

## City promotion of Neighborhood Council system

From Bob Gelfand's 11/6/17 CityWatch article:

( <http://citywatchla.com/index.php/los-angeles-for-rss/14321-time-for-the-city-to-pull-the-curtain-on-its-best-kept-secret-la-s-neighborhood-councils> )

We call on the City of Los Angeles to advertise the existence of Neighborhood Councils. They are the best kept secret in the city of Los Angeles.

It's been 16 years that we have had neighborhood councils in Los Angeles, but an educated guess suggests that no more than 5 or 10 percent of the population is even aware of their existence. This is not for lack of trying on the part of neighborhood council volunteers. By the thousands, they have done their best to communicate their existence. But neighborhood councils are not advertising agencies or radio stations, and they lack the funding to tell their story to the people in an adequate way. The city of Los Angeles has the capability to publicize the existence of the neighborhood councils, but doesn't do so.

For most of their existence, neighborhood councils have been left to their own devices when it comes to outreach.

The elected members of the City Council have in general made it clear that the development of the neighborhood council system is not a priority. Observers attribute this attitude to the fact that neighborhood councils are the places where people go to air their grievances against city government. Elected officials are loathe to encourage a system which brings them grief. Think of the recent talk about recalling members of the City Council as an example of what can happen when the public gets engaged in civic affairs.

At the beginning, the newly formed neighborhood councils lacked history or even a lot of participants. As they grew, they were considered by the powerful to be at best a flock of pests. It's only in recent years that the neighborhood councils have been getting a little respect. City Controller Ron Galperin and City Councilman David Ryu were neighborhood council members before they ran for, and got elected to, their respective offices. City Council President Herb Wesson has been friendlier to the neighborhood council system than a lot of previous City Council members. This is progress, but the fact that most Angelenos are hardly aware of the existence of neighborhood councils limits their effectiveness.

It's time for a change.

Here is a motion that was passed by a neighborhood council and has now been supported unanimously by those present and voting at the citywide meeting of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition (Lancc).

**"The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition calls on the City of Los Angeles to create an advertising campaign to inform the public as to the existence of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council system, and to adequately fund and administer the process."**

Lancc motions are designed to be communicated to the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils and, in addition, to be taken up and considered by the 97 neighborhood councils in Los Angeles. If enough neighborhood councils agree with this motion, then it would be hard for the City Council to ignore it.

Neighborhood councils can be a force for good in the city. In particular, they can play an important role in getting Los Angeles residents ready for a possible earthquake. But after all these years, it is disappointing to realize that the city has done little or nothing to point its residents towards their local councils.