



Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition

<http://www.lanccoalition.org>

DRAFT – MINUTES - DRAFT

January 2, 2010

10:00 am

**Hollywood Constituent Center
6501 Fountain Avenue
Los Angeles 90028**

1. The meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** at 10:20 am by Chair, Leonard Shaffer.

2. PARTICIPANTS, self-**INTRODUCTIONS**

Ashley Zarella Hand (DLANC)

Bob Gelfand (Coastal San Pedro NC)

Purcell Sanders (SoCentral NC)

Michael Cohen (Reseda NC)

August Steurer (Woodland Hills NC)

Margo Harris (Watts NC)

Joanne Yvanek-Garb (West Hills NC)

Leonard Shaffer (Tarzana NC)

Diane Rosen (Encino NC)

Jeff Jacobberger (MidCity Wilshire)

Sid Gold (Granada Hills North NC)

Paul Radke (Westchester-Playa Del Rey)

Adrienne O’Niell (Harbor Gateway NC)

Lucille Saunders (LaBrea Coalition)

Stephen Box (Hollywood United NC)

Monica Harmon

Glen Wilson (Northridge West NC)

Heinrich Keifer (HHPNC)

Ken Draper (City Watch)

DeDe Audet (Venice NC)

Daniel Wiseman (West Hills NC)

Cindy Cleghorn (Sunland-Tujunga NC)

C. Joyce Greene (Tarzana NC)

Frank Wada (Lincoln Heights NC)

Jeff Bloch (Studio City NC)

Paul Michael Neuman (Silver Lake NC)

Noel Weiss (Venice NC)

These 27 participants come from 22 NCs.

Presenters and Special Guests

Ashley Zarella Hand (DLANC)

Daniel Wiseman (West Hills NC)

Bob Gelfand (Coastal San Pedro NC)

Doug Epperhart (Coastal San Pedro NC)

3. The **AGENDA was REVIEWED & APPROVED**
4. The **MINUTES of December 5, 2009 were APPROVED**
5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. Paul Michael Newman spoke of the next **Silver Lake NC (SLNC) Board Meeting (Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010, 7:00 pm at Micheltorena Elementary School)** where they will discuss the City Clerk Plan for NC Elections. Vote-by-Mail (VBM) is an issue. SLNC may offer a pilot program of VBM. There will be a presentation at 5:30 p.m. by "Everyone Counts," a private firm experienced in VBM and Vote-by-telephone technics.

For details, go to pmneuman@yahoo.com

b. Heinrich Keifer said that the Autry Museum was leaving its Griffith Park location. Meetings of the **South-West Museum Coalition (Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010 and Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2010 at Highland Hall)**. They have support from CD14 Council Member Huizar.

c. Phil Jennerjahn announced his candidacy for the 33rd Congressional District as a Republican (vs. Diane Watson). The area is 82% Democrat. He spoke of the 60,000+ emails sent to registered voters re: the No-on-B campaign in the March 2009 election. He formed the West L.A. Republicans Association.

d. Adrienne O'Neill returns with a GOOD new hip (that works). She said that Plan Check will become more "educational" and more "activist" toward a Planning Dept. which has become more negative to them, lately. They hope to meet with Gail Goldberg to present PlanCheck's position & recommendations. She encouraged all to take the Survey on the Plan Check Website: (<http://www.plancheckncla.com>).

Adrienne announced the formation of **HANC (Harbor Alliance of NCs). They meet at Kaiser Hosp (south of PCH & Normandie Ave)**. Of concern, are the Harbor NCs' 2010 elections which are scheduled on the same day but in a different place from the State's election. Can the City Clerk either bring them closer together or find another date?

e. Glen Bailey spoke of a communications outage at a recent (?BONC) Commission Meeting.

Then he told us that the City's Bicycle Lane Maps are available on the Internet but written copies are not yet in the libraries (as promised). The Bicycle Plan's comment deadline has been extended to 1/8/10. He encouraged us to submit comments to soon. Recommendations for specific streets have been accepted.

f. Stephen Box it is easiest to go to labikeplan.com and cut & paste copies of its 12 recommendations into your comments.

g. Cindy Cleghorn said that the Sunland-Tujunga NC Planning Committee will guest Dick Parker (formerly of the Planning Dept) on Monday, Jan. 4, 2010 @ North Valley City Hall. He to discuss planning problems for buildings and emergency preparedness.

She added that candidate filing for Valley NC elections is opened now, ends Jan. 4, 2010 and that the Maps of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries (Collectives) are posted on the **Planning Dept.'s website** (www.planning.lacity.org) and the City Council will discuss the issue on Jan. 13, 2010.

h. Noel Weiss is focused on citizen empowerment and suggests that NCs recruit and/or invite participation of some of the City Employees (“experts”) who are retiring in the ERIP program.

He wants us to re-activate the No-on-B COALITION to consider issues such as:

- Placing Ex Officio NC Member on the City Council and each CC Committee (They could submit CFs & Motions but could not vote)
- Establishment of the DWP Ratepayer’s Advocate

He told of his success with SB1818 in which a recent court action has modified its covenants. He asked why developers need the support & help of SB818?

He described the TOPA (tenant opportunity to purchase apartment) and the importance of understanding CEQA protocols.

i. Joanne Yvanek-Garb invited all to the next **West Hills NC Meeting (Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010 at Chaminade High School)** – Wendy Greuel & Dennis Zine will be guest speakers.

She encourage us to read Doug McIntyre’s articles in Daily News. She thought his “12 presents of Christmas” (“presents” from the LA City govt.) was hilarious.

j. Doug Epperhart reported on the Coastal San Pedro NC motion: “NO CONFIDENCE in our City Council”

6. DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

- NORTH VALLEY = Cindy Cleghorn (given in Public Comment)
- SOUTH VALLEY = Charlotte Laws
- CENTRAL = no takers for this position
- EAST = Heinrich Keifer (given in Public Comment)
- SOUTH = Margo Harris
- HARBOR = Soledad Garcia
- WEST = DeDe Audet said there may be “too few” points of view expressed at recent Venice NC Meetings. One recent meeting became a discussion between lawyers of opposing sides – advocating for “open & transparent” meetings.

Dede said there are problems with specific projects using NC funds because of confused & unstable responses from DONE. She wonders why there should (ever) be retroactive recovery of spent NC funds. Key actions are NC participation City Budget Process(es) and SPECIFIC, projects.

7. UPDATE on UNIFORM BYLAWS Guidelines

Bob Gelfand reviewed the recent attempt of BONC to develop uniform ByLaws Guidelines for NCs and the formation of the Bylaws Assistance Taskforce. See the “new” website: www.ncbylaws.blogspot.com. Doug Epperhart said that many/most NC bylaws are good – without “time bombs.”

Jeff Jacobberger pointed out the limitations of DONE’s resources and our NC’s resources, as well. Lately, most deficiencies are blamed on the declining City Budget. A central issue is the need to change NCs Bylaws to conform to the “new” City Clerk-directed election procedures.

Len Shaffer mentioned that the NCRC did NOT recommend unification of NC Bylaws language. For instance, the City Clerk says we must elect entire new Boards in our next elections and can not stagger the elections with ½ elected, now, and ½ in 2012 elections. He suggested that some NC’s ByLaws can be unified but those that establish the style & function of meetings should not be altered.

Daniel Wiseman suggested that LANCC create Task Force to review and comment on all the very complex points of view presented here.

Dede Audet suggested that we adhere to the California State Election Laws.

Ashley Z. Hand told of the inconvenience produced by the requirement to vote, in person. The majority of DLANC Stakeholders (approximately 40,000 people) work but do not live downtown.

8. DLANC’s SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN ASSESSMENT TEAM (SDAT) project

Ashley Zarella Hand (DLANC Director and Sustainability Committee Chair) described DLANC’s experience applying, getting and activating an American Institute of Architects \$15,000 national Sustainable Design Assessment Team Grant. It helps DLANC focus on sustainability goals in their community. It is important that this grant was the first one given to an NC rather than to the Mayor or to a specific City department...which was “routine” in the past.

See **DLANC’s SDAT project website**: www.downtownsustainability.com and their Power Point presentation, to be posted on the **LANCC Website**: <http://www.lanccongress.org> RESOURCE ASSESSMENT & ITEMIZATION is central. Local projects of other NCs similar activities mentioned by Doug Epperhart, Dede Audet and Monica Harmon.

9. Report on **MAYOR'S "INTERACTIVE" BUDGET SURVEY**

Daniel Wiseman presented images from this year's Mayor's Budget Survey (MBS) and a detailed analysis of the Budget. (These have been emailed to the LANCC Coalition participants and will be uploaded onto the LANCC Website.) He emphasized several features of the Survey:

- As always, this is the **MAYOR'S** Budget Survey aimed to serve the needs of the Mayor... and to gather statistics to support his priorities. One unalterable Mayoral priority is continued support of the LAPD (minimal decreased funding); exempting LAPD from most of the "Shared Responsibility & Sacrifice" required by the decreasing funding.

- This year, there are links on almost all pages allowing us to access to key City financial data. Dr. Wiseman strongly advised all to "surf" these links, actively. They permit us to learn about and understand the current budget policies. By reviewing the links, we can "follow the money" and better understand our current financial situation.

- There are links we can use to provide feedback; endorsements, criticisms, comments, questions and suggestions. The NC Budget Representative hope to receive, review, categorize and report on your suggestions. These materials will be posted on the LANCC website.

10. The Current and Changing **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NCS AND THE CITY**

Len Shaffer introduced the subject by saying that the City's "Budget Crisis" is the primary issue. This time there will be no "quick fix;" no shifting of funds from Department-to-Department and no more deferring obligations into the next fiscal period). Decreases in funding are definite and unavoidable. Our City Government has not made preparations to prevent or mitigate the effects of the totally-predictable and predicted economic downturn. This time, there will be major decreases in City services.

The "Budget Crisis" effects everyone. The past patterns of apathy and inactivity which keep the majority of our L.A. citizens away from their elections and away from their City Government, in general, can not continue. There is a great opportunity for all to join their local NCs. And, there must be INCREASED deliberations of the "Budget Crisis" with increased advocacy, involvement and accomplishments from our NCs. NCs must design and deliver new local projects; such as park and green space creation and maintenance, food pantry support, senior citizen-school student mentoring, code watch reporting, graffiti abatement and many other services.

Mr. Shaffer and many who spoke on this issue restated and emphasized that **the Purpose of NCs (Article IX, Section 900 of the City Charter) is "...to promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs..."**. Many alluded to **Section 7 of Ordinance #174006** which establishes and implements the **Plan for a Citywide System of NCs**.

Both documents mandate that the goals and objectives of the NC System are:

- #1 – “...to promote public participation in City governance and decision making...”
- #2 – “...(to make) government more responsive to local needs and requests.”
- #3 – “...(to create) opportunities ... to build partnerships with government”
- #4 – “...to promote and facilitate communication, interaction, and opportunities for collaboration among (and within) all Certified NCs...”
- #5 – “...to monitor, report on and facilitate the delivery of City services and City government responses (to and from all communities)...”
- #6 – “...to create an environment in which all people can organize and propose their own Certified NC...from the grassroots of the community...”
- #7 - “...to foster a sense of community for all people to express ideas and opinions about their neighborhoods and their government...”

All who spoke seemed aware that the “Budget Crisis” would result in decreased funding to the City, decreasing and/or eliminating services to the people. They seemed unified in the belief that our current City Government officials and City Government policies were inadequate to prevent, to meet and to resolve these problems. Many believed that inflexible past policies, imprudent decisions and ineptitude were important causes of our current deficit and deficiencies. The NCs activists can predict specific impacts of this situation and, now, must develop, advocate and deliver solutions to the problems.

The largest impact, both in decreasing the City’s Salaries Expenses and the delivery of services will come from the 2,400 “senior” employees who have accepted the Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP). Once they receive the promised “extra bonuses” and benefits, the City will be free of the cost of their primary salaries but saddled with paying their retirement checks. Unlike many past retirees, they will probably NOT be asked (and paid) for their services any further. Because of the suddenness of their retirement, the City will lose their experience, their expertise and their “institutional memory.” They have not been allowed to upgrade the skills and knowledge of those who remain. New hires (“replacements”) will not be hired for many years ... some say as much as 15 years.

However, the experiences of our NC activists represent one of the few remaining “institutional memories” in the City. NC opinions delivered to the Mayor, City Council and Departments is more necessary and will probably be more influential than ever before.

KEN DRAPER quoted Rita Robinson (GM of the Dept of Transportation) who said that the City’s financial difficulties are “infinitely more serious than we have imagined.” She has suspended the NC-DOT MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) talks with the NCs because she can not predict what DOT will look like in the next 6 – 12 months.

We can expect more merging, diminishing and eliminations of City Departments and their projects.

NCs have a prime opportunity. NC activists MUST take a central role in the City's "reinvention." (If we don't, someone else will.) NC funding is very likely to be cut severely. DONE may become a desk in the City Clerk's office.

Adrienne O'Niell recommended that each NC review its past accomplishments and make specific plans for a more "independent future." NCs should send more emails to the City Council Members and other City Officials. NCs should make more personal appearances in City Council and Council Committee meetings, make more visits to the Mayor, to their City Council Member(s) and to other City Officials.

Margo Harris cited the achievements of the Watts Crime Task Force which grew out of community concern and helped decrease crime in that area. She (and most others) said that No City Department (including LAPD) can be off the table in the cuts in Budget.

Jeff Jacobberger said that each of us have our own prime priorities and that we should work to become more effective advocates of our positions. When it comes to objecting to decreases in services, do we recognize the real costs and can the Public accept the increases in taxes and fees necessary to pay for the City Services we need and want?

We (NC Activists) must categorize the problems, realize our capabilities and our limitations in order to focus on, maintain and supplement our City's Functions?

August Steurer agreed: We must recognize and vocalize the City's Problems. We need to consider and prepare to survive the coming, expected fiscal limitations and the predictable physical disasters (consequences).

NCs should continue and increase their work in their separate communities. The City & the NCs are faced with the fact that the people, in general, don't seem to recognize the presence & functions of City Government, don't seem to want to know what's going on, and don't even come out and vote in City elections. They eschew involvement in their City's business. We NCs must find ways to increase their awareness and participation. The current "Budget Crisis" is a strong influence for more people to get interested and to get involved and to participate.

Sid Gold suggested that we could consider the very real possibility that the City will become bankrupt and have to go through a bankruptcy process. It has happened in other cities; San Diego, New York City and elsewhere and those cities became stronger, afterward. Dr. Gold, thinks that, with or without a bankruptcy process, we NC activists should propose an alternate budget...one which would improve City Management, increase Efficiency and modify our policies and practices regarding City employee working conditions (salaries, employee benefits, pensions, overtime, performance evaluations, performance-based advancement). This might be done concurrently in the process of responding to this (the Mayor's) Survey.

Doug Epperhart, recalling NC's influence in recent elections; the election of Carmen Trutanich, the defeat of Measure B, the elections of Paul Koretz and Paul Krikorian. He thinks that we, as knowledgeable and concerned individuals, have an opportunity and ability to influence future elections. So many of our current electeds are "term limited" and will be leaving their current offices. We should define the qualifications we want to see in future officials in order to find, grade, support and/or oppose specific candidates.

NCs should link with City Employee groups (Unions, Guilds, etc.) in this activity. The practice of "Each one...Reach one" should apply not only to individuals but to these groups.

Mike Cohen thinks that NCs are "here to help" our City's Government. We are not the City's enemies. We are neither the City's "loyal opposition" nor the City's "minions". NCs can counter the current, lop-sided, power structure of our City is composed of employee unions and large-moneyed interests which seem to disregard the needs of the larger, general population (the "people"). The current, over-biased power structure may be sustained because LA is such a "disjointed" City...a situation which allows these smaller but more intensely motivated groups which are more organized to be more effective. He sees strong citizen participation as the wave of the future. NCs should become a natural, positive balancing influence in our City's politics.

If rapid financial changes do not occur, a Los Angeles City Bankruptcy is a real possibility but NCs should be offering suggestions to help replace and supplant the diminishing services.

DeDe Audet: Community Councils have existed since the '70s. "Free Venice" was famous for the "Peace & Freedom Party." Currently, the VNC started with no money...worked from pillar to post ... and got things done. DeDe remains opposed the "City-funding" of NCs because of the "control" it applied to the NCs.

DeDe plans to take today's budget information to VNC ... to tell of the threat of decreased funding and decreased services in Venice. We should all be doing that ... each of us focusing on those items which are of greatest "importance" to us.

Diana Nave thinks that this discussion of the NC-City Relationships is the most important item on the agenda. Organizing is one-half of the problem ... but behind "what?" Do we have or need to bring in outside expertise.

Ken Draper: We need to decide whether LANCC is the spokes point or whether LANCC should be the mobilizer of the City's NCs? NCs should stand up for the Charter mandates that gave NCs life. Our activist rhetoric needs to be converted into visible and documentable achievements.

Many want to have opened meetings with the NC BUDGET REPRESENTATIVES to create wider representation, more deliberation, more input to the Mayor and more activity within our communities.

EVERY ONE SPOKE ABOUT NC's STARTING TO "DO SOMETHING."

Bob Gelfand: These meetings provide all of us with large amounts of information and exposure to a diversity of opinions which we can mold into specific actions. It helps us recognize each other and support other NCs' activities and efforts.

Len Shaffer summarized what LANCC and each/every NC do?

1. Consider our core responsibilities (established in the Charter & Plan):
 - Communicate between the City Government and our Communities.
 - Record and report on the delivery of City Services.
 - Respond to Mayor's Survey.
 - Request and support a NC Congress...this time, as a "Constitutional Convention" aimed at a "re-invention of the NCs?"
2. Review and repeat past accomplishments?
3. Devise activities where NCs replace the evaporating funding and City-dependent services with new facilities (green spaces, public gardens, etc.) and programs (student mentoring, senior citizen support services, educational and recreational activities, etc.) in our communities.
4. Reconsider our dependency on the \$45 – 50,000 that we get from the City and think about increasing our use of "outside" and acceptable "supplemental & focused" funding.

LANCC Chair Len Shaffer will be sending a series of emails asking us to rate these concepts and to respond with our suggestions. We NC activists have considerable expertise here.

11. (Added agenda item) LANC and the circumstances related to the creation of a City Chartered **WESTWOOD NC**

First, the City Charter mandates the right for all communities to create a NC. Although compliance with the Brown Act is not required of NC founders before certification, "open and transparent" meetings are always advisable for NCs.

As a follow-up to last month's LANCC motion to support establishment of a City-Chartered NC in Westwood, Len Shaffer & Bob Gelfand have tried to mediate amongst the three factions:

- those "pro" establishment of a NC,
- those who feel "left out of the development plans"
- and those to oppose any City-Chartered NC in Westwood).

Their offer was refused by the Westwood "factions." Then, after further discussion, LANCC approved a MOTION to form a mentoring committee to assist any and all NCs-in-formation and whose first purpose would be to help a Westwood NC get certified and functional.

LANCC considered sending an "official" LANCC delegation to the **BONC Meeting, Jan. 19,**

2010, 6:00 p.m. at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire Blvd. (the north-east corner of Warner Ave.), to represent LANCC. Len Shaffer, Bob Gelfand and Doug Epperhart offered to attend and encouraged others to join them.

12. (Added agenda item) the City Clerk's involvement in NC Elections

There are many conflicts related to the revisions of NC ByLaws (see above) to comply with new City Clerk election "rules." (Many of the comments placed here occurred earlier in the meeting and prompted this added agenda item.)

Paul Michael Newman said that denying Vote-by-Mail (VBM) and even Vote-by-Telephone is an issue.

Joanne Yvanek-Garb spoke against the actions of the City Clerk and its preparations for NC Elections. She said we should ask the City Attorney to comment on the "disenfranchisement of voters" which may occur because there is of no vote-by-mail and no vote-by-phone.

Len Shaffer expressed concern because the City Clerk says we must elect entire new Boards in our next elections and can not stagger the elections with ½ elected, now, and ½ in 2012 elections.

Jeff Jacobberger asked that NCs share their election experiences and "best practices."

DeDe Audet is concerned that Venice NC is scheduled to have its election on the same day as the State elections and that there is no parking at the polling place.

13. ADJOURNMENT – 1:50 pm

The next LANCC Meeting will be on Jan 10, 2010 at 1:00 pm at a location TBA
Its purposes are a further review of the Budget problems and deliberations on the future focus and activities of our NCs.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Wiseman
1-818-635-4033