's website and subscribe to receive, through e-mail, lists of these new items. Click on Subscribe to Council Documents and then choose to be sent New Council Items (Referrals). But, in order to know about the backlog, the Neighborhood Councils proposed the posting of the pending files.

The pending files list also contains some very interesting proposals that, although never acted on, might still be good ideas today. It's a treasure trove for those who enjoy making public policy and making the world a better place for all.