

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council Board Meeting 11/14/22 -
Government Affairs Motions

6b1 (part 1) CF 22-1197. New Ad Hoc Committee / City Government Reform / Increase Transparency and Limit Corruption / Los Angeles Residents Trust.

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) supports CF 22-1197 to create a new ad hoc committee at LA City Council on City Governance Reform to increase transparency, community outreach on important topics, limit corruption at City Hall, and make City leadership more representative of and beholden to the communities served. SONC recommends this committee hold all meetings in a public forum and be composed of persons other than sitting City councilmembers, their staff or paid representatives, and persons who are considered restricted sources and restricted developers under the Ethics Commission or Code, and other persons subject to mandatory disclosure pursuant to Municipal Lobbying Ordinance Update CF 22-0560.

6b1 (part 2) CF 22-1132. Charter Reform / Ethics Commission / Powers and Responsibilities / Ballot Measure.

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) supports (if amended) CF 22-1232 to pursue a ballot measure and changes to the LA City Charter to address concerns regarding Ethics Commission composition, function, and operation. SONC recommends the following amendments to CF 22-1232 to fully address these ethical concerns while ensuring the Commission is empowered to remain independent and recommends LA City Council take its time to progress this legislation through committee before reaching the full council:

- Independent Appointment: The city of LA will not have a truly independent ethics commission until it ends the involvement of elected officials in the appointment process. The incumbent commissioners should be responsible for accepting and vetting applications through a public process like the Oakland and Long Beach Ethics Commissions.
- Eligibility Requirements: The commission proposes adding restrictions excluding any bidder, contractor, developer, or someone with a direct financial interest in work of the city from service on the commission. These restrictions are warranted but incomplete. We also recommend excluding anyone who is a recent candidate for elected office in the city of LA, former

elected officials in the city of LA, and anyone who has donated or raised above a certain threshold for local candidates.

- Raise the vote threshold for removal of a commissioner: The commission recommends increasing the number of elected officials who may initiate removal and reducing the threshold to a majority vote. We recommend requiring a 2/3rds vote for all removal proceedings of ethics commissioners.
- Increased maximum penalty: The commission recommends increasing the maximum administrative penalty to \$10k per violation. We recommend adopting Chicago's max penalty of \$20k per violation model.
- Raise minimum budget: The commission recommends their budget be set at \$4.5 million and tied to CPI. While this would protect against retaliation or defunding during a financial crunch, this essentially freezes the status quo into the charter. \$4.5 million is a few hundred thousand above the commission's current budget. The recommendations include new expenditures, like outside counsel, which will require more money. If the Council is expanded, the Ethics Commission will require more money. A minimum budget in the range of \$7-10 million would give the commission the resources needed to fulfill its broad sweeping mandate.