

8 MOTIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The Commission started the process for examining policy topics in December 2012 when it established 3 regional committees to conduct a review of the “Plan for a Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils.” In the spring, the committees met over 20 times, and have now returned with recommendations. Before acting on the recommendations, the Commission has decided to solicit additional input from Neighborhood Councils.

The committees have proposed motions recommending to amend the City's Administrative Codes which touch upon numerous topics and would ultimately require City Council action. In some cases, the changes (or reaffirmation of current policy) can be implemented at the Commission or Department level.

IMPORTANT: Every motion is followed by a “Note” or “Background Note” to offer clarification and context, but these notes are NOT part of the original motions that the Commission will be considering. Please focus your input on the motions which are “**bolded and in quotation marks.**”

In a board resolution, please state if your Neighborhood Council supports or opposes the following motions, and indicate why or why not.

MOTIONS

1) Elections

Neighborhood Council Plan Review Committees' Recommendation
(Recommendation):

“The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is to be permanently placed in charge of administering elections.”

(Note: This issue has already been voted upon by City Council, but is included on this survey for your reference. You are still welcome to express your opinion on the matter as it is one of the recommendations coming from the Plan Review Committees.)

(Background note: Since 2008, the City Clerk was given the authority to conduct Neighborhood Council elections, which it did in 2008 and 2010. In 2012, the City Clerk authorized the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to conduct the elections instead. On September 17, 2013, the City Council voted to authorize the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to partner with the City Clerk to administer the 2014 elections. The full text of Ordinance No. 182723 can be found in Council File: 11-1912-S1 at LAcouncilFile.com.)

2) Training and leadership development

Recommendation:

- a. **“Neighborhood Council board members be required to complete Ethics, Financial Policy, Sexual Harassment, and ADA Compliance training, and that the Department offer classes including, but not limited to leadership, City government basics, parliamentary procedures, land use, and candidate training.”**
- b. **“There be a citywide standard period of time from date of seating, not to exceed 90 days, that a Board member will have to pass the required training, and that this be enforced by the Neighborhood Council bylaws, which shall prohibit voting on any matter coming before the Neighborhood Council board. Inability of any board member(s) to vote for failure to timely complete training will not affect quorum.”**

NOT OFFICIAL MOTION HERE, BUT COMMISSION ASKS FOR YOUR INPUT ON THE FOLLOWING AS WELL: During discussion it was proposed that the Commission may amend the recommendation regarding training to include consequences for failure to complete the training within the allowed period of time. The ultimate consequence discussed was the removal by action of the Department of any offending board member.

NOT OFFICIAL MOTION HERE, BUT COMMISSION ASKS FOR YOUR INPUT ON THE FOLLOWING AS WELL: During discussion it was also proposed that the Commission may amend the recommendation regarding training to include Workplace Violence/Bullying Prevention training.

(Background note: Since the NC Plan Review working groups submitted their recommendations to the Commission, new developments have brought to focus the issues of discrimination, harassment, and sexism. As of October 2013, the City Council's Education and Neighborhoods Committee has been conducting hearings on a motion which asks the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (Department) to investigate allegations of discrimination and harassment at a particular Neighborhood Council. Additionally, the motion instructs the Department to report on implementing a training program which would address these types of issues going into the future, and which would be required for all board members. The full text of the motion can be found in Council File: 11-1017-S1 at LAcouncilFile.com.)

(Additional background note: Current Department of Neighborhood Empowerment policy already requires Neighborhood Council board members to complete Ethics and Funding training. The Department also offers leadership training classes covering most of the topics identified. The Plan Review Committees were aware of the current policy and chose to reinforce the requirements by including them in their recommendation while at the same time proposing new additions.)

(Additional background note: If adopted, the “not to exceed 90 days” requirement and accompanying consequence would constitute a new policy.)

3) Early Notification System

Recommendation:

“An Early Notification System be established by each city department, commission, and the City Council, and its committees to provide Neighborhood Councils with a minimum of 60 days notice of any proposed action.

For any proposed ballot measure or ordinance Neighborhood Councils must receive at least 60 days notice.”

(Background note: The Los Angeles City Charter Sec. 907 establishes an Early Warning System stating that “... Regulations shall establish procedures for receiving input from neighborhood councils prior to decisions by the City Council, City Council Committees and boards and commissions. The procedures shall include, but need not be limited to, notice to neighborhood councils as soon as practical, and a reasonable opportunity to provide input before decisions are made....”)

(Additional background note: While some proposed legislation may take many months to move through City Council before becoming law, some items are introduced and passed into law within days. When items move rapidly through City Council, Neighborhood Councils do not have sufficient time to agendize the item and issue an official statement. Based on their volunteer capacity, most Neighborhood Councils are able to have full board meetings once a month.)

4) Initiation of Council files

Recommendation:

“Neighborhood Councils should have the right to open Council files. No Neighborhood Council board member shall be required to file a financial disclosure form for a Neighborhood Council to open a Council file. There shall be no limit on the number of Council files that a Neighborhood Council may open each year.”

(Background note: Currently, Council files are initiated either by a City Council Motion or when a City department submits a report to Council. In 2009, City Council adopted a two-year pilot project whereby Neighborhood Councils (with the support of a fellow Neighborhood Council) could create up to three new Council Files per calendar year, provided that board members submitted individual financial disclosure forms. The pilot project expired with no Neighborhood Council having participated in it. For more details, see Council File 08-0351 at LAcouncilFile.com.)

5) Review of delivery of City services

Recommendation:

“The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, with the aid and advice of citywide Neighborhood Councils, will adopt policies establishing best practices for monitoring the delivery of City services.”

(Background note: Los Angeles City Charter Sec. 910 states that, “Neighborhood Councils shall monitor the delivery of City services in their respective areas and have periodic meetings with responsible officials of City departments, subject to their reasonable availability.”)

6) Community Impact Statements

Recommendation:

“City agendas should once again include the full text of the brief Community Impact Statement (CIS) from each NC submitting one, with links to any background materials that were provided as support. Any time a CIS is, for whatever reason removed from a subsequent agenda, the City Clerk will send a notice to the Neighborhood Council.”

(Background note: Community Impact Statements (CISs) are official statements or positions adopted by a Neighborhood Council on issues pending before the City's decision makers. When the process was first instituted in 2003, CISs were limited to 100 words. The first Neighborhood Council to submit a CIS on a particular Council file would have the first 100 words printed on the physical agenda. If the CIS ran longer, the additional words would be left off. Subsequent NCs who filed CISs on the same file would only have their position of "for, against, or general comments" indicated on the agenda. In later years, once the Council File Management System was implemented and all documents became accessible to both the Councilmembers and the public, there was no longer a 100 word limit for CISs and none of the CIS language was placed on the agendas. Per Council instruction, there continues to be a line for Community Impact Statements, regardless of whether or not one is filed. If a CIS is filed, the agendas indicate the name of the Neighborhood Council and their position of for, against, or general comments relative to the item.)

(Additional background note: A new CIS must be submitted after each Council action, because while the CIS will stay in the Council file, it will not reappear on subsequent agendas. The reason for this is that the original position taken by a Neighborhood Council may not be the same position after the Council has acted. The Neighborhood Council must follow the item, determine their new position on the item and communicate it to the Council via the City Clerk.)

7) Neighborhood Councils presenting at public meetings

Recommendation:

“Official Neighborhood Council or Neighborhood Council Alliance representatives addressing the City Council, its committees, City commissions, and boards be granted up to 5 minutes of presentation time separate from general public comment, to present the official view of the Neighborhood Council Board or Alliance. Neighborhood Councils should receive priority as city entities and be called for comment before general public comment.”

(Background note: Currently, official Neighborhood Council representatives speak during general public comment and receive the same amount of time as other members of the public.)

8) Funding and Grants

Recommendation:

- a. **“Unexpended Neighborhood Council funds should be kept in the Neighborhood Council system, received and administered by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.”**
- b. **“Neighborhood Councils should be allowed to provide funds to City departments provided that the equipment benefits stakeholders, that in addition to the initial requestor there is documentation of the need from a higher level of the department, and that the transfer is accompanied by an MOU, agreement, or a form similar to a neighborhood purposes grant.”**
- c. **“Overriding principle should be that in the absence of conflicts of interests, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment should be empowered to seek and receive funds appropriate to their mission and support their operations.”**

(Note: Item 8 was not brought before the Commission at its September 9th meeting, but will be introduced at a subsequent meeting. In the meantime, you are requested to also weigh in on the issue as it is one of the recommendations from the NC Plan Review Committees.)

(Background note: Currently, at the end of a fiscal year, unexpended Neighborhood Council funds are swept and not allowed to carry over to the next fiscal year. Prior to fiscal year 2011-2012, NCs were able to roll over funds year to year for a maximum of 3 years.)

(Additional background note: Neighborhood Councils are allowed to provide funds to City departments to buy equipment to benefit their local stakeholders, but sometimes this equipment is moved to other locations. There is also no higher level communication within the department receiving the funds required and no MOU or agreement is necessary, which would provide clarification on the intent of the funds to all levels of the departments.)

(Additional background note: The Department is able to receive funds from outside organizations such as non-profits, foundations, etc.)