

Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition: A Coalition of Councils General Meeting Agenda

Saturday March 4, 2023 10:00AM

Update or download Zoom software version 5.11.9 (8040) (64-bit) or better. <https://zoom.us/download>

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/99882612542>

Meeting ID: 998 8261 2542

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/adzNSCxqhi>

Meeting ID: 998 8261 2542

1. Welcome and roll call of Neighborhood Council Elected Representatives. 5 minutes
2. Approval of outstanding minutes.
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aXqQiejy_sYA7SVS6FvNNndGc8oVtheX?usp=sharing
3. Brian Wilbur, LADWP Senior Assistant General Manager Power Systems, provide an overview of the latest storm response for the electrical grid and the resiliency of the grid.
4. Motions from our member NCs and Alliances:
 - a. **Central San Pedro**
 - i. Motion expressing concern at actions by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) in placing the Hollywood Studios Neighborhood Council in “Exhaustive Efforts” and expression of no confidence in leadership of DONE.
 - ii. *Whereas*, on February 8, 2023 the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) allocated \$4,000 of Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council (HSDNC) funds to Sheriff’s Youth Fund through the Exhaustive Efforts process over the objections of duly-elected HSDNC Board members, thereby prompting multiple resignations; and
 - iii. *Whereas*, the General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), in a letter to the entire Neighborhood Council system explaining actions by DONE following its takeover of the Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council (HSDNC), claimed that HSDNC should have appealed DONE’s actions, then spent over 500 words justifying those actions, accentuating the futility of any such appeal; and
 - iv. *Whereas*, this attitude and these actions are consistent with DONE’s policies and performance over the past several years, wherein DONE inappropriately takes over entire neighborhood councils through a glib use of so-called “EE” (“Exhaustive Efforts”), or handles individual neighborhood council’s problems by issuing restrictions, rules, and regulations that limit all neighborhood councils from exercising the diversity of governance envisioned for them in the City Charter; and
 - v. *Whereas*, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment has, over the past few years, persistently increased control and decreased true service, turning the department’s name into an ironical antithesis of its stance;

- vi. *Therefore*, the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council thanks Raquel Beltrán, General Manager of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), for her service with the City; finds that we can no longer repose confidence in the present General Manager of DONE; requests that Mayor Karen Bass and the City Council appoint an acting General Manager of DONE forthwith; create a negotiated process for finding and appointing a permanent DONE General Manager; and asks all other neighborhood councils to join us in this request.
- vii. The Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council calls on the City Council or its appropriate committee to review these actions by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), and for the Mayor to consider appropriate remedial action regarding DONE.
- viii. The Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council calls on the City to place an immediate moratorium on the use of Exhaustive Efforts by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

b. Palms Letter attached at end of agenda.

c. Emergency Preparedness Alliance

- i. The ***** Neighborhood Council supports the Neighborhood Council Emergency Preparedness motion to file a CIS regarding Council File (CF) 22-1258 (Controller's report regarding the Emergency Management Dept) as follows: The city's Resiliency Plan tasked NCs with producing emergency preparedness plans for their communities. So far, the city has offered little or no help, financial or otherwise, for these projects. The Neighborhood Council Emergency Preparedness Alliance believes that help with these projects could be forthcoming if the city's Emergency Management Dept. were properly funded and staffed.
- ii. Since the Controller's Report was filed, the EMD has been tasked with responding to the Mayor's Emergency Order regarding homelessness. A recent council file, 23-0214 further tasks the EMD as follows:
- iii. "City departments must be equipped to respond in the aftermath of floods caused by atmospheric rivers. City departments, Council District offices, and City residents need a clear understanding of how to respond to major weather events, including clear methods for communicating essential safety information in the aftermath of storms, both internally between City departments and externally to the public. The City's Emergency Management Department is well equipped to serve as a coordinating authority in these situations. (Emphasis added)
- iv. I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Emergency Management Department, with assistance from any other relevant departments, to report back within 30 days with an overview of existing plans to manage weather-related emergencies with distributed impacts across the City, in addition to lessons learned from the January 2023 storms and corresponding adjustments that will be made, a clear delineation of responsibilities for preparing for and responding after an

emergency, and an identification of channels for the communication of critical safety information between City departments, Council offices, and residents.”

- v. The ***** Neighborhood Council views with concern the historic underfunding of the Emergency Management Dept and calls on the city of Los Angeles to fund EMD adequately. The Peer City Emergency Preparedness Programs Budget Comparison (FY2021-22) on page 7 of the Controller’s Report shows the funding disparity between Los Angeles and other comparable jurisdictions.
- vi. The ***** Neighborhood Council supports the Neighborhood Council Emergency Preparedness Alliance’s resolution as follows: Resolved: the NCEPA calls on the city of Los Angeles to adequately fund the EMD in order to achieve full staffing by increasing its 2023-24 budget to \$5,701,933 as requested. (February 25, 2003)

5. LANCC Elections Update.

6. Update from the WG4CC committee and motion:

- a. MOTION: Discussion and possible action for LANCC to direct the Working Group for Constructive Change to draft a "Neighborhood Council Bill of Rights" and requests the input of all Neighborhood Councils, board members and interested Stakeholders for their suggested provisions. Committee vote: 11-0-0

7. Jamie York, update on the Municipal Lobbying Ordinance. Draft letter at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Sy2g4so6zIsQpA7Keb7n3r-1GDehLASZWhckSQeWyuQ/edit>

Additional information at <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-02-14/editorial-l-a-is-finally-cracking-down-on-stealth-lobbying>

8. Motion:

- a. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition requests that all Neighborhood Councils submit a CIS to CF 23-0600 strongly requesting that the City Council places no amount restrictions on Neighborhood Council roll over funds for the FY 2023-2024 because the City Clerk Funding Division failed to provide the Neighborhood Councils in a timely manner. Furthermore, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition requests that all Neighborhood Councils submit a CIS to CF 23-0600 strongly requesting that the Neighborhood Council’s annual funding be increased to **\$100,000** for the next Fiscal Year.
- b. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition is very concerned about the recent comments made by a Board of Neighborhood Council (BONC) commissioner *“if it is time to pull the plug out, then let’s pull the plug out. If they want to become their own non-profits let’s go ahead and do that. Some of the stuff going on is absurd.”* The Neighborhood Council Coalition has been in favor of an audit of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) for years and that recommendations made from various committees and commissions be implemented when appropriate. It is the job of the BONC to create policy and to make sure that the DONE follows those policies so *“some of the stuff”* does not happen to tarnish the reputation of the Neighborhood Council system or the City of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition requests that all Neighborhood Councils submit a letter to Mayor Bass to

review the appointments of all current BONC commissioners for the betterment of the Neighborhood Council system and the stakeholders we serve.

9. Update from Budget Advocates – Co-Chairs Jennifer Goodie/Kay Hartman Budget Day is June 17, 2023
10. Update from Congress of Neighborhoods 2023 Congress. Congress Committee elections
11. Update from DONE. Raquel Beltran. Not if February.
12. Update from BONC Len Shaffer 5 minutes
13. Update from any other NC regional alliance 5 minutes
14. Announcements 5 minutes
15. Adjournment-Meeting ends at 1:00PM

Date: March xx, 2023

To: Karen Bass, Mayor of Los Angeles
Ray Regalado, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners President
Hydee Feldstein Soto, City Attorney
Kenneth Mejia, City Controller

Eunisses Hernandez, City Councilmember District 1 and chair of the Neighborhoods and Community Enrichment Committee

CC: Raquel Beltrán, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment General Manager

Re: Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council

The Palms Neighborhood Council requests that both the City Attorney and the City Controller immediately open independent investigations into the events described in the document below including under what authority, if any, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and the City Clerk Funding Division spent \$4000 on the Sheriff's Youth Foundation event (to be held on March 25, 2023) on behalf of the HSDNC.

The Palms Neighborhood Council is very concerned about the events leading to the mass resignation of Hollywood Studio District Neighborhood Council board members and their implication for the Neighborhood Council system as a whole. We are equally concerned about the response from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment General Manager.

The Hollywood Studio District NC found itself unable to make quorum on a regular basis and asked for help from the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. The Department put the Neighborhood Council under Exhaustive Efforts at the request of the NC. With Exhaustive Efforts, the Department takes much greater control of the Neighborhood Council and works to help the NC to repair its issues. It also allows the NC to operate with a smaller quorum.

At the February 8, 2023 meeting of the HSDNC, Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate Mario Hernandez announced that the NC would sponsor a Sheriff's Youth Foundation event at the \$4000 level, \$4000 being 12.5% of the NC's annual budget, adding that any board member who did not attend the event would be removed from the board. Neither a majority of the NC board members nor the stakeholders present at the meeting were in favor of the expenditure. In fact, a majority of the board members are actively opposed to the event and asked Mr. Hernandez about avenues for appeal. He responded that no appeal was possible; the decision was final. On top of that, the event is not scheduled to occur in the NC's district. In fact, it is not even taking place in the City of Los Angeles. How does this expenditure help achieve the goal of community outreach to find new board members? How does the City Clerk pay this money on behalf of the HSDNC without a Board Action Certification? We know that if our NC voted an expenditure to any organization, even one of our local public schools or our local fire station, the City Clerk would not write the check without a signed BAC.

To address some points raised in the February 18, 2023 letter from Department of Neighborhood Empowerment General Manager, Raquel Beltrán, it is not the responsibility of a Neighborhood Council to promote the Neighborhood Council system at a regional event that is held outside of the City limits and would do little if anything to help the Neighborhood Council recruit new board members and satisfy the reason the board had entered exhaustive efforts.

Any one board member, even a board member who is the chair of a committee, may not speak for the whole board. It is not uncommon for a board to disagree with a committee or even a committee chair and in this case, the board disagreed. It is disingenuous for the Department to use the one member as justification for violating the sentiments of the board. To be clear, the board member cited in the Department's response to the resignation is one of the board members who resigned.

This is not empowering the Neighborhood Council.

In response to this egregious overreach, and choosing to stand for their principles, 9 of the 11 members of the Hollywood Studio District NC board, including 100% of the executive committee, resigned February 15, 2023.

The mission of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is to promote civic engagement and make government more responsive to local needs by supporting the Neighborhood Councils throughout Los Angeles which matches its purpose as set out in Section 901 of the City Charter.

It is hard to see how forcing a Neighborhood Council to sponsor an event its board members and stakeholders oppose satisfies the Department's mission. If this forced participation can happen to Hollywood Studio District, it can happen to any Neighborhood Council.

In a letter to the Neighborhood Council board members on February 18, the General Manager asks why the HSDNC board members did not appeal to the assigned Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate's management. We understand that the NEA told them appeal was not possible so we ask a different question. Why didn't the Department reach out to the resigned board members to see what kind of accommodation would bring them back? The GM says in her letter that the Department "would have liked to have had an opportunity to work with them to resolve the matter." The opportunity still exists. All that is needed is for the Department to avail itself of it.

The letter from the General Manager seems to indicate a hurry to restaff the board. Its efforts should be directed towards restoring the resigned staff and filling the remaining open positions.

The Palms Neighborhood Council seeks the satisfaction of seeing the \$4000 funding restored to HSDNC budget, the resigned board members restored to their positions without being required to support an event in West Hollywood that they oppose, and the Department and BONC work to help the HSDNC thrive. Anything less is an injustice to the people involved, the people who elected them, and to the system as a whole and so we also ask that the Department apologize to the community and the board members involved. Finally, the Palms NC requests that the Department make the recording of the February 8, 2023 HSDNC board meeting available to the public.

The Palms Neighborhood Council finds that we no longer have confidence in the present General Manager of DONE. We request that Mayor Karen Bass and the City Council appoint an acting General Manager of DONE while they search for a permanent replacement. We also request DONE remove Mr. Hernandez for informing the NC board members there was no path for appeal when one did exist.