

Dne7599

BEFORE THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS
BILL CHRISTOPHER, PRESIDENT

In the matter of:)
)
CITY OF LOS ANGELES)
BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS)
In Re: Regular Meeting)
_____)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
Sylmar, California
Tuesday, May 6, 2003

Reported by:
Jorge P. Dominguez
CSR No. 12523

Job No:
DNE7599

000

BEFORE THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS
BILL CHRISTOPHER, PRESIDENT

In the matter of:)
)
CITY OF LOS ANGELES)
BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS)
In Re: Regular Meeting)
_____)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken at
Hubbard Elementary School, 13325 Hubbard Street,
Sylmar, California, commencing at 6:30 p.m.,
on Tuesday, May 6, 2003, heard before THE
BOARD OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONERS, CITY OF
LOS ANGELES, reported by JORGE P. DOMINGUEZ,
CSR No. 12523, a Certified Shorthand Reporter
for the State of California.

000

APPEARANCES:

Dne7599

BILL CHRISTOPHER - PRESIDENT
JIMMIE WOODS GRAY - COMMISSIONER
MARY LOUISE LONGORIA - COMMISSIONER
TONY LUCENTE - COMMISSIONER
RONALD STONE - COMMISSIONER
DARRIN R. MARTINEZ - DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

000

Sylmar, California
Tuesday, May 6, 2003
6:30 p. m.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: All right. I'd like to call the meeting to order tonight for Tuesday, May the 6th. We're at the Hubbard Elementary School in Sylmar, California. I'm joined this evening by Commissioner Jimmie Woods Gray, Commissioner Tony Lucente, and Commissioner Ron Stone. I'm Commissioner Bill Christopher. For those of who wandered in, this is the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners for the City of Los Angeles.

Our second item on the agenda is public forum. Our comments from the public on items that are not on our agenda this evening and tonight we have no speaker signed up under speaker forum, so that allows us to move directly to Item No. 3, which is a public hearing regarding the application for neighborhood council certification submitted by the Sylmar Neighborhood Council.

000 The way this works is Rita Moreno will provide the staff report, we will then ask questions of the staff as we see fit relative to the report. And once that's done, we'll ask the applicants to come forward and make their presentation.

We will then ask questions of the applicant as is necessary and finally move to open the public hearing. So we'll begin with Rita, if you'd like to bring the staff report. I'm sorry.

I didn't notice that Councilman Padilla -- he says to wait until Ms. Moreno is finished, so please.

MS. MORENO: Good evening, Commissioners and stakeholders. My name is Rita Moreno. I'm with the

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, and the project coordinator. We have an application before you for the Sylmar Neighborhood Council. And just before I start, you should have received some amended bylaws for the Sylmar Neighborhood Council.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: We have those.

MS. MORENO: I'm sorry. I'm looking for the report. Okay. I've found it. The application was submitted on January 24th of this year. The staff reviewed the application and reviewed the boundaries and with few slight modifications and more clarification that you see in the bylaws found it to be consistent with the map that was submitted from the -- by the applicant as the outline is a bit irregular, but it follows the City

000

limit boundary on the north and on the east, the southern boundary or western -- southwestern boundary is the 5 Freeway. And to the northeast, I guess, it follows the boundary of the City of San Fernando. It goes around the perimeter of the City of San Fernando and then meets with the boundary of the Foothill Trails and the Pacoima Neighborhood Council and then it follows again on the City limit boundary.

So even though the footprint is a bit irregular, we found it to be consistent with the requirement of the plan and found that they do meet those requirements. The applicant also included some information about the outreach that was conducted and we found them to be in accordance with the requirements of the plan.

The bylaws -- there were a few modifications that needed to be made, which the applicant did make. The bylaws that you have before you are different in only one respect, that would be the grievance procedure, I believe that's the -- element, the last articles in the bylaws. They made a slight change to the wording that allows the secretary to forward any grievances to the Board and that is the only change between the bylaws that you have in your packet -- that you received with your packet and the bylaws that you received tonight.

000

So we found that the bylaws are in compliance with the plan and would recommend that the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners certify the applicant.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Are there questions for staff?

I don't see any at this point.

Councilman, would you like to address the Board at this point?

COUNCILMAN PADILLA: If it's okay with the community.

Good evening every one, and I'll apologize to the members of the public court. I don't mean to give you my back but they've positioned the podium this way.

First of all, I want to thank the members of the commission that made it out here. Sylmar is not exactly the closest community to City Hall, but that's what this commission is about. That's what the department is about. That's what the Neighborhood Council Movement has been about, connecting communities at all ends of the City to the happenings of City government and to what decisions are being made at City Hall and so I want to thank the commissioners who made just a little bit of a drive today.

You know, let me speak just for a second about

the Neighborhood Council Movement adopted by the voters

000

in 1999. I think it was a manifestation and a feeling of disconnect that people throughout the City of Los Angeles had with City government at its decision making.

Well, I would argue that very few communities, if any, feel that neglect, disconnection or of being forgotten by City government than the community of Sylmar. And by driving out here I think you know why. It's quite a drive. Not only is it physically a distance to get out here, but it's also a very different environment. It's a very different feel when you're in Sylmar than when you're among the high rises of downtown.

I think a lot of people didn't know about Sylmar until the earthquake more than 30 years ago. And just like Northridge became famous because of the earthquake in '94, Sylmar didn't really have a lot of the recognition until the earthquake in '72.

Well, time has passed since '72 and I think Sylmar, unfortunately, fell back into that category of, where is that again? To have to describe your community as 15 minutes before you reach Magic Mountain, that's not the best way you want to describe your community.

But Sylmar has a lot to be proud of so far and in general, when other communities read about this growing Neighborhood Council Movement and the exciting community organizing and resources that the City is

000

giving to neighborhoods. Their own budgets to decide how to spend -- I know I've personally been trying to bolster neighborhood councils by suggesting that we give neighborhood councils computers, give them the tools to empower themselves to request, if not force, City departments, including the police department to come out and make fast track presentations.

Now it's called contact to Neighborhood Councils to offer not methods and the tools but with the information they need to know what's going on in their neighborhoods and be proactive members of the community and part of the solution.

Well, just like the community was active and recognized in the '70s because of the earthquake, the community organized and it was a battle to establish Mission College, what's the newest smaller but fastest community college in the entire community college district. Sylmar community knew what it needed but had to stretch its total resources and its own will power to make it happen.

And in recent times, Sylmar, I think, has been one of the better models throughout the City of the community organizing, weighing in, and delicately balancing planning issue. We've seen Sylmar as one of the areas that have seen one of the highest population

001

growth and we see it reflected in the residential development, but doing it in a way that's sensitive to the history of the community with the equestrian trails being one concern and the rim of the valley and other natural features in the vicinity of Sylmar, being taken care of and respected. It's not an easy balance to make, but Sylmar has, again, organized, on its own, with its own resources, with its own initiative to be able to determine the direction and the defining of our community.

And there's a lot of other examples we can

point to in terms of the infrastructure as far as organization goes. I remember even before I was elected as a representative of the former council member Tony Caganas never missing a Sylmar coordinating council meeting because that was the place to talk to the graffiti busters, the Chamber of Commerce, the women's club, Sylmar Independent Baseball League, the hang gliders, the homeowners, the friends of the library, mobile home park residents, on and on and on.

Sylmar is a community that has historically taken care of itself, but done so in a way that has been well organized with a lot of communication, a lot of inclusively. And so I think the track record of this community speaks for it itself. It's a proven and

001

experienced community. It's one that is ready to jump in and make its impact on the Neighborhood Council Movement that we see going on city wide and flourishing city wide. And so with that, I just want to pledge my support and recommend -- request your approval for the application from the Sylmar Community to be certified or recognized as an official neighborhood council so Sylmar can continue doing the great work that it has been going for years.

And before I finish, I just want to recognize just a couple of people who have been so instrumental in supporting the neighborhood council as its been in the formation stage and that's Dr. Adriana Barrera, president of Mission College.

And to Nancy Oada, the principal of this elementary school, and one of the loudest and most aggressive community activist I've ever come across Bonnie Brunard. A lot of people involved, but I think those three women deserve special recognition in my mind.

Thank you for your time. I want to thank the community for being here today and again, I urge and ask for your support. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you, Councilman.

001

Okay. Now, I'd like to invite the applicants to come forward and make their presentation. Who is going to be the leader?

MS. OADA: Good evening.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Excuse me.

Mr. Wiseman, yes, we're in session.

MS. OADA: I'd like to welcome all our distinguished guests and neighbors to Hubbard Street School.

It's a real honor to be hosting this event because in my mind, this is a historic day. I am so excited and pleased. And this school owes a lot to all of you because as you know, the school is just a part of the whole.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: I'm going to have to ask you to speak in the microphone to us.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: You can take it off.

MS. OADA: Moving along. Again, thank you very much for coming here. We're just pleased to have all of you here. We hope that you will enjoy your evening and have a cup of coffee and that we will have a successful conclusion to this event.

It is indeed our pleasure to have you all here and I would like to have you all come back again.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

001

MS. BARRERA: Good evening, Commissioners. I'm Adriana Barrera. I'm president of Mission College and for the past two years have served as a facilitator for the Sylmar Neighborhood Council and that means that tonight is really a milestone event, not only for Mission College, but for my secretary. She's been providing a lot of the clerical support.

In recognition of that, we prepared a very brief overhead presentation for you and so I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you could just change --

But this is a new housing development that I describe as being just behind Mission College, about three hundred new homes. But that's okay. Go ahead. We're going to do this rather quickly.

Again, you see the boundaries of the Sylmar Neighborhood Council, we are bounded to the south by the Pacoima Neighborhood Council; by the City of San Fernando; I believe Mission Hills is in the process of developing a Neighborhood Council and to the west of Granada Hills.

We are somewhat unique in the sense that we are a growing community, but much of Sylmar is in the state of flux. We are forever changing, and so the next couple of slides will focus on income households and businesses. But before we get to that income, I do want to mention

001

that the Sylmar population, as I mentioned, it's a community influx. Seventy percent of our residences are Latino/Hispanic. About 21 percent are white and the next demographics show that four percent are African American and three percent are Asian American.

Now, compared to other communities, we're not a rich community. But I think that most people will note that, as you saw in our first slide, and it was taken at a distance, there is development in Sylmar. There are pockets of development throughout the area. We just showed you one that had about 400 new homes which had been developed within the past two years.

With regard to the educational level, our demographics show that about 63 percent of our population has at least a high school diploma. I'm an optimist. I always look at the bright side and say 63 percent have a high school diploma or greater, but that does speak to the others among us that are lacking that high school education. And that is a substantial number and that continues to be one of our problems.

Nonetheless, as we look at our age groups, we see some of the significant areas that, again, tell us that Sylmar is in a state of flux. Only 31 percent of our population is under the age of 18. And about 45 percent of our population is between the age of 25 and

001

54, which is the age group that we've targeted within our Sylmar Neighborhood Council. That's not to say that we've discounted youth, but we really have -- our makeup is in that middle-aged group of adult individuals.

The next segment of our presentation will be presented by Martin Laufer.

MR. LAUFER: Good evening and welcome. I'm Martin Laufer. I'm a resident of Sylmar and also a realtor in the area. The business makeup of Sylmar is very diverse. We have Merle Norman Cosmetics, we have, Coca-Cola, we have Letronics, Sears, just to name a few

of the large companies.

However, the greatest number of businesses in Sylmar are retail and the majority employ under 100 employees. In fact, most of the businesses in Sylmar as you can see, employ between one and four people. So we have a very diverse business base within the Sylmar community.

Since April of 2001, we've reached out to the entire community. We meet every third Tuesday of the month. Our focus during that time has been outreach, building momentum, organization, and of course, the all important bylaws.

Just look at all the happy faces you'll see on the next slide there -- here we go. All the happy faces

001

there as we worked on those bylaws getting ready for this evening and that leads us to our next presenter, Cheri Blöse.

MS. BLOSE: Good evening. My name is Cheri Blöse. I'm the bylaws community chairperson. As you can see, there was a large group of us that met a total of 26 times over the two-year period to complete the bylaws for presentation tonight. I want to thank DONE and the lay law for helping us get through them, and they've been submitted to you tonight. Thank you.

Oh, Our next presenter will be Bob.

MR. FOGUZI: I'm Bob Foguzi and I'm a co-team leader with Naomi Knox, and Naomi is focusing on the Hispanic population, and I focus across the board.

We've had a very very robust outreach program. I'm actually the second person who's really involved. We started off with Mark McPhee, but I've been involved from the very beginning. At the very beginning we had success in doing outreach because we ran a forum right here at Hubbard Street School. We had graffiti busters working with us. We distributed fliers and information to the total community of Sylmar.

We also have Jan Sandstrom in the back here who is -- one of the advertisements, one of the public notices you'll see here both in English and Spanish. She

001

put in a shopper which is distributed at 80,000 different people or locations in the neighborhood.

I basically was just taking a class up at -- I won't get into that too far -- but I was taking a class. I teach at LA Harbor College, but I was taking a multi-media computer class up here and was working with the instructor in the computer club and he sent me down to work with them on the website. And I got wrapped up in it ever since.

We've had, again, a very robust outreach. I have a calendar over here. In that calendar we keep track of everything that's going on and we try to get out to all of them. If you take a look behind us, you'll see that we have fliers for everybody. We distribute fliers to every person who comes to our meeting and ask them to become a member of the outreach committee. We run a separate outreach meeting on the first Tuesday of every month and basically, with that, everybody has a commitment. We've been to things -- we were in the Sylmar parade. We were in the Hanson Dam winter extravaganza along with Pacoima Neighborhood Council.

We basically touch base with almost every organization in every outreach opportunity we can go out and reach people.

Tonight, I was slipped another 10 or so voter

001

registration cards, and they're continuously coming in and like Dr. Barrera said, we're driving her secretary crazy by continuing to build our database like it's going out of sight. And if you'll take a look at our flier, we've thought ahead with respect to certification. We identify on the face of our flier areas of interest that the community would be concerned with having the Neighborhood Council be involved in. And then our intent is to then move those people into the committees that we will -- that the Neighborhood Council will be sponsoring and working with.

Okay. With that, I'd like to pass onto Naomi and give you a little information on the Hispanic outreach.

MS. KNOX: This isn't fair. This podium is taller than I am. Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Naomi Knox. I've been a resident of Sylmar since 1993. Obviously, my emphasis is reaching to the non-English speaking community because I am a Latina, although my last name wouldn't denote that.

Since our application was submitted, our outreach efforts for the non-english speaking community have resulted in the following activities and contacts: The San Fernando -- is a paper published both in English and Spanish. We have inclusion of the Neighborhood

001

Council meetings and of this hearing in particular in the calendar of events. I was able to present -- make a presentation to a council meeting at the League of United Latin American Citizens. Attendance of this meeting was a delegate representative of the Sylmar Korean Christian Church. The delivery of Neighborhood Council information and registration leaflets in various places of business.

Also, specifically in the last two weeks a delivery of hearing notices for posting locations above the minimum requirement. One hospital; two churches; three restaurants; one technical college; a bank; two markets that cater primarily to Latino customers; two mobile home parks; three laundromats where I was noticing that the clientele were primarily Latino; three local -- three liquor stores; the local VFW, the moose lodge, and our only serving fire station.

Projection for ongoing outreach to non-English speaking communities, writing 200 to 500 word briefs or short stories for printing in both "The Sun" and at least two other publications catering to the Hispanic community and one publication catering to the Korean community. Publishing notices with "La Opinion" newspaper and also writing those same briefs. Have meeting notices aired on Telemundo 54 or other Hispanic video viewing media. Publish meeting notices in the "Corral 12 Equestrian"

002

newsletter serving equestrian interest of Sylmar. Many equestrians in Sylmar are Latino as well.

Publishing meeting notices in the calendar of events in the "Shadow Trails" newsletter, distributed to each of the residents of the Olive View Garden Apartments, 80 percent of who are Latino or Hispanic.

And last but not least, converting all the text in our website into Spanish not just the meeting announcements.

Two items projections for outreach projects in general, throughout resources of the Verdugo Hills TV,

produce video presentations for airing on public TV in both in English and Spanish. Publishing meeting notices the LA public library events scheduled.

Thank you very much. That concludes my presentation.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

MR. FOGUZI: You can see our mission statement out there, the mission of the Sylmar Neighborhood Council is to promote the welfare and protect the interest and to serve as a voice for the Sylmar community with the City's decision making process for a better quality of life.

Sylmar is a very diverse community. We have quite a few new housing developments. And in those new housing developments, such as the one pictured, the price

002

of the median homes in Sylmar have gone up substantially, as I presume has the median income in Sylmar. The -- that also represents the fact that there are a lot of open spaces still in Sylmar, which is kind of unusual in the City of Los Angeles. And that brings in question the quality of life issues where the desires of builder -- builders and developers conflict with the desires of homeowners. And so that is one of the things that we expect to be presented within the coming months and years ahead.

Then, we also have the retail diversity in Sylmar. There's a huge variety of businesses that cater to everything from the horse community, as you heard in the Lakeview Terrace Homeowners' presentation or Foothill Trails, to the normal issues of cigarette, cigars, liquor, the normal food chains and that sort of thing, within the community.

The -- all of those people we are trying to incorporate into the Sylmar Neighborhood Council. We have Stetson Ranch Equestrian Park in Sylmar. We have miles and miles of horse trails, and we have approximately 1000 horses within the area of Sylmar itself. We have two county parks within Sylmar. We have the Veterans Memorial Park and we have El Carriso County Park. And the people in Sylmar enjoy the open spaces.

002

And of course, we're extremely proud of our Mission College and the expansion that's taking place there and we look forward to that development and we thank Dr. Barrera for her efforts on our behalf. Without her, we wouldn't be ready tonight to make this presentation to you and to ask for your support in approving our application for certification.

And before I finish, I'd like to thank Bonnie Brunard, who has been our point person for the last two years and has been instrumental. I think she deserves a round of applause.

And of course, we want to thank Layla Campost -- there she is -- for all of her efforts on our behalf. She has been very very helpful and cooperative in the process of getting us certified. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. All right. Are there any questions for the applicants? Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes. I have a question regarding the formation committee. I'm particularly interested in the makeup for the formation committee, you know, how many people were on that. I think our report indicated about 11 people, but can someone characterize

002 who they represented? Was there a lot of coordination

with the Sylmar coordinating committee and other groups? Were there homeowners? Businesses? That sort of stuff.

MS. BARRERA: Let me look back -- we have the Sylmar Chamber of Commerce represented. We have, of course, education represented. We have the equestrians represented. We have residents represented. We have hang gliders represented, business owners represented. We have public employees represented. And all of them, I believe, are residents of Sylmar as well.

These -- the names that appear on page 9 of our bylaws are all individuals that have been a part of the steering committee group that began meeting in April of 2001. Most of them have been with us from the very beginning. A couple have only joined us within the past year. But they have all been involved with the bylaws development as well as outreach efforts and have all spoken on behalf of the Sylmar Neighborhood Council to public groups and individual contacts.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Any further questions?

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yeah. Another follow-up question. During the formation process, you had quite a lengthy formation process.

MS. BARRERA: Right.

002 COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Were there contacts with other neighborhood council groups such as the group in Pacoima?

MS. BARRERA: I believe we had a contacts with the group in Pacoima, with Van Nuys, with Granada Hills.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I can speak to that, if you'd like. In fact, if you take a look at my calendar, you will see that I have identified all of the various things that go on in the area. I basically run with all of them. I go out and see what's going on. My senses of Neighborhood Council strength is in working together as a group. If you take a look at some of these seats here, you'll see that we have some signs. We basically are showing all of the groups that we have worked with or have passed -- have come through us.

Our meetings -- 11 doesn't really represent what we have. The meetings generally run 25, and we have people rotating through. So there's been a lot of people within the community. The Lutheran High School is represented on a continuous basis. We have -- everybody that you see on these fliers as people stand up, have been represented in the community. And we have some people out here with fliers and if they raise them, you can see that there's a lot of involvement within the community.

002 COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Okay. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any other questions for the applicants?

Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you, Mr. President. I have a question on outreach for Ms. Knox, actually a comment and not a question.

In your presentation, it sounded like a very detailed list of outreach that you made to the Latino community. My question is in your mind, how successful do you think that initial outreach was? And the follow on part is upon certification, how do you plan to build

Dne7599

on that success and continue outreach to that community?

MS. KNOX: I would rate my success at this point -- actually, I would rate it at minimal, and I'll tell you why. Most of my -- I was able to contact one person at a time, a person in authority at the time of day or the day that I visited, and that's what I had to work with for that day, especially the churches.

My intent is to go back and attempt to have an audience with somebody in authority or I can make a presentation or I can sit down with a body of people in a similar fashion that I did with the League of United Latin American Citizens. I endeavor to do that. I've been out right now with the Jehovah's Witness Church across from where I live. It's just a matter of keeping

002

pounding the pavement with it.

I am a working individual, so as my time will allow, I will make the contacts and attempt to follow through. I can't even tell you I can hit a home run once a week, but, you know, all I can do is keep trying to make these contacts and to also work with some of the other Latino council members to that end.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

MS. BARRERA: I'd like to add with regards to outreach, that many of the individuals who have come and gone, really have said to us, We'd like to participate, but we'd like to participate once you're certified. This is taking on -- this is probably too much of a commitment for us to come to discuss bylaws and alike. So we got a number of people that are interested in participating, but, quite frankly, they're waiting for us to become certified prior to actually going in and really becoming involved.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes, I have two questions, one of them related to the youth.

Is there any outreach to not only the education community but to the youth in the neighborhoods or what efforts are made in that effort since the population

002

seems to reflect a large percentage of that area.

MR. FOGUZI: We've been involved from the very beginning with various students at Mission College, we have representatives from Sylmar High and Alta Vista High. We've presented fliers to a number of the schools in the area, to the teachers, if you will.

We have youth coming to our meetings. We invite youth to be involved with us. Next month we're going -- there's going to be a high school program at Mission College in which we've already established ourselves to be involved with that. The winter extravaganza was pretty well drew upon the community because they pulled in ten tons of snow, so we had the children actually translating for us with their parents. We have bilingual fliers that we present and we go out to various meetings and we present both English as well as bilingual Spanish fliers. And we don't just leave them there. We look for them to be signed and hand them back and we speak to people about them.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: That's excellent. I really like the fact that Mission College is being involved with the Neighborhood Council. It's unusual to have that collaboration, that shows that there's a strength to develop that. And I would strongly urge

002 since the President is here, to encourage your history

teachers and those involved with policy and government to actually see how that can be developed. And you all could be the model for other Neighborhood Councils in this effort because you do have that base.

There's the other question that I had: In terms of the outreach to the Latino communities, it seems like there's 70 percent in the area. What was the biggest challenge other than saying -- that you felt in this outreach, because it's really a big challenge?

MS. KNOX: Actually, I think the biggest -- there's two big challenges as I see them. One of them is to find a level of sophistication in the Latino community to speak to the issues of civic involvement. And then the other issue would be basically a distrust, that there's still a sense of separation like an us against them where the Latino Hispanic communities want to cling to each other for support and don't feel that they can get it anywhere else.

002 That was probably the two primary obstacles that I could see. And you know, you're fighting generations of thought there, and it's going to be a struggle. It's going -- hopefully, we'll find some sophisticated individuals who have been here for a while, perhaps, and shed some of that old time thinking and just start working with each other and start reaching out again.

The lady who was running the Council of Lulack, she was probably the most sophisticated Latino I had met in the sphere of outreaching to people. So --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: I agree.

MS. KNOX: -- and she and I connected quite seriously and look forward to engaging in a positive relationship to both our benefits.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd also like to speak to that, if I may. What we have discovered is to an ever growing extent in the words of -- the immortal words of Polio, "They is us."

What's been happening with the Hispanic community is that they are merging and blending with the community at large and to greater and greater extent, as time goes by, they don't see themselves as a totally separate entity and they're blending in and merging in, so that we don't -- in a lot of the Hispanics and Latinos that we brought into it, they just see themselves as community members.

003 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I can add to that also. The City Council held a meeting out here and it was at Mission College and we had an outreach. We had fliers

and we actually distributed membership to everybody in the place, and then we presented, as part of Channel 35. But what -- what occurred was a tremendous amount of interest from the Hispanic community in supporting us and that -- we have a tremendous amount of professional Hispanics who showed up at our meetings and become involved in a tangential way, not directly involved, but we've had a tremendous amount of support from that point of view.

The point that I really wanted to make was my barber is Hispanic. And I started to talk to him about

Dne7599

the Neighborhood Council. He said, "Oh, yeah, I saw you at 5:30 in the morning." He has a big home with horses that he raises, and -- and he says, "Yeah, and I want to be a member of the Neighborhood Council because I want to be involved with you guys and whatever you do with the Neighborhood Watch."

But basically, by reaching out into the community and talking as we wander through our daily events we're having success. And every one of the members that comes through receives five fliers and -- and excerpts to become part of the outreach is the Neighborhood Council and they are invited to become an extension of the outreach committee and to use those five immediate fliers to go out and sign up and bring people

003

in. And it flows through the Sylmar Chamber of Commerce and we are seeing more and more fliers, and it's been growing in leaps and bounds.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: I have one question I'd like to direct to the bylaws person.

In Article 6 B you have a minimum age requirement of 14, as I'm reading it, at least the copy that came today.

Is that correct or is that incorrect?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: We've had some concerns about those types of bylaws. And one of the concerns is as the Neighborhood Council takes an action, particularly for contracting purposes, anyone under the age of 18 is not allowed to vote on contracting provisions, and I didn't see that anywhere else in the bylaws.

Speaking for our city attorney at the end of the table, I would suggest that that might be something you want to consider.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That was in one of these --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right. We did discuss that and we do want youth represented on our council. And if there is issues that do have anything to do, they

003

will be excluded from voting and that's already been approached. It may not be in the bylaws, but that has been discussed and approached because in signing the letters of -- from the city attorney's office. But we do want youth on our board.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: We completely agree. We are wholeheartedly in support of the idea of involving the youth, and it's just a legal question that we have to deal with, those under the age of 18 can't participate in contracting matters. Okay.

All right. Seeing no other questions for the applicant, we will then move to the public hearing portion of the meeting. And I have two cards so far from Cheri Blose and Bill McMahon. If they'd like to come to the microphone.

MR. MCMAHON: Good evening. My name is Bill McMahon. I'm a teacher. I teach quite often over at Alt Vista Middle School and Sylmar High School. I've been over there for more than four years. I have talked to quite a few students about what's going on in the neighborhood. I've talked to the faculty over the past few months. We've gotten together. We've established a vision for our schools also. And one of the most important things that we've come up with is the idea of

safety. Safe schools and safe neighborhoods go together.

003

And over the past few months I have also been working with the Sylmar forming council and letting them know about the school concerns. And we want to make sure that -- or my main concern or our main concern is once the neighborhood council is formed, that the City is responsive to our needs and that we understand how important that having a safe neighborhood is so important for the students at school. That once they leave the school; that they can go out into the neighborhood; that they can go home; that they can have a quiet place to study; and that they can be safe walking to the home, playing in the parks and doing other things.

So this is one thing that I'd like to let you know that they are aware of what's going on and that we need your support also. And I certainly hope that you are recommending the formation of this council tonight.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Phyllis Patterson.

MS. PATTERSON: I just had a quick comment. I think that Naomi and Bob didn't quite give themselves enough credit as far as the outreach. As someone new to coming to the meetings, every week new people would come in and they truly do want to make a difference in Sylmar, but not necessarily be a part of the committee. But they

003

are very anxious for the committee to be formed so that the issues can be addressed.

And so I think they did a lot of outreach. And they really -- they really went out of their way. They did a good job. That's what brought me to the meetings.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.

MS. BLOSE: Yes, I'm going to change hats real quick. I'm going to be representing ETI Corral 12, a very active member of Sylmar. I'm speaking on behalf of the President Corral 12 tonight. But we do have several of our members here. And I know that the horse owners of Sylmar are very very eager to have this Neighborhood Council certified so that we can have a working relationship with the rest of the community.

For many years it's been those horse people and the developers and what we need to do is we need to dovetail in and have a central place where we can communicate with each other. So I know that Corral 12, we have a lot of members, like we said, there's over a thousand horses here in Sylmar. And we need to preserve that and keep it a horse community along with the development that needs to come into our area. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. Okay. No one else has availed themselves of the speaker cards tonight. We have one more. Two more.

003

Jan Sandstrom

MS. SANSTROM: Yeah. Hi. One of the reasons I'm so much in favor of having a Sylmar Neighborhood Council is because I go out into the community, and I speak to business owners in the community and publish a magazine that represents them. And always, not only am I wearing the hat of selling the advertising, but I'm also talking to them about their businesses and how important it is to have their businesses within our community.

And this is one of the reasons I feel the Neighborhood Council is so important, because now they

also have someplace that they can go to and someone that they can talk to that's a little closer to home to them and that really means a lot. So not only as a homeowner here, but also as a resident and as a business professional, I want to see our businesses continue here in Sylmar.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you. All right. With that, I'm going to close the public hearing on Item No. 3 and move to Commission discussion.

Who would like to start?

Commissioner Woods Gray.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Good evening. I'm very pleased to be here. I'm one of those people that drove a

003

long ways, but I feel that we're all a part of LA City, and I enjoy the drive because I do get to see the parts of Los Angeles that I wouldn't get to see ordinarily. So now I know where some of the teachers that I work with live. When they say they have to drive, you know, to Magic Mountain or somewhere close by, I can really sympathize with them because I wouldn't want to make that drive every day, but it's a beautiful place to be.

I am really pleased to hear your application presentation. Your outreach sounded wonderful. I think you did a great job of trying to reach out to people, and I hope that the outreach continues to bring in new members as you get into the issues because people are generally more issue-driven than bylaws as you said.

The organization -- once you get an organization and you have issues, people usually come more to that, those kinds of things than others. But I'm really pleased to hear the kind of outreach that you did because it shows that you're really interested in involving everybody in the community and this community has so much to offer.

It's very interesting all of the different things that exist in this community. And I like the bylaws because the board of directors seem to reflect the diversity of this neighborhood and that's really

003

important. And when I read that you had a youth representative, I was very excited. He just -- I was going oh, wow. Because that's something that we talked about time after time in neighborhood after neighborhood and to see that you realized that; because you also have a lot of young people that live in the neighborhoods -- in this neighborhood, that you're involving them in the decision making process is really important to me.

And so I'm really pleased to see the diversity of your board. I believe that your organization will do well because you have so many people represented who live in the community. And it can't help to thrive because you will have input from everybody who is here and that's what's really important.

It's when you leave people out, that you of problems. But when you include everyone, I think that you will be very successful. And that is the extent of the Neighborhood Council, like people who have never been involved before.

And just as I'm sure if you talk to young adults, if many of them were asked who's the adult that you have to talk to? It's probably a teacher and their parents, but the rest of us never talk to the kids on the street. Just that you pass by and, what do you think

003 about this? And how do you feel this should go? If you

did, you would really hear some interesting and wise things coming from them because they really understand what they need. And we may need to talk to more of the young adults to get them off the streets and to get them from destroying a lot of the property they come in contact with just because they have nothing else to do, and they end up doing things they shouldn't do.

So I'm very happy with what I've heard, what I've read, and I'm wishing you a lot of success. And to know that you have 1000 horses around here, that's something, too. Wow, a very rare thing.

Now, we went to another neighborhood not long ago that also had horses, so this is -- you guys are really luckily, that's I'll I can say, that you have open spaces. Very very lucky to be able to do that.

So I wish you good luck with your council, and I certainly will be voting to support you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Thank you,

Mr. President.

This effort is -- you know, we've heard from many many groups throughout the City of Los Angeles, and I must say that this effort certainly is one of the most well-organized efforts that we've seen, and I would commend you for that effort. It is worth it, and it is

003 difficult to -- I very much can relate to the point that several people made about, you know, that it's been kind of transitory in terms of people coming and going, but that's very normal, and it's not a bad thing. It's actually a good thing because lots of people get exposure to the process, but thankfully there was a core group of you that stuck with it to the very beginning -- I will not say to the end, but the work is just beginning, my friends.

So with that, you know, certainly the results on that work are manifested in your application. And I especially like the fact that the stakeholder diversity is represented in your bylaws, that you had many meetings, and that the existing groups within the communities are involved.

Oftentimes, these Neighborhood Councils, because they are new and different, actually set up kind of a competition between existing groups and communities rather than bringing, you know, communities together. And so it's with that, I think both the spirit and the letter of the ordinance are reflected again, in your application.

I always make this statement, but I will make it, again, to you and that is that, as I said, this is the beginning and this is very much of a long-term

004 process, so keep that in mind as you move forward. Don't necessarily take -- you know, set your goals high, but don't try to take the world by storm.

Somebody said, Hey, we want the City to represent our interests, but really the responsibility for making things happen and getting results will rest with you. So while you'll now speak with one voice for this community, believe me, people will look -- you know, that responsibility shifts in some respects from the elected officials to your able shoulders when, you know, when it appears that you will be certified.

Dne7599

Anyway, congratulations, and we'll move to the next step.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes, there's no doubt in my mind that this will be a successful neighborhood council. All the elements are in place. People are talking to each other. There's definitely a well-developed application and it's simple, it's readable and it's something that people can pick up and say, this is something that we can do.

I'm very familiar with some -- I live in Arleta, so it's not far. I come up here and Mission College, in fact, I helped design Mission College and was one of the advisors there for many years before I went on

004

to do many other things. So you're at the hub of something that's very unique with the college and with the horses, don't let them go.

I'll support you all the way on that one. And make sure that the youth you have here are really part of it this. And it's going to take a one to one. And Naomi, you're right. It is sometimes one to time. And very often it's good to be -- not only Latinos going to the Latinos, but also other ethnicities going there, because I think that's what it also takes. So I would strongly encourage you to do that.

I definitely like the outreach that you made to the media, both print and electronic media. I think that's something that showed you a lot of strength. And because we are a media oriented society, and I think you realized that through the presentations that you made, especially through the website, that was great.

I'll be looking forward to looking it up, and seeing what you're doing with that.

Otherwise, I too am going to support that you be certified tonight, and it's a pleasure to do so.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you, Mr. President. Like Commissioners Woods Gray, I enjoyed my

004

long drive out here tonight. I actually did it without going on a single freeway. I left about two weeks ago, but I -- no horseback. But I think I passed both district offices for Councilman Padilla on my way through San Fernando and made it here, early too.

Well, I made the mistake of waiting to go last because all of my colleagues said pretty everything that I wanted to say. I think you have put together an excellent application and clearly the amount of time and effort that you've put into this formation is paying off. It shows in the presentation that you've made. It's one of the best ones that we've seen.

One thing that sticks in my mind in looking at the presentation, and I'm not sure if I'm using it in the correct context, you had the word "momentum" there, I know there was a sense of momentum about what the Neighborhood Council was doing. In my mind, the neighborhood, Sylmar, has momentum going for it, too, a lot of changes in a positive way. And I think that this Neighborhood Council movement has come at a perfect time for Sylmar. I'm excited to see it. I'm looking forward to driving out here again, coming to some of your meetings.

I'm also, just as Mr. McMurray said, excited

004 about hearing some of the technology and I see that in
your bylaws, that you want to use the website, converting
it into Spanish. Hopefully, looking for ways to bridge
the digital divide.

Anyway, I'll be thrilled to support your
application and, as I said, look forward to working with
you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Well, over the last, I
guess year and a half or so, I've followed the exploits
of Bonnie and Bob and Naomi as they sort of followed down
the path of putting together a neighborhood council,
which is, we all know, not the easiest thing in the world
to do.

We've deliberately made the process a little
bit difficult. Just so by the time that you're all done
and arrive at the point of certification, that you
understand that the -- along with the title comes a
certain amount of responsibility that you will, in fact,
be responsible for making your neighborhood heard in City
government and that your neighbors will come looking to
you to be their bridge to City Hall. And I'm looking
forward to making that happen in Sylmar so that it joins
the growing litany of neighborhood councils as our map of
the North Valley begins to fill in more and more and we
get more and more blue areas and fewer and fewer red
areas.

004 I see, too, as most of my colleagues have said
this evening, particularly with the structure of the
board of directors and the allocation of the
representation, which if you can hold to that, will truly
be representative of a broad base of community support
for the Neighborhood Council.

Obviously, you know where the issues lie in
terms of outreach and to identifying additional support
within the Latino community, which is obviously a
significant chunk of the population here in Sylmar.

So with that, I would entertain a motion:
Commis sioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: I move that -- wait a
minute. Let me find that place.

Oh, I just want to say one more thing. Just
let me tell you one more thing. This certainly beats
having a meeting until 2:00 o'clock in the morning. That
happened the other day.

I move that the Sylmar Neighborhood Council be
approved because we find that the boundaries meet the
criteria set forth in the plan and move that we approve
the final stat boundary determination as being on the
north side Los Angeles City limit between the 5 Freeway
and the eastern city limit. Is that correct? Okay. On
the south by Renaldi between the 5 Freeway and the

004 San Fernando City limit; the San Fernando city limit
clockwise between Renaldi and Foothill Boulevard;
Foothill Boulevard between the San Fernando city limit
and Paxton Street; on the east, by Paxton Street between
Foothill Boulevard and the Los Angeles City limit; the
City limit northward between Paxton and the northern city
limit; and on the west side by Interstate 5 Freeway
between the city limit and Renaldi Street.

And we also find the applicant has satisfied
the outreach criteria set forth in the plan.

We find that the applicant has satisfied the

bylaws criteria set forth in the plan.

And we move to adopt the findings as contained in the staff report and move to certify the applicant as the Sylmar Neighborhood Council.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Not yet. We need a second to the motion.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: I second.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: I second.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: I would assume there's no discussion of the motion. I'll pole the commission.

Commissioner Woods Gray.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes.

004

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: I think you're No. 69. Okay. Thank you all.

This is -- you're one of the few Neighborhood Councils that's been certified before 7:45. Okay.

We have a couple of other items on our agenda this evening. Item No. 4 tonight will be a hearing in determining by the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners on the application to modify the Bylaws of the Valley Glen Neighborhood Council.

So actually what we'll do is take two minutes while the room sort of clears out, and then we'll have the staff report.

(Recess taken.)

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. If I could have your attention please, and ask that the conversations die down a little bit.

When we last left here, we were about to come to Item No. four, which is the hearing and determination by the Board on an application to modify the bylaws of the Valley Glen Neighborhood Council.

004

Rita, are you going to be the staff? And I've been asked by the court reporter that everybody who comes to the microphone tonight needs to state your name.

MS. MORENO: Rita Moreno, for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

You have before you an application to change or adjust bylaws by the Valley Glen Community Council. The Valley Glen Community Council was certified on August 27th, 2002. If you'll recall that there were competing applications by Valley Glen Community Council and the College Center Neighborhood Council.

At the time the Commissioners made the determination to certify the Valley Glen Community Council and adjusted the boundaries and requested that the applicant -- and the applicant consented to amend its bylaws to reflect the change in the boundaries to include the rest of the college center area, an orphaned area that was near the northern edge of the Valley Glen Community Council area.

Additionally, to provide representation of those stakeholders that had been added to the Valley Glen area in bylaws to include for their representation on the governing body and participation of the neighborhood council.

The application that you have before you that

was submitted by the Valley Glen Community Council on

004

April 18th, includes changes that were consented to by the applicant and were the parts of what was deemed certified at the time of certification. So when you look at the application, you'll see various requested changes, but we won't -- for purposes of what is before the Commissioners, those are not the changes that we have before you tonight.

In addition the -- and those changes are basically, the adjusting of the boundary of the Neighborhood Council to include those areas, adjustment of the internal boundaries within the Neighborhood Council to allow for representation and by that, also, increase the number of areas. They had, I believe, five zones or grids and that changed to six. So those are all changes that we believe to be consistent with what was consented to by the applicant at the time of certification.

The changes that you'll also see in the application are those that the Department did approve since we felt that they were not significant changes and that is changing the initial election to be held within the first 90 days to within a reasonable period of time. And so those are also changes that are being requested by the applicant that, again, for purposes of this report are not before you tonight.

004

So with that, what I'd like to do is basically just discuss those that are before you. The applicant is requesting to change its definition of a stakeholder.

Initially, the applicant had a definition that included the required groups of anyone who lives, works or owns property, but also included a diverse stakeholder definition which includes community stakeholders who participate in education institution, religious institutions, and community organizations. That is one of the reasons when the Commission did take a look at the bylaws from the Valley Glen Community Council and the College Center application and looked at the two bylaws, determined that the bylaws were sufficiently the same in the sense that they both included a variety of diversified group of stakeholders in its governing body and structure.

And, as a result, that is one of the changes that is before you to consider. However, the Department finds that it is inconsistent with the initial intent -- or the original intent and the reason why this set of bylaws was chosen over those of the College Center Neighborhood Council.

A second change that is being requested by the applicant is to further clarify or define the different stakeholder categories to be represented on the board.

005

And they're fairly consistent with what the applicant had originally set aside on its governing structure. We find that it adds a little bit more diversity. It grants additional seats to some of those groups. And we find that this particular change is consistent with a life for greater participation on the governing body by the stakeholders.

However, one of the changes that's also in that same section, would divest the religious board members from voting rights on the board. And we felt that this was inconsistent with the spirit of the plan in terms of

Dne7599

allowing for representation by a wide variety of stakeholder groups on the board and order to participate on that board.

The other change involves the voting age of stakeholders. Currently, it allows for the board member -- for the youths to be 16 to 19 years of age. It is requested that be changed to 18 to 21. And that is also a change that is before you to determine -- to accept. It was -- the Department's recommendation that particular change also be disapproved.

When looking at the demographics of the community upon certification, we find that stakeholders that reside within the boundaries -- and this is in an area that does not include -- the report is taken from

005

the Valley Glen Community Council, which only includes the original area that was requested for certification. It does not include the additional College Center area nor the area to the north that was incorporated as well. And those demographics show that those that are 17 and under make it 25 percent of the population. Consequently, the Department recommends that be a change that be disapproved.

And the last one is basically the same type of change, but it would change the stakeholder age for purposes of election from 16 -- over 16 years age to over 18 years of age. And again, we felt that would be inconsistent with a live for that representation by that segment entity, residents at population.

At the beginning of this report, you'll find these changes that are being requested, particularly on page 2, they're numbered, as well as our findings for your consideration.

Do you have any questions?

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Questions for staff?
Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Several of your recommendations are against these changes -- or against several of the changes.

005

Can you expand upon the communications that the staff has had with the Valley Glen Neighborhood Council Committee working on this? I mean were these reservations expressed? Did they proceed counter to the recommendation of the Department?

MS. MORENO: The discussions basically have been -- a lot of this is as a result of what people envisioned or think, or what's being discussed in terms of what occurred in the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council. There's a belief --

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Van Nuys or Valley Glen?

MS MORENO: No. Van Nuys Neighborhood Council where there's been a lot of discussions about who should be able to participate and who shouldn't and how do you ensure that all these people don't take over the board. And so that's been -- that is part of what's being discussed. But my understanding from the Valley Glen Community Council is that they thought that they could achieve the same goal by limiting the stakeholders definition by those who live, work and own property and setting the seats aside for different groups.

But part of the problem is upon really reading the application and the requested changes, it doesn't -- my understanding is that the Valley Glen Community Council, wants to, for example, under -- they have a seat

in what they're proposing for community organizations,

005

that it would be the stakeholder that runs under the seat of a community organization would be a stakeholder who works for a community organization. So it wouldn't necessarily be a stakeholder who participates with a community organization, but rather somebody that works there.

So they feel that they can still get the diversity on the board if they have seats aside for people that work for faith based institutions or education institutions or what have you, but not allow for any voting participation or even consider people that participate with those organizations as stakeholders.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: I understand the rationale, and it's explained in the staff report. But this is Matthew's area. It was realigned.

MS. MORENO: Actually, I guess I'm sort of working with them at this point. We lost a project coordinator and everybody's got a full plate.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: So I'm more focused on the process. I mean, were you participating in these meetings? Were they clearly -- you know, did --

MS. MORENO: When they discussed these changes, no, I was not.

As you'll note, the application was dated actually -- I'm trying to find that exactly -- but it was

005

dated earlier in the year. And I'm sorry, I don't have the page in front of me. I'd have to kind of -- but if you'll look at the actual application submitted by the applicant, it was signed on January 6 of 2003.

At the time the project coordinator that was assigned Kafi Sammy was still on staff. He left, I believe, around the 10th of January. So I know that he probably did attend meetings with the group and was discussing the different aspects that they were proposing, but I don't have that information for you.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Woods

Gray.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Would the board have less members on the board if they eliminated or if they were trying to --

MS. MORENO: I'm sorry?

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Would they less members on the board if they reorganized and eliminated their religious position?

MS. MORENO: Well, right now, the two religious seats would be non voting seats, so they do not have -- it wouldn't change the number of total board members on the board. If you were to disapprove divesting the two religious seats of voting rights, then it would lead to

005

increase the total number of board members by two, which I believe would go from 27 to 29. Currently, it's 29.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Maybe this is the wrong bylaw. I have them as -- every board member shall consist of -- yeah, I guess it's the original.

MS. MORENO: If you look behind that, you've got --

COMMISSIONER GRAY: I'm looking at the original, so in the original they were voting members.

MS. MORENO: Correct.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: So they have less voting

members if they eliminate them?

MS. MORENO: They had them as voting members, but they -- what they did is that they reapportioned the seats among the different groups. So what they have done is taken the same number, reapportioned them and so, for example, I believe they only had -- I believe the youth had only one seat. And I think they now have -- I want to say that they have two seats, but I'm not -- it maybe easier if you look at the actual application and you'll see the original language and amended language.

So if you look at the original language on page 6 of the staff report and that's where the changes first appear. Go to page 7. It says "youth representative." The original language had one seat, 16 to 19, and the

005

amended language would give youth -- I'm sorry. It's still one seat, 18 to 21.

But for example, they added at large seats. When they reallocated the seats, they added some at large seats that would allow for -- it says other stakeholder groups -- someone who qualifies under one of these definitions. So in reality, they added some additional seats.

Originally, they had only residents, renters, school, merchant slash commercial, religious, community organizations and youth. They changed that to homeowners, residents, schools, merchants, businesses, religious institutions, community organizations, youths, other stakeholder, which, again, wouldn't fall under -- it would still be someone who lives, works and owns property. And there is a separate one for commercial property owner.

So they basically, reallocated -- came up with some additional categories, in reality, for seats. That's why we have the same number of seats still on the board, 27.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: And am I to understand that caucus means that they are non voting members.

MS. MORENO: No. Caucus would mean that they -- rather than holding an election day where people come

005

in and vote, it would have the separate caucus, or meeting or election of just that particular group separately from an election that everyone else participates in.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Who was actually selecting the schools, the religious institutions, and community organizations? They all say caucus. I don't understand that process.

MS. MORENO: I'm not sure. I guess the applicant can answer. The only -- since schools, for example, wouldn't be stakeholders or people in religious institutions, it would only be people that worked for schools could then be part of a caucus that would then select who that particular representative would be.

But, again, by changing the stakeholder definition from the broader definition to only those who live, work and owned property, only those people that, for example, worked for those religious institutions or community organization or non-profits, or what have you, would be the only ones that would be able to vote and participate on the board.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: But then the changes -- that change, I see this caucus where it was elected, and that's what I'm trying to get a clear understanding of.

When, the revised --

005

MS. MORENO: Right, they are changed to caucus, Correct.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: -- and on the original, it says elected.

MS. MORENO: Correct, that's an additional page here.

Commissioner, you're correct. You're correct. Initially, the applicant had a process for selecting the board members by caucus. And one of the requested changes was that they be able to have an election process by caucus or open election, so there is this change.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: So where in the original bylaws does it address the caucus issue?

MS. MORENO: In the original bylaws it states that the allotted board seats will be selected by a caucus of the stakeholder members in a given category, that is the original language.

The amended language states the allotted board seat will be elected by a caucus or open election of the stakeholder members in a given category.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: So they just changed elected to caucus the group that they will elect will elect them.

005

MS. MORENO: They changed from selected to elected and they added or open elections so they can have

a caucus or open election. And it is no longer a selection process, which means that they just agree on who will choose them, but they're going to actually hold an election.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: See the ones I'm looking at says elected all the way down, so I don't know --

MS. MORENO: If you look at page 7 of the staff report. At the very top you have the original language.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: This one says elected, this one says caucus, that's the difference.

MS. MORENO: You're correct. There is a change. In the original language, they were all elected or selected. Now, the difference is that they were going to do it in a caucus. They were going to have a caucus of that particular stakeholder category, and only those stakeholders within that category would caucus and hold an election or selection process to elect or select that member.

What the applicant is proposing to do now is to allow for either that kind of a gathering, caucus, or to simply have an open election where every -- all stakeholders will come and they will still vote only by category, but they will all come to one place to vote.

006

The only place where that is different will be for the schools, where for the schools and religious

institutions and community organizations. In those cases, it would require a caucus of people that work for schools, work for religious institutions, and work for community organizations to meet in their caucus and elect their -- the representatives to sit on the board. I'm not saying it will be easy.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Sounds too confusing to me.

MS. MORENO: Any other questions?

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you, Mr. President.

A question for staff or for Mr. Martinez from the City

Attorney's office.

One of the proposed changes had to do with making religious institution members non voting and there is reference to possibly some erroneous information?

MS. MORENO: Correct. The minutes that the applicant committed indicate that the change was made due to information that they received that the City Attorney had recommended that they not make them voting seat. My understanding from the applicant is that in working with the project coordinator Kafi Sammy is that the information that they obtained.

Again, I can't respond for what happened at the time in terms of getting a full report of what was said or not said. But that is what the applicant understood.

006

I have talked to the applicant and said that this is highly unlikely, but this is what is being requested.

COMMISSIONER STONE: So did staff convey to the applicant that that information was erroneous?

MS. MORENO: Yes. I conveyed that that was highly unlikely, but the applicant contends that the project coordinator told them that that's what they should do if that's what they wanted to do.

We did confer at the time of writing the report with the City Attorney to make sure that they were right in the assessment and we are correct.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Who would decide if they're going to elect by caucus or by open election?

MS. MORENO: It's stated here. In the amended language on page 7, it would tell you exactly how it would occur. If you look at page 7 -- it should be Item No. 4, the application to change or adjust bylaws page 7. If you look under amended language, it will tell you exactly how each one of those seats will be determined. If it says elected, they will -- those stakeholders to vote for those particular seats would actually attend an

006

election day and vote accordingly.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: So it's not arbitrary. It's just depending what seat it is, right?

MS. MORENO: Correct. And you see which ones on there are to be selected by a caucus or elected by a caucus, which have been identified as schools, religious institution, and nonprofits.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Any other questions for staff?

Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yeah, I just wanted to clarify. The number of board seats has changed from 32 to 37, correct?

MS. MORENO: Let me verify that. I'm looking at the very back of your packet, you should have what is submitted as the original Valley Glen Committee Council bylaws. And by originals, those would be the ones submitted at the time of certification which did not show the changes that were consented to and certified. And then behind that, you would see the revised bylaws. And I'm looking at both of those documents under Article 5, board of directors. The original states that the board of directors shall consist of no more than 26 voting members.

In the revised bylaws which indicate the

006

changes that the applicant is requesting, Article 5, board of directors also states the board of directors shall consist of no more than 27 votes, so there's no change because the two religious votes are non voting or two religious seats are non voting seats.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

Any other questions for the staff? If not,

Mr. Randall wants to be appointed to.

MR. RANDALL: Hi, I'm Michael Randall, I'm the secretary of the interim board for the council. And I'm going to do no more than about two minutes of trying to put a little context. And I'm going to -- then we'll turn to the three or four issues that I believe have been recommended as being denied -- is there another way to say -- that by the DONE staff.

The positive light I'd like to put on it is one we have done over 20 public meetings of an election committee in which many people have worked very hard and all of that work except for the three or four issues appear to be acceptable.

The context I'd like to place this in is that we kind of come before you, I feel, at a slight disadvantage and that is, it has been mentioned here tonight, it has also been mentioned in the staff report,

006

again, references to our certification circumstances and the fact that, yes, we were in a competitive struggle, so to speak, with another group. I want to assure you that the history of the council since then has included the following.

One, we have included key members, those who wanted to, who were supporters of the college center group. We happen to meet at Valley College now. Valley College at our last meeting, participated in our meeting.

In terms of our outreach, we have spread at least 8,000 hand walked brochures in two languages, Spanish and English, to apartments, to houses, et cetera. We have purposely tried to recruit and have succeeded a person of Armenian descent for our board and are working to do things in that language.

In addition to that, we want involvement of all groups and I think there is a portrayal here such that because we made some bylaw changes, that we believe are minimal, that somehow it either makes us less inclusive, which I think will demonstrate, I think, it doesn't. Or that we have a motive that somehow is not as high as others. I will conclude on that that we -- even at our last meeting, which the minutes are here with me -- the president of the former college center gave a statement saying he has complete confidence in this interim board,

006

in fact, that we are proceeding towards an election with no delay and we've been working very hard.

I wanted to put things in that context because how you look at us here tonight, if you look at us under a cloud and if we go back to our certification circumstances, et cetera, I believe is unfair. I'd like to stand before you with a clean slate based on the work that we've done and to say to you, please, evaluate us and let us, I hope, limit the negativity.

We're a very positive group and we're doing very good things involving our community. Let us, I

hope, stick to the three or four things that we seem to have sticking points with DONE and I'll let my colleagues go and I'll do one little bit about an issue later. Thank you.

MS. DEBING: Good evening, Commissioners, my name is Laurie Debing. I'm the vice president of the interim board of Valley Glen Community Council and the chair of the elections committee.

If I may address the question that Mr. Lucente had for staff. Matthew Fitzgerald was a project coordinator. He attended all the election committee meetings from September to around mid-November at that point Kafi came in and he attended from mid-November until, I think, the last one was January 8th, if that

006

helps.

What I'd like to start with is just some very quick background note. The committee was formed the election committee was formed and the final task was to create the procedure. The committee who sits at both board and stakeholder members, a board member from the new area which was incorporated from College Center served as our first chair of our committee, and Larry Applebaum, who was one of the leadership from College Center, also served on their committee.

If you go back to our certification hearing, I think you'll remember you asking us to bring leadership from College Center, and Mr. Applebaum did want to make some bylaw changes that coincided with what College Center had done, which is what I think was done here.

We also had three stakeholders and the committee has met 18 times, all meetings were posted. They were public. They were noticed. Including the December 16th meeting when the board and the stakeholders heard all the recommendations from the elections committee.

The first issue then that I'm going to address is Article 3, the membership change. We do believe that the change is consistent with the plan. The plans definition of a stakeholder is anyone who lives, works or

006

owns property in the council area. And I have to tell you that the devil is in the details and because when you go back and look at our original bylaws, they are confusing.

In Article 5 we state that we are going to have a caucus. Well, to be honest, I don't think everyone on the board understood what a caucus was and I think that was an oversight on the board's part and on DONE's part because they do not agree with each other.

It is a conflict. At the initial meeting that we had, we did discover that there was a problem, one is a caucus did not -- from what we understood, allow for open elections. We wanted it to be democratic and open, and we changed all those categories that were the residents, business commercial property, to be open elections. But we would keep the caucus format the same for education, religious, and community boards. And what I did want to address is the intent because that was alluded to by staff.

If you look at our original bylaws which I assume you all have in front of you, I think you'll see that under key organizations it states that the community org would be the who chooses their particular representatives sitting on the council. Well, I stand

006 before you, I am that example. I am the vice president of the Valley Glen Neighborhood Association, who has always had a seat on Valley Glen Community Council since 1996. The Neighborhood Association assigns a vice president to that job, that is my job on the community council.

So even before certification, the intent was there that the organization chooses who the representative will be. The same thing applies to schools. We have 19,000 on our board before certification. They're still on. And again, 2000 changed who they would send as their rep to our board. I think when you look at the description, the definition of religious, it does say religious institutions.

Our point of view is simple. I'll get to the point, I don't want to take all of your time. If you have a religious institution, at what point is a parishioner representing or has the authority or ability to represent faith based organizations? Our point of view was this: If religious organizations come onto the board, they are not representing a particular church, a particular synagogue, they are there representing faith based or religious institutions. Now, at what point do you limit the caucus?

006 Do you allow all the parishioners to come to a caucus and decide if it's going to be an individual, someone from the community, a parishioner? Is it going to be a member of the clergy?

Our thinking was simple. If it's an institution, the institution should be the people at the table. They can send whatever rep they want from every church, synagogue, mosque. They will sit down at the caucus, and they will decide who will represent them.

Same thing applies to schools. A parent is a stakeholder to the school. The schools have a responsibility to them. But who is the true representative of education providers? It's the schools. They have the authority and the ability to represent themselves and, again, to be brought into the caucus which does not conflict which our original bylaw makes sense.

Same thing applies to a community organization. If you were to let all of the residents in Valley Glen come into a caucus to decide which community organizations are going to be on there, I can pretty much guarantee you that ever resident would vote for the Valley Glen Neighborhood Association. But is that democratic and is that fair?

007 They may not be the best party to serve as a community org. Let all of the organizations come into the caucus table, sit down and let them hash it out and

determine which of the people there should be the two people representing their group.

Do you have any questions for me? Other people will address --

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Let's finish your presentation, and then we'll come back for questions.

MS. DEBING: Well, I kind of skipped around it.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: I meant other people of your board.

MS. AKARI: Hi, my name is Diana Akari, and I'm a stakeholder in Valley Glen. I'm not a member of the

Dne7599

board currently. I was originally with Valley Glen, but I was brought along onto the election committee, and I am now vice chair of the election committee. I just wanted to give you some -- just a feeling for what we went through. And I know Laurie said it a little bit and gave you some idea of the meetings that we had, but I want you to understand that we looked at this process very seriously.

When we had -- we did not want to make significant bylaw changes, that was not our intent. Our intent was to go in there and create election procedures, but as Laurie said, the devil is in the details. And when we came to the point of trying to decide exactly how people would vote and in which category they would vote,

007

would they vote in more than one category, you know, all these little issues that you never think of when you write bylaws.

We realize that we had to readjust those various seats. And I want you to look at what we did and perhaps it's not as clear because you're standing here -- I'm just standing here talking to you at these various seats, and you're looking at things on paper. But everything that we did holds together. It's a piece.

And we sat there and tried to put everybody into certain category so that everybody would have a representation. The at large category is there because we had people that we could not put in any one category, and we wanted people to be represented.

We discussed the participant's language that the staff has recommended that be taken or maintained in the bylaws. We discussed that particular sentence over many many meetings. And we decided that the best way for participants in community organizations, religious institutions, and educational institutions, the best way for them to participate was through their institutions.

And I might add, and this is going to Commissioner Lucente's point, the staff from DONE who is there agreed with us. Throughout the process, everything

007

was run by the staff because they were at those meetings and we were given guidance and we asked questions, significant questions throughout the process and this is what we came to.

And I want to stress, also, these bylaws, that we attempted to give them to DONE in January and we were told that they had to review the boundary changes first.

So all of this came to a head immediately at the last meeting that we had in April and we found that we suddenly had to come before you. So please put that into this context.

I just want to make one other statement. One of our biggest educational institutions is Valley College. I personally wrote a letter to the president of the college asking them to take a seat on the board. We wanted to give Valley College its own seat and they declined. That we thought, was, you know, not something that we wanted, but we made an attempt to bring in as many of the stakeholders as we possibly could and that this board is represented as good possible.

Thank you.

MR. RANDALL: I want to clarify on what I'll call the second issue. There seems to be concern that what we're trying to do is dissolve the people who are

007 participants in religious institutions, and that is not the intent.

What we did, simply, is we felt that the bylaws that we had originally had which, instead of -- we already give the involvement to people who work at a religious institution within our boundaries, and people who live, and people who might be members who own property, but we made a distinction. We said what about those parishioners who are sitting and visiting the congregation and they're a member of it, but they happen to live in Woodland Hills, where they may be a stakeholder there? Should they be given a voice in terms of voting on issues about our community if they don't live, work or own. And we felt that that is not in accordance with the plan. That it actually contradicts the plan.

007 That what we wanted to do is to say involvement and inclusiveness is wonderful, but to the point where it does not dilute the honest purpose of the plan. We don't want to nullify or dilute the votes of the people those who live, work or own. So we'll have a little line in there that says, that those that are participants in those congregations who don't live, work or own, are not to be given the voice to nullify or dilute those who are not here. And we think that's consistent with the plan and we don't agree with the interpretation that the DONE staff has provided and we're frankly confused by it. That's that.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Michael, before you leave the podium, I'd like you to address two other questions. One is: why are the religious seats being treated as non voting; and another is, why is the age of the youth vote being raised from 16 to 18.

MR. RANDALL: Certainly. I'll start with the youth vote. We do wish to involve the 16 to 18. We want to involve them in another way. We don't believe that there is a necessity that we all have to address this in the same manner, we actually can take an advantage if we don't.

In this case, what we have said among stakeholder conversations that were part of our brown act meetings was this: 16 year old's, one, under our election codes of the State of California are not eligible to be public officials or publicly elected officials.

007 We were also given advice by Leham Powell of the ethics commission, as were all neighborhood councils who went to the convention, that these seats on the board would be regarded as publicly elected officials. That because they had the ability to make decision making powers on the expenditure of funds, public funds, we didn't want to place a 16-year-old in that situation.

Further, we didn't want to place a 16-year-old in a situation in which the judgment of the 16-year-old would be equal to that of an adult who sat next to him on the board. We didn't want the 16-year-old's judgment in this context to nullify or dilute the opinions of adults, which, in our laws, in both our election process in general, in terms of eligibility, were consistent.

We also noticed that the fact that the ability to vote in an election is also not granted to a minor. The minor cannot decide which adults will have the voice

in the community. Which adult will be mayor, it hasn't been decided. So we decided the involvement we want is we want our 18-year-olds, and our 14-year-olds and our 12-year-olds and we want them involved, and we will. And we're going to the schools, and we're going to the principals and they are addressing issues and they are letting their input be known.

But in the end, we wish the adults of the community who are, in effect, the stakeholders, my little boy is a stakeholder only through me, "stake" meaning the risk we each have in the community's future. We did not want to equalize his right to those of the rest of the adults who sat there.

Did I leave anything out?

007

I didn't get to the religion. Could you ask me again the question you wanted to ask about religion?

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: The two questions were, one, the non-voting religious --

MR. RANDALL: I'd like someone else to handle that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: At our December meeting it came up that some of the stakeholders and frankly myself as a board member, were concerned about separation of church and state. And at that point a couple of lawyers in the audience suggested that at some point in time there maybe a lawsuit against the city to handle that situation. I do not have the e-mail from Kafi and the reason I'm explaining the lawsuit is because he mentions it in his e-mail to me.

By the way, the City Attorney was really waffling on my question regarding religious beliefs on the board. I couldn't get a straight answer from him. His exact words were, "I'm not going to comment on a lawsuit that has not yet happened." But he seemed to indicate that if this creates such a large issue in the council then make them non voting.

So I would go along with Michael Randall's recommendation that was made to the board and make them non voting seats on the board. So that's the

007

documentation and the reasons behind it.

Does anyone else want to address religious?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Members of the commission, Larry, I'm the interim president of the board. The two areas that you touched upon were very sort of controversial. We had a lot of things going on, and as Laurie said, there were people in the audience, people from College Center, who were -- some of their biggest issues were the age and were the religious aspect of this.

So it was a very contentious night. It went on for a long time. But we went with your staff recommendations and now, we hope don't get that used against us.

We have the e-mail here that she just read from and they were the ones advising us and that's what the board went with.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Well, let me clarify, the e-mail that she read was between two stakeholders between Valley Glen --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's from Kafi, who was our project coordinator.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Out project coordinator, who advised us that he talked to the City Attorney.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

007

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's been a problem not having continuation of the same project coordinator. I'd just like to add a few things. I set up the election committee. We have the sort of advice -- and what we wanted to do is have fair, open, great elections, to have the best ones hopefully in the City and to have them quickly. But this process We want to get them done as quickly as possible.

So we thank you for your time tonight. And I just want to thank Laurie Levine and Diana Lapari for all their hard work. They said 18 meetings, but they have spent many many many hours working on these election procedures and bylaw changes. So I want to thank them and the rest of the board.

And if you have any questions we can help answer, I think they have a couple more things.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Briefly.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I can talk very fast.

I just want to compare the membership stakeholder definitions from Valley Glen to College Center. Here's Valley Glen: Anyone who lives, work -- this is the original certification. Anyone who lives, works, or owns property in the area, additionally, people who participate in educational institutions, religious institutions, and community organizations.

007

College Center for which as I said before, we had some people on our election committee from there. Here's their definition: Any individual who lives, works, owns property, or attends community college in the Neighborhood Council area. Also, any religious institution, community org or nonprofit organization that operates within the council area.

So I think in this situation we have taken the best of both College Center and Valley Glen and put them together. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'll be brief, too.

I think the concerns raised about caucuses were, in fact, false alarms, that basically the only caucuses that are existing in these bylaws are caucuses that involve institutions and things other than voters at large, so to speak.

What the intention was of making them a caucus was -- I'll give you an example, it was raised -- well, we have one very big church in the community when you have several smaller religious institutions. If you have no caucus and you have the religious institutions at the -- I'll make it clearer.

One religious institution would always win in a popularity contest. What we really wanted to do was to allow for more diversity for the result to have the

008

religious institutions in a room and have them select who they would wish to be the representative of religious institutions.

In another year they would select someone else. And in that way, more than one religious group would have a vote on that seat. I think that's a good motive, and I think you will find that the entire caucus issue is not the problem in terms of democratic process at all, because it only involves those types of group.

The school is making that decision. Such as, where only one elementary school always had the most

Dne7599

voters. And therefore, its 60 votes will outweigh the 40 votes from older -- let the schools, if there are four or five public schools in the area decide, okay, next year we'll send so and so, that was our motive.

In terms of the decision that we made to not have a religious seat as being a voting seat, it was a separation of church and state issue. And I did recommend to the board that they wait one meeting for the DONE representative to give us word that we would -- we passed a motion, we'll follow whatever they say, and we followed it.

Last, I want -- I hope the attitude that we come with here tonight is we need your support on a different level. We as councils come to you and we

008

express this experiment of councils in slightly different ways. We ask you to let local expression happen here, so long as we do not eliminate democracy. And I think what we're doing has high motives and we're going to involve everyone.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any other questions for the applicants? We have a couple of cards from people -- I'm sorry, Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you, Mr. President.

For the applicant and for our staff, too, the applicant mentioned a contentious meeting on a couple of these issues within your council.

Has -- in the time it has ensued since the decision was made to go forward with these bylaw changes, has anyone expressed opposition from within the neighborhood council or outside?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. Not at all and maybe contentious -- we have -- this is from one of the College Center people, and he sent along an e-mail -- I guess, an e-mail where he's supporting it. And I'd like to enter this into evidence. And it's more very intense debate where people really showing their passions about this religious debate and freedom of religion and that type of thing. So it was -- but it was a good debate and

008

it was really democracy happening. But nobody has come forward after that saying they were unhappy with the outcome or that type of thing.

COMMISSIONER STONE: In that, we won't say contentious -- but in that debate -- passionate debate, was the subject of the stakeholder definition discussed as well and was there passion about that?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. No. There really wasn't much passion, no.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The subject -- the debate centered around whether or not to have the seats in school. It wasn't about whether they should be voting or non voting. I, for one, for example, believe very they we should have religious institutions represented. Other people did not think so, because they were concerned about the separation of church and state issue.

So that's where we came to the compromise of non voting seats based on the information that we got from DONE. That's what the debate centered around. None of the other debates were contentious.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Any other questions?

No.

Seeing no other questions, then I'll call the two speakers we have, Jaime McQuiston and Dan Wiseman.

008

MR. MCQUISTON: Jaime McQuiston, please.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: I'm sorry.

MR. MCQUISTON: You noticed I filled out the Latino forms.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Yes, I noticed that already.

MR. MCQUISTON: East Hollywood Community Association.

I'm looking at the original bylaws which were agreed upon. And it says in the bylaws, "the board of directors shall be elected from the general membership on an election day to be held initially," et cetera, et cetera.

Back where it says bylaw changes, it says these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the board. That means that actually we got to wait until the election before we change these bylaws by this bylaw, which was approved.

I think after looking at this, if you remember at this particular meeting where the two groups were competing, I mentioned the fact that these bylaws were woefully deficient and that something had to be done about them. And now we're really reaping what was sown then.

008

As far as the revisions are concerned, though, of course, that's going to be up to the next board to

decide. And even if they were changed now, the bylaws still have to be approved by the DONE rules after the board is elected and that board may come up with a third set of bylaws. So I think this is really quite premature to be even suggesting the bylaw changes at this time. Both from the problem that is eminent in the approved bylaws to start with, and also for the fact that the bylaws still are woefully deficient and probably will have to be changed again. So there's no sense in going through this and going through this. Let's get on with this election with the committee that it is now.

Now, actually from my looking at the bylaws, these are very salutary changes, but they are not enough in the bylaws. And it's still not going to be a workable board, although it's a much more workable board after it's been changed. And I see nothing in the bylaws that the board really can more or less tell them to change except for the fact that they can't be changed at this particular moment until there's an elected board.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

MR. WISEMAN: My name is Daniel Wiseman. I'm a stakeholder in Valley Glen. I didn't even know so until this evening. Can I ask the board, please, what is the southern border of the Valley Glen? What's the southern border of Valley Glen?

008

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Burbank.

MR. WISEMAN: Burbank Boulevard?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: North side of Burbank Boulevard.

MR. WISEMAN: North side of Burbank Boulevard. And I am a stakeholder in two ways which I will not mention. It happens that I see in this discussion, the same issue that I raised at about 10:30 or 11:00 on Tuesday evening the 29th, that is the issue of stakeholder voice and the actions of the individual neighborhood councils.

Dne7599

I also raise a question for this board. Wouldn't you have expected that the people from DONE and these people from Valley Glen could have met in some way, talked enough and effectively gotten together so that they wouldn't be presenting a conundrum to you, but would be presenting to you something complete, something ready for you to approve?

How is it that there was a miscommunication with the City Attorney's office?

That what Mr. Martinez apparently told these people and what these people understood wasn't fully appreciated and understood? I'm here to ask questions tonight. I'm going to ask four questions later in the No. 7 issue for the future agenda. But those of you who

008

know what I'm talking about will recognize that recently we were asked four questions, and a very important person, as a matter of fact, two people asked me four questions at the same time two weeks ago almost to the exact hour. And those very two important people in my life asked me four questions, which really are one question. And I'm going to ask you gentlemen and ladies four questions of the section seven, which is really only one question. It's the same question.

How are the stakeholders empowered in this structure that we are dealing in?

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Thank you. Okay. That will conclude the public hearing, Item No. Four.

MR. MCQUISTON: I answered the question in the other issue.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Who would like to start? Call for volunteers.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Mr. President, can -- I have a question for the City Attorney.

Are we able to act on the requested changes without an election? Can you address that?

COMMISSIONER MARTINEZ: That is correct. Actually, I think the Department did specify the rational in its report to the board and a -- I suppose a quick

008

overview -- would you like me to get into it or -- Tony says no.

Because what it is, is the process that's being used in this situation is not technically an amendment. It's a modification to the certification application. That being because this group has a problem with respect to its elections. If it was unable to adopt or make these changes to its bylaws, it in a sense would be an empty shell, incapable of doing anything. So it does need to reach back, so to speak, to clarify what it was certified to improve this neighborhood council so that it can proceed with the issue, the formation of a certified council which was the board's intent and this group's intent.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Okay.

In looking at the bylaw changes and in looking at the issue that this particular council brings to the board, it really comes down to the question, I think Mr. Randall addressed in what is the role of an institution within the neighborhood council versus what is the role of an individual.

We talk about stakeholders in the plan as people who live, work and own property, I should say in the charter as people who live, work and own property in

008 the neighborhood council. The actual plan document and the ordinance go a little bit further and add a number of additional categories as ways of explaining what the intent of the phrase, "live, work and own property," is to be interpreted as in terms of actual participation in neighborhood councils. And we've arm wrestled over the past year and a half with the role that's assigned to individuals versus a role that's assigned to institutions.

My personal bias in that discussion is to allow more participation on behalf of the institutions that a community is made up of any number of ongoing institutions, whether it be churches, whether it be schools, whether it be chambers of commerce, whether it be Rotary Club, Lion's Club, any other organizations that contribute to the fabric of a neighborhood. And in many cases along the way, we've had models of neighborhood councils which deal with all at large elections where stakeholders either belonging to those groups or either residents or business owners or workers come together and elect representatives to neighborhood councils on an at large basis.

008 In this case we're confronted with a situation where you've carefully crafted -- I should say a structure that placed an emphasis on the institutional memory of the community. To some extent, however, over balancing the opportunities granted to individuals and. Finding the right balancing point between the two is the trick here. Being able to allow the individuals to participate in the neighborhood council, even to the extent that they may only be visitors, not necessarily visitors, but participants in a congregation who may not reside in the neighborhood council or they may be members of the chamber of commerce who don't necessarily work or own property in the neighborhood council.

Our goal as people who are working toward empowerment in communities is to involve as many people as possible and to involve as broad a spectrum as possible. And the reason for that is because we feel that as neighborhood councils reflect the broadest possible consensus of a community, the stronger their voice will be in city government.

The idea is that if you only -- if you restrict access to the neighborhood council functions and you restrict participation in the neighborhood council, then the people who will take your advice or who will be listening to your advice, will take that into consideration in the way they deal with that advice.

009 The broader the consensus that your advisor represents, the harder it is for your city council people and the mayor and others higher up the food chain, will be for them to ignore the advice or to move in an opposite direction.

So what we're really challenged with here is finding that balancing point between the interests of the individuals who make up the stakeholder body of the neighborhood council and the institutions which form the fabric of the neighborhood. And by allowing for caucus votes in a number of situations to select institutional representatives, you've done a good job of hearing that institutional voice or giving the institutions a place within the Neighborhood Councils. And by allowing other

Dne7599

elections in other stakeholder categories, you've cast a fairly broad net of the stakeholder participation. But there are a couple of places where the bylaw changes directly affects that balance that we're looking for.

And as you remove the clause from the definition of stakeholder, you also then remove that group of people from the at large voting capacity within the neighborhood council group in general and that concerns me. By the way that the bylaws define stakeholders for purposes of electing the at large representatives, by removing the participants -- the individual participants within the institutions, therein, precluded from voting for the at large representation.

009 The other is the question of the non voting religious situation. I'm a little bit concerned -- more than a little bit concerned about that, because you then created now, a second class of institutional participants within the community. And acknowledging that the City Attorney's advice was mixed, at best, along the way and probably should not have sent you off in the direction they did, the end result is not necessarily the one that we would prefer. We would prefer that all institutions in the community be given equal voice and equal access to the Neighborhood Council.

Michael talked again how the state laws and other things define certain characteristics relative to voting membership or the right to vote and the right to deal with certain things. That's true in state-wide elections and in federal elections and other elections, but not necessarily true in neighborhood councils. Because, again, here, our intention is to involve people who are not necessarily included in other ways in the process.

009 So reliance on what the state law says with regard to raising the election and the age of the elector to the age of 18 for some things is not necessarily consistent with what we would view as fully empowering the community as a whole. And while we make a point of involving the youth and others at an earlier age in the

neighborhood council, more than that we want to do that because we want people at an early age to begin feel the affects of participation in government and not necessarily exclude them just on the basis of their age; that they might be excluded in other areas. Because, again, the neighborhood council is intended to be the ultimate place where everybody gets to play.

And that's sort of my reaction to the bylaws changes that we're looking at tonight. I would be hard pressed to eliminate the clause in the definition stakeholders that you're talking about.

I do wholeheartedly believe in the expansion of the board and the changes in the way the electoral process is set up and the way the seats are allocated in the election process. I would be again hard pressed to support the change to making religious institutions non voting. And I would probably be hard pressed as well to support the change in raising the age of the electoral status of the stakeholders.

I'll let my other colleagues comment as well.

Commissioner Lucente.

Mr. President. COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Thank you,

As you all will recall, you know, we had a very

lengthy certification hearing last August. And I think
 009 this Commission and, indeed, the community members that were there, several hundred as I recall, bent over backward, I think, in trying to accommodate what as best can be described as a contentious environment and situation.

But it was my personal hope at that time where I think reflective of the decision by this Commission to certify that application at that time that everyone would be brought together, you know, and kind of bring -- put forth the faith that everything was going to come together. And I think that you've, you now, have demonstrated that you're trying to get there. And so I would certainly commend you for that effort.

I know that this is painstaking is probably a great word to describe the process. But democracy is oftentimes a very messy thing and some famous person said that, but I can't remember who that was.

Anyhow, with -- you know, having said that, you know, here we are again trying to get you to get to the point to being able to move forward. And so my comments are being made in the -- through the prism of trying to let the process go ahead, you know, and I really respect the participation that the community has had in trying to, you know, mold -- remold this to meet the spirit in the letter of the certification recommendation last
 009 August.

Having said that, you know, I think that many of the changes, while you guys spent much time and deliberated very very carefully and analyzed every word to the enth degree and seemed to have debated these things at a very theoretical level, I'm not sure that the real words that are contained in these bylaws, especially in several of these recommendations will materially change the outcome of the participation. I just think that they are, you know, while they're very important words, that they are words.

And so I think the -- you know, we have to look at this from an expanded standpoint of the sum total, the totality, if you will, of these bylaws because they will govern the -- they will govern the -- establish the rules of participation by all of these stakeholder groups.

So with that being said, I would agree with our President on all of his points, basically, and say the definition of the stakeholder, you know, I understand where you're coming from. I just don't think it really will make that much difference in light of the other changes that are being made in these bylaws. And I would weigh in on the side of, you know, more expanded stakeholder definition.

You're to be commended for expanding the
 009 categories of stakeholder participation, and I don't think there's any argument. I think you were kind of trying to convince us of the idea of the elected and the caucus, but you're rational is sound. And I think it does meet the goal of expanded participation as was dictated in the certification hearing decision. So I would support that change.

The religious non voting, I agree with President Christopher that, you know, I'm not sure what incentive anybody would have being a non voting participant on the board, frankly. And it's so hard to

get people involved. You guys have stuck with it surprisingly, in some cases I'm sure, but, you know, I would weigh -- I would weigh in, you know, to maintain their status as voting members.

The UC age, we have certified many many neighborhood councils, if I recall, where the youth were non voting members. And so I would weigh in at this point to, you know, go ahead and keep it the way it is. And then when you can move to the next level, you may want to reconsider that because your comments about youth participation, I mean, this Commission, I know values that participation. But speaking for myself, you know, we have certified many neighborhood councils where it's non voting, but that isn't necessarily before us. You're

009

just talking about the age, so we can't take that action tonight. So I would keep that the same as current time.

And in terms of the increasing voting age, I think, you know, again, I'm not sure that when all said and done that that will impact you at this particular time. I would, again, weigh in on the side of, you know, making that the same. So it's kind of a mixed bag. But most importantly, you know, where I'm coming from is giving you the impetus to, you know, move ahead and get this phase of your formation completed so you can move to the next level.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

Commissioner Woods Gray.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: I guess I'm pleased that you're interested in trying to make things work for you the way you think will work best. However, it's just not clear to me what you're really trying to do.

I believe that the neighborhood councils need to be looked upon as a new process and things will be done in a different way. So involving the youth, I'm certain was one of the reasons why I voted to -- would have supported your application in the first place.

And just as my colleagues have said -- as my colleagues have said, I agreed with many of the things they have already said. There really would be no need to

009

repeat many of those things. But I do believe that religious institutions play a vital part in our communities. And I have always wondered why there would be only one representative when I realize that the communities are religiously diversified as they are ethnically many times.

So but that's what I -- we get from neighborhood councils, and we assume that you're thinking of that at the time, that one person is going to represent all of these various religions. So that's a very good point that you made there and something to be considered in someday perhaps in the future.

But I was -- I'm certain when I voted, looked at your board and thought how diverse it was because you had almost everyone represented. And the stakeholder definition of membership was also very diversified definition and it seemed to include everyone who was in the community very clearly without us guessing who was going to be in there was there.

And for those reasons, I think I would prefer to see that you move along with your elections and begin your council to see how the bylaws that you originally wrote are going to work. Because, again, I'm still not clear if those small changes that you recommended today

009 will make that great a difference in the election process
and the running of your council and fighting for issues
and causes that will affect the neighbors in the
neighborhood.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay.

Commissioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: In looking and
listening to various comments that were made today, I'm
very glad that Jim brought to our attention the fact that
without a board, you know, it's very difficult to move
forward. But what really caught my attention in all of
your comments was that you did have the help of a staffed
person as you were developing your guidelines and your
ideas and that was good.

The fact that you have numerous questions about
this or that the neighborhood council staff has requested
these kinds of questions toward you, I believe has to be
ironed out after you get your board intact. I have never
liked to have someone participate and not have a voting
right.

Time is of essence, so when you have people
come and help you, it's important that they have a voting
presence. So I don't know whether I heard that correctly
or not, but if someone is coming to meetings -- you're
shaking your head no.

Would you explain to me no, please?

009

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Michael, you have to
put that on the microphone.

MR. RANDALL: I think that was restricted to
the issue of minors.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: To the issue of what?

MR. RANDALL: Minors of an age less than 18 and
where that line would be drawn. It could be drawn at 16,
14.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Okay. Even then, you
know, it's like people passing out candy and you can't
have any because you're not there yet, but you can come
and participate. Kind of think about that and see how
that can be developed. You might be able to offer
alternate ways for them to participate and still have a
feeling of voting and not just being in attendance.

So many of the comments that have already been
said, I go along with. But I do feel that your board can
proceed with what you have now.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Thank you, Mr. President.
Would it be appropriate for me to ask a question? And I
don't intend to rehash the debate that's already gone on.

But it would be helpful for me to hear in a
very succinct manner the rationale for the first change to
change -- the first suggested change to modify the

010

definition of stakeholders.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The reason for that once
again, was if you're going to be representing
institutions, as Mr. Randall stated earlier, do you want
it to be a popularity contest?

If you have four schools in the area and all of
the parents from one school come and vote that day, maybe
Kindrich Elementary School is the one that will win year
after year. Same thing with a community org.

If you're going to allow all the residents in
your neighborhood to vote in that caucus, every single

Dne7599

time I guarantee you the neighborhood association will win. It's a popularity contest. You're not truly representing the institutions if you allow individuals to decide which institution is going to be sitting at the board.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There's another issue because when we -- we decided along with what Commissioner Christopher said. We decided that we seriously wanted institutions participating as institutions. So then we looked at that and said participants in community, organizations, educational institutions, the only place to put those stakeholders is in the at large category. And by putting them in. -- which we will do if you so decide that that's what we

010

need to do. But we felt that the at large category where those people who had no other place to vote, they were workers in home-based business, for example, and the homeless. And we wanted that category not to be diluted by having so many of the other people who are just simply participants in the community organizations and educational institutions, when their institutions are already having a voice through the other stakeholder categories. And so that was our rationale.

It also went to the issue of really are these people who just come into the community for a couple of hours a week, at best, truly stakeholders, and this is an issue that we debated. And I understand that this Board and DONE would like to have a very broad based definition for participation in community councils, but we really want our council to be meaningful and have a real impact on the issues of our neighborhood and truly represent the stakeholders who truly have a stake in the community, and that was the rationale for the change.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I appreciate that and a follow-up question would be -- I think you raised good points.

Were those points discussed, debated, amongst yourself before August 27th, 2002, which is when we moved to certify? That's the first point of the question.

010

The second is: Did something that happened on August 22, which there was a change in your boundaries, our Commission took action to change what you guys had proposed. Did that cause additional discussion or changes?

And the third point is: Did something else in the ensuing time period happen to make your board change its mind on this?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, it's interesting because I was on the original board that wrote those bylaws, and then I resigned during that whole controversy. So while I was on part of the College Center group, I was not part of the original Valley Glen Council which appeared for certification in August.

Honestly, we were in this simple experience of all community councils, you're getting together and you're writing bylaws. Somebody sits down and writes a bylaw. Then you sit around and you debate it and you talk about it. And maybe you don't see all the issues as clearly as you need to see them when you see down and write election procedures, which is a whole other experience.

When we sat down and tried to debate the issues of do people -- do stakeholders have to vote for every

category? Do they vote for one category? Our bylaws
010 don't talk about that. All of a sudden, then, we had to
make changes in the category. We were asked in the third
part of your question: What prompted this?

What prompted it was the actual experience of
sitting down and talking about who was going to elect
whom and what seat was going to elect what group of
stakeholders. The bylaws were simply inadequate. They
simply were inadequate. And we had to make those
changes. So that was the rationale for our looking at
every single word as it affected the stakeholder
categories because those were what we had to get before
we could hold an election.

I hope I answered all your questions.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I appreciate that.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. RANDALL: Can I give one short --

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: No, Michael.

MR. RANDALL: There's one reason that's
missing, and I want to just -- please.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Very very briefly.

MR. RANDALL: The institutions are also in
themselves interest groups. They have their own
interest. So in the discussion, which also took place at
the general meetings with our stakeholders who commented,
it was felt that should the residents decide the outcome
010

of yet another category, or should the institutions
amongst themselves say we're the chamber, we will decide
who represents are interest group?

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: We understand that
point. And there's no problem with the idea that in the
caucus setting that you establish under your election
procedures, that the institutions be the ones to make
those decisions within the caucus and that they not
necessarily can be opened to the individual at that
level.

However, my concern still stands that I
articulated earlier, as we attempt to broaden the base of
the neighborhood council that the individuals who
participate in those institutions have someplace to go as
well, since -- that the at large category is available
for those folks to participate in the neighborhood
council elections, along with the other people that
you've indicated would fall within those categories.

In that way, then, everyone is insured some
means of participation whether they're participating
through their institution or whether they choose to
participate individually. And, again, the idea here is
to allow as many people as possible participate in some
level in the discussion. And we may find over time that
we want to change it and that it doesn't work or that it
010

may need to be modified to work differently.

We're all experimental, and we have to
understand that bylaws of neighborhood councils are
living documents. They're not necessarily set in stone.
And here you are six months later making one set of
changes. I'm sure there may be other sets of changes
which will come later on, not only in this neighborhood
council, but in other neighborhood councils.

So look at it as a means to move to the next
level of involvement and participation and growth of your
neighborhood councils. And then step back a year from

Dne7599

now or a year and a half from now and evaluate whether the situation is working and what changes need to be made to take you to the next step beyond that.

COMMISSIONER STONE: Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I had asked some questions, but I hadn't really jumped into a couple of my thoughts as well.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Sure.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I do have some concerns about the religious institutions not being voting members. And what you have just said here is that everyone should have a voice here. And I think by making them non voting the institutions, the members that make

010

up those institutions, would be at a different level than others on your board.

With that being said, what troubles me a little bit about where I think the board is heading is that we were presented here with some bylaw application changes with no opposition or no reported opposition from members of the neighborhood council. And I feel like we may be standing in the way of this neighborhood council moving forward, that troubles me.

And if we reject this or a portion of this, I don't know if this board moves forward to an election. If it moves forward to an election and then since there's no opposition, it unanimously makes these changes anyway. But the lack of opposition here, as I said, troubles me in that we would not give consideration to making some changes that I believe are still within the spirit and certainly legal under the plan, and if we were presented with using the definition of stakeholders, lives, works or owns property, certainly we have approved bylaws that are based just on that -- on those definitions.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: I appreciate that comment. But I think that we're really talking about, you know, interpretation of these bylaws, you know, relative to the ordinance, the plan, and as I stated

010

before, you know, Article 3, that change we could go either way on that. But fundamentally, the participation and the constitution rather of the board of directors is defined in Article 5.

So, you know, we can debate it all night, but the bottom line is it's not really going to make a lot of difference one way or another other than maybe in the spirit of this change -- I mean, the spirit in how this group moves forward. I would argue very strongly that by not adopting some of the changes -- well, most importantly, the most important change that needs to be made, and as the City Attorney representative pointed out, you know, this really is -- was mandated by our decision on August 27th because we have to amend these bylaws or amend our certification determination to address the expansion of this neighborhood council. And so if we don't adopt these changes, the most fundamental of which is the stakeholder category expansion, then we will, in essence, you know, keep them at the status quo.

And so that to me is kind of the core or the essence of the changes that are before us. The other ones are, you know, subject to the -- how one interprets this plan. That's my read of this.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Would you care to make

a motion?

010

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes. I'd be happy to make a motion. But before I do, I would want to say two things in addition to what I've previously said, and that is that I believe, if my recollection serves me, that we did mandate as a condition of approval on August 27th that this election be overseen by the League of Women Voters or --

MS. MORENO: No.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Or by a third party?

MS. MORENO: It was by third party, and I think you mentioned the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment. I don't have a copy of the transcript with me, but that was something that you stated.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Okay. So as long as that condition is there, that's good. And furthermore, I'd strongly recommend that -- I understand that the Department has a vacancy in this area. And with all due respect, Rita, with your support is very -- you're spread thin over a lot of different areas. And I would strongly recommend that this Department, in light of the circumstances that Valley Glen has underwent for the last, you know, year almost, to assign somebody to this area immediately because they really need the help. And I know you don't have the time necessarily to, you know, do such as a project coordinator.

010

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Well, the general manager's report is the next item on the agenda, so we can address part of that.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: So I would make a motion to -- as outlined in the staff report dated May 2nd, 2003, to deny the request of modification to Article 3 of the bylaws regarding stakeholder definition and find the requested changes inconsistent with the applicant's original intent and as further outlined in the staff report of May 2nd. With respect to the amendment of Article 5, Section 1, A, grant the requested change regarding the expansion for methods for electing the governing body and find that this proposed change is consistent with the plan as an allowable forum for electing or selecting a governing body.

B, grant or request to change its standing in diversity of the govern board and find further clarification of the eligibility requirements for state organizations and I find that the proposed changes consistent with the plan's requirement to allow the greatest opportunity for participation and diversity on the board.

C, deny the requested change to the seat for a religious organization and find the reason for the requested change based on erroneous information; and to

011

allow the stakeholders of religious organizations will be treated differently than other stakeholder classes with respect to seats on the board; advise the applicant to correct its bylaws to reflect the accurate number voting, work members, I believe to be 29.

D, deny the requested change to increase the voting age for the stakeholders, and find that the requested change is inconsistent with the applicant's original intent to include a broad stakeholder base and as further expanded in the staff report, May 2nd.

And three, deny the request modification of

Article 12, Section 3-A, regarding the increasing in the voting age and find that the requested changes are inconsistent with the applicant's original intent to allow the broad based of youth participation and its further expanded upon in the staff report of May 2nd, 2003, I so move.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. We have a motion.

COMMISSIONER WOODS GRAY: I second.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Discussion of the motion.

COMMISSIONER STONE: I have just a question for Commissioner Lucente. Did your motion include Article 3?

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes.

011

COMMISSIONER STONE: Okay. That was the first point, which is denying Article 3?

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes, it was.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. One point I'd like to make in discussion of the motion is that I want to make it clear to the representatives of Valley Glen that I don't believe the Board considers that there is a cloud over of the certification, rather that we have certified you for good reason, and we expect that the Valley Glen Neighborhood Council will be a successful neighborhood council going forward. And I think that the changes that you made in the bylaws to this package will go a long way toward helping you toward that goal. So -- and, as I said, this is still a living breathing document and it's a living breathing neighborhood council. So we would expect -- we will evaluate all neighborhood councils on an ongoing basis and try to find places where we can improve things and work ultimately toward the goal of empowering the neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Mr. President, I would just reaffirm also that, that you know, I'm making this motion with the full intent that, you know, in the interest of helping you move forward, not holding you back. So hopefully, you'll take it in that regard.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any other

011

discussions of motion? If none, I'll pole the commission.

Commissioner Woods Gray.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Longoria.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: Yes.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Stone.

COMMISSIONER STONE: No.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: And I yes. The motion here is four to one.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In that decision, then, our bylaws have to be modified to include the participants in the religious organizations, et cetera, in the at large category as well?

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: That can be done through your election procedures.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That can be done. Okay. And may I make one comment?

I am disappointed in the fact that -- and I understand where the Commission is coming from, but I do appreciate Commissioner Stone's comment. These changes were made through the community. It was a great

discussion and, in essence, I think that our process

011 would still move forward if you would have approved all of our bylaw changes. And I am disappointed that this Commission feels that the community's voice is not the strongest one that should be heard.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.

Okay. That concludes Item No. 4. And we'll move to Item No. 5, which is our general manager's report. Mr. Nelson.

MR. NELSON: Thank you very much. Fred Nelson, general manager. It's a pleasure to say good evening instead of good morning. A couple of Saturdays ago I attended a special civic engagement conference hosted by U.S.C. Normally, I would go to an event like this and end up with no notes because there was nothing of any importance said. This time I walked away with 18 pages of notes, and I'll be putting those down in writing and sharing them with everyone.

I was joined by -- from our staff Matthew Fitzgerald, Alvin Tonyas, along with Dume from the administrative staff, from our extended family of human relations Gary De La Rosa and the very distinguished Commissioner Jimmie Woods Gray.

So it was an incredible conference with representatives from Columbus, Ohio; Minneapolis; Seoul, and believe it or not, Shanghai; to share with us how

011 they were developing neighborhood councils. One of the most interesting questions of the day was: How did the neighborhood councils of Shanghai get along with the Chinese Communist Party. And you don't even want to hear the answer to that one.

There were three main points that we came away with, and I thought I would share with you very briefly. Oh, there was also a gaggle of the academics from around the country who we met in different workshops, and I thought was very good discussions. And I don't know how they picked who attended, but there were a lot of community-based organization leaders and selected neighborhood council presidents who attended. I think maybe 60 or 70 people in total.

Three main points I'll share with you very quickly. One was that more than worrying about having a long list of accomplishments, those who were in attendance suggested that neighborhood councils concentrate more initially on building trust. And the trust gets built among the board members themselves, between the board members and their stakeholders. And I added to that myself between the governing boards of the neighborhood councils and our staff.

011 But the participants made a very strong point that the building of that trust really does not occur by

sitting in a board meeting once a month, and that you have to build relationships outside of that meeting in order to build the trust, which probably, in my mind now is going to run headlong into the Brown Act. But that's another issue that we will deal with.

Second thing that happened was the keynote speaker was Professor Archon Fung from the Kennedy School at Harvard. Incredible person, incredible insight, and I actually understood what he was saying, which was -- this wasn't another professor talking. He was making a very strong point about how during the new

deal, government got into the habit of doing everything for people, taking care of everything, and building these programs and solving more of our nation's problems. And in the '60s, in and around the '60s, we began involving ourselves in confrontational and adversarial politics to be able to get things done.

But he was making point that now we are evolving into what he calls deliberate problem solving, and it's being done through the neighborhood councils. And that's why he traveled out here from Massachusetts to be able to admire what it is we are doing and how we are proceeding with this deliberative problem solving where people do things together and the bureaucrats understand that it's the neighborhood councils themselves that can

011

actually make the bureaucrats job easier and make them look better.

Third point was that -- and it's actually applicable to what we're talking about, is that they were -- "they" meaning generally the people who were there, were making the point that when neighborhood councils are electing or selecting representatives from certain groups, from religious communities, from educational communities, that they shouldn't get too stressed in trying to figure out how those people will vote. Will they be voting just for their congregation? Will they be voting just for their school?

But the more important thing they stress that you should be looking at is do those representatives have the ability to take the message of the neighborhood council back to their community. Does the representative from Milikan Junior High School have the ability to take the message of the neighborhood council back to the other educational institutions? And that's where they feel that the stronger focus should be. And I -- from having been through a lot of certification hearings think that sometimes that point gets lost.

On Friday I appeared before the City Council's budget and finance committee and that was to defend our budget -- proposed budget. And things went fairly well.

011

The only big concern that I raised after being -- the question was posed by Councilwoman Janice Hahn was I said my biggest concern is not with our proposed budget but with the budget of the office of the City Attorney. And I went on to explain that we have been long concerned that they do need more help. And the committee asked for a report from the CAO's office on that. So I've been collaborating, or conspiring with them, to tell them the workload that the City Attorney has, the demands that have been made upon them by neighborhood councils that go unfulfilled because they just don't have the staff time to be at all these neighborhood council meetings. So we'll see where that goes.

The report, I think, was due today back to the budget committee and there should -- if everything goes right, I felt that help is on the way. Not that we don't think that DONE can't do everything itself.

Today, I went to the personnel committee where we had the unfreeze -- or exceptions from the hiring freeze for three positions which would be Romero's position, the empty project coordinator spot, and Accountant II position. So it was a committee of one and they approved those unfreezes and they will -- those requests will go along through the course and hopefully

011 get to the city council shortly and begin hiring into those positions.

The last thing is Van Nuys and the county register reporter said that they did not want to be the ones who arbitrated this election. The main reason was because in order to do so, to have the authority to do so, they would have to go to the County Board of Supervisors and they reminded me how long that would normally take. And they said by the time that's over, the City's election on May 20th would be over and then the city clerk could do it.

We went back to the city clerk, talked some more, I whined, and they consented that if asked by the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council Board, they would accept the job of being the final arbitrator of that election. So we're in the process of polling the board members to see when it is convenient for them, and we will present that option to them.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Questions for the general manager? Seeing none, we will excuse Mr. Nelson.

And next Item No. 6 is Commission business. Are there any business items from the Commissioners? Commissioner Woods Gray.

011 COMMISSIONER GRAY: I would follow-up with Gregg and some comments about all the conferences. It

was a very -- the level of the discussion was very good and high. It was a high level of discussion on neighborhood participation. And I found that many -- we have many more rules and ordinances than the other cities that have been doing it for 20 years or so. That to me was very interesting that they get a lot of things done, and they don't have all the rules that we have.

And the discussion about the notification, the early notification system, hearing from the members of councils that were there and the fact that they don't want to get every piece of mail that comes from the city, and it just helps us to know that we need to focus more on helping them to identify what the needs are of their neighborhood, and then focusing on perhaps the developing portals or something that will just help them to identify -- be able to get what they need, not everything under the sun. Because those e-mails do clog up their computers like they do ours. If you signed up for them, you know how many pieces of mail you get every day. Too many pieces to read, actually.

But the discussion was very good. And, Gregg, it would be great if you could get the keynote speaker for us.

MR. NELSON: I'm just going to go on Amazon.

012 COMMISSIONER GRAY: He has a book out, but he didn't bring the books with him, that was interesting. Although, he was a very good speaker and had a lot of information to share on citizen participation.

And then there was a great poster from Minnesota, which I think I got in the mail, Gregg, or yesterday, a tube of them. I don't know if they're all the same because I haven't opened them yet. I was going to tell you to bring them in. It was a really great poster that perhaps we can duplicate for our neighborhood councils.

We did learn a lot of interesting things there.

Dne7599

I, too, wanted to write some information, but since I last left that meeting, I've been busy and a lot of congress and a whole lot of other things. And so the details, I've forgotten. Except that it was a very, I though, a good meeting. And I'm sorry that many of you didn't come to participate in that process so that you could hear all those good things they had to say.

The man from China, by the way, I had to ask him -- I said, "How do you balance this, democracy and the Communist Party?" And he said, "Things are changing."

They have neighborhood councils where people are actually voting, electing, and making decisions. On the other hand, they still have the Communist Party

012

watching them. But it was very good just to hear them and here -- oh, the other thing is our councils are much too large. Many of us have felt that anyway. Based upon the information that was given there and the best groups that have been organized for many years, we are really extremely large compared with those and even the ones in China where they have all those people, have much smaller neighborhood councils than we do.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: What is small?

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Like 5,000. It was enlightening to hear the successes. And I don't remember if it was Milwaukee. They give the neighborhood councils and just say, Go do with it what you want, without any strings attached. It's like what?

Anyway, it was very interesting to hear the things that people are doing around the country. So we should at least look at some of those things. I'm sure Gregg will be looking at some of those things. See how we make ours work.

However, we also learned that we've moved a lot -- we've really moved fasted and we are really ahead of the curve on what we're doing in LA, although we have a long ways to go.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Commissioner Lucente.

COMMISSIONER LUCENTE: Yes. I just want to

012

make this statement: We saw tonight the power of e-mail. And that in this case, I think, was my personal view had a negative implication for kind of misleading people this particular Valley Glen Neighborhood Councils, so I just wanted to make the statement that the Department should remind all members of the Department about the rules of e-mail. And, you know, e-mails a very powerful tool because it puts things in writing, and this is not to discourage people from communicating because transparency is very important, but rather to just caution folks how people interpret this. That they are -- that the staff are indeed the -- people are looking to them as the voice of really the collective City of Los Angeles.

And so I think that I would request staff to clarify that or just remind all of the staff about those rules of engagement, so to speak.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Any other Commissioner business?

I'd just also like to note on the U.S.C conference, I was there for the kick-off dinner Friday night, but I wasn't able to attend on Saturday. But definitely the level of participation and the information available was quite extraordinary. In that same vein, the Neighborhoods U.S.A. conference is happening in two

weeks in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

012

I don't think anyone from LA is going this year, which is unfortunate. But we might look at next year's travel budget to see whether or not we can send people to my neighborhood in Hollywood where the Neighborhoods U. S. A. conference will be happening next Memorial Day week. When I say Hollywood, I mean Hollywood, Florida; not necessarily the Hollywood we know and love. Although, it is in fact my neighbor because I do work extensively in Hollywood, Florida.

So I will invite you all to join me in Hollywood next year.

And that will then conclude Item No. 6. And we'll move to future agenda items, which are listed on our published agenda. It's carrying us out through now, the middle of August, I guess, for certification hearings.

We have one request to speak on the future agenda. Mr. Wiseman.

MR. WISEMAN: My name is Dr. Daniel Wiseman. I'm a stakeholder in the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council. And before I start my comments, I want to make another comment.

Ms. Longoria, Mr. Nelson, your comment about the two o'clock meeting is a little insulting for those of us who stayed and spent out time and got babysitters

012

and spent our very valuable time with a great and deep abiding and real concern that our Van Nuys Neighborhood Council make good progress, be a good council, and be a credit to ourselves and to our city.

I'll expect a written apology at your earliest convenience. And I'll be sure that all of my friends and neighbors will know about it. Now, I promised --

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: It was not meant to be an insult.

MR. WISEMAN: I'm sure it wasn't, but you understand the appearance. Sometimes -- and we've been accused of the appearance. But the appearance of wrongdoing is sometimes as serious of wrongdoing itself.

COMMISSIONER LONGORIA: And the other part of it is that we as volunteers stayed there until two o'clock to listen to you and also to see past -- to see how we could assist. So it was a mutual reciprocal attempt to make this work.

MR. WISEMAN: That's the real issue. That's the one question I've been asking all this time in the last two or three months that I've gotten involved in this. You know what period this is. Three weeks ago this very night was Passover. My two grandchildren got up and recited four questions: Why is this night different from any other night?

012

On all other nights we eat any kind of bread. On this night we eat only matzoh or other versions. It's all the same question. What's different? Why are we meeting here tonight? Why did my family and I follow a two -- almost 3000 year old tradition of getting our families together and celebrating our exodus us from Egypt?

It wasn't just the exodus of the Hebrew people, my friends. It was the exodus of all of us. It was the first exodus from oppression, from slavery, to freedom. Now, we're still involved in that same exodus right here

and now. So in that spirit, I would like to ask you four questions, which really is one question. When Mr. Padilla got up -- I came in when he was talking.

I was a little surprised to hear him say that this is an unusual place this Sylmar. I see the Sylmar people are here. This is no unusual place. When I moved to the Valley 38 years ago, my first job was at the Pacoima Memorial Lutheran hospital. And I served the people of Pacoima, of Arleta, of Sylmar, of every part of the San Fernando Valley, and I still do in spirit.

Although, I stopped practicing four years ago. There's nothing strange about this place. This is my neighborhood. These are my friends. These are the people that I work for. These are the people who work

012

for me. I want to congratulate the Sylmar people. I'm sorry they're not here, but maybe --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm here.

MR. WISEMAN: Congratulations on a wonderful amount of work, and I wish you well on my neighborhoods of which I makeup yours as one. And we'll continue to work together for the betterment of all of us.

Now, four questions. Was, in the opinion of this Board, was the May 1 meeting of the Van Nuys Neighborhood stakeholders meeting both legal and proper?

In the effort of not to take more of your time, I'll wait and let you answer after I'm finished.

Was the distribution of the petition, the names, the addresses, the phone numbers, the e-mail address that requested that meeting of May 1st, was its publication to many people on the Internet, I believe, and I may be wrong here, but I note to all the Commissioners, was that a violation of their rights of privacy?

I have in my hands -- and, Mr. Christopher, I hope you received the letter I sent you yesterday. It was an e-mail. Maybe it's clogging up your e-mail.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: It could be.

MR. WISEMAN: But if you haven't seen it, I have copies here for all the Board members. You can

012

answer it at your convenience. I presume this may not be the time to do it, but I'd like to have answers to the questions asked of you.

However, yesterday, Cinco de Mayo, I received the answer from Mr. Nelson. Mr. Nelson sent a letter -- an e-mail around. To anyone who hasn't gotten it, please let me know. I'll be glad to give it to you. Mr. Nelson, thank you for sending it.

The pleasures of DONE. If DONE keeps those pleasures, Mr. Nelson, we're all in great shape. We're going to be fine. They're not easy to keep. You know how hard they are. But they're the pledges that we stakeholders want.

Question No. 4: Where is the meeting going to being on Monday?

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. WISEMAN: No. 4 is an easy one.

PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER: All right. That concluded Item No. 7 on the agenda tonight and takes us to one final item, which is the adjournment.

And I'm seeing about five different people who move to return and of these who second, and all those in favor, please leave the building. Thank you.

Dne7599
(Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.)