

Government Affairs Committee

Lindsay Imber, Chair
Kira Durbin
Howard Katchen
Tom Materna
Stacey Segarra-Bohlinger



**Sherman Oaks
Neighborhood Council**

Government Affairs

Minutes

Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 6:30 pm.

VIRTUAL - ZOOM



Sherman Oaks
Neighborhood Council P.O.
Box 5721
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

Website:
www.ShermanOaksNC.org

The Neighborhood Council system enables meaningful civic participation for all Angelenos and serves as a voice for improving government responsiveness to local communities and their needs. We are an advisory body to the City of Los Angeles, comprised of stakeholder volunteers who are devoted to the mission of improving our communities.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. Lindsay Imber, Chair, called the meeting to order at **6:33pm.**
- b. Stacey Segarra-Bohlinger called the roll.
 - i. **Present:** Katchen, Imber, Segarra-Bohlinger, Durbin, Materna **(5)**
 - ii. **Absent:** **(0)**

2. Administrative Motions

- a. *A motion to approve the Minutes of the July 2025 Government Affairs Committee Meeting.*
MOVED: Katchen **SECOND:** Durbin
YES: Katchen, Materna, Imber, Segarra-Bohlinger **(4)**
NO: **(0)** **ABSTAIN:** Durbin **(1)** **ABSENT:** **(0)**
item 2a approved unanimously 4-0-1-0

3. Comments by Elected or Appointed Officials, City Agencies, and Staff - none

4. Public Comment - remarks from the public on non-agenda items

5. Chairs Report

Kira Durbin newly appointed committee member
welcoming remarks

6. Committee Business and Discussion, Potential Motions

a. City-Wide Expansion of CIRCLE Program.

CF 25-0331.

POSITION: FOR

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) supports CF 25-0331 to explore an optimal pathway to create a single city-wide program for unarmed crisis response, such as the Crisis and Incident Response Through Community Led Engagement (CIRCLE) Program

MOVED: Durbin **SECOND:** Katchen

YES: Materna, Durbin, Imber, Segarra-Bohliger, Katchen (5)

NO: (0) / ABSTAIN: (0) / ABSENT: (0)

item 6a carries unanimously 5-0-0-0

b. Goats for Brush Clearance in High Fire Zones.

CF 25-0749.

POSTION: FOR

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) supports CF 25-0749 and the innovative approach of utilizing goats for brush clearance in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. In 2022, SONC adopted a motion to support CF 22-0600-S61, a since-expired budget motion proposing the use of goats to perform park brush clearance on Department of Recreation and Parks land. SONC reiterates its support for the adoption of such a program in the City of Los Angeles, the benefits of which include fiscal savings, wildfire prevention, and nature sustainability.

MOVED: Imber **SECOND:** Katchen

YES: Materna, Durbin, Imber, Segarra-Bohliger, Katchen (5)

NO: (0) / ABSTAIN: (0) / ABSENT: (0)

item 6b carries unanimously 5-0-0-0

c. SONC Quorum Motion re City Hall.

Follow-up regarding previously passed legislative proposal

Adopted City Council guidelines mandate that presentation of Community Impact Statements (CIS) is delineated from general public comment period during City Council meeting

d. Charter Reform Commission

DRAFT MOTION:

While Neighborhood Councils (NCs) are supposed to be the closest form of government

to the people, the system has been eroded in myriad ways from its original intent as set forth by the previous Charter Commission. Recognizing that current standards are systemically and intentionally divorced from the purpose of the Neighborhood Council (NC) system as defined in section 900 of the Charter, The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) implores the Charter Reform Commission to include the following changes to the charter relating to NCs:*

*1. Codify better standards outlining the way in which NCs provide input to City Council (currently detailed in section 9.07 of the Charter**.) Presently, NCs are not afforded a reasonable opportunity to present a Community Impact Statement (CIS) commensurate with the time and effort spent by NCs to file them. NC Designees have reportedly been told in commission meetings that presenting a CIS on behalf of a Neighborhood Council cedes the individual's right to personal public comment. Current operating procedure for City Council meetings does not delineate CIS Presentation from public comment, despite policy adopted by the City Council stating that CIS presentation "shall be considered separate from the public comment process"; furthermore, time allotted for CIS presentation is counted against time allotted for public comment period, and often fluctuates as it is granted at the discretion of the presiding officer. NC designees should be granted, at minimum, five minutes as a standard for CIS presentation during City Council meetings. CIS presentation should be clearly separate from public comment period, with City Council providing the same attention and respect to NC designees as they would representatives of any City Department or Agency. NCs designees should be able to present a CIS before the full City Council body regardless of whether public comment was satisfied under the Brown Act during a committee meeting.*

2. Modify section 9.02 of the City Charter regarding the appointing authority of Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC). At present, all BONC appointments are made by the Mayor. Commissioners with little to no experience working with Neighborhood Councils, or who have been actively hostile to Neighborhood Council advocacy, have been appointed to BONC. Active NC board members deserve to have a role in the appointment of at least four BONC commissioners, if not the entirety of BONC. This would ensure that NCs would always have adequate representation that would carry a genuine and earnest understanding of the work performed and challenges faced by NCs. It has also been reported that commissioners of BONC, and other commissions, have been required by the Mayor to sign and submit undated letters of resignation. There should be a blanket ban of this practice that applies to not only BONC, but to any commission for which this has been standard procedure. This is an intimidation tactic that gives the appointing authority ongoing political control over commissions, which makes it impossible for commissioners to operate independently and objectively.

3. Modify language in section 2.19 of the Charter regarding intergovernmental relations to explicitly allow NCs to communicate with Government Offices and Agencies operating separate from or superseding the jurisdiction of the Mayor and City Council. While it is not explicitly disallowed, the City Attorney and previous Mayoral administrations have communicated to NCs that making direct correspondence to any office or agency other than the Los Angeles City Mayor and City Council would be considered as representing the City of Los Angeles (L.A.), and thus forbidden. There may be a caveat that NCs must

clearly state that their position does not necessarily represent that of the City of L.A.; but it is necessary for NCs to have the prerogative to communicate with any office or agency as an independent, elected body, so as to adequately represent their stakeholders.

4. Amend guidelines as currently outlined in Charter section 9.11 to restore and maintain funding for NCs that is, at a minimum, \$50,000 per NC per fiscal year; which was the initial amount allocated at the inception of the NC system. NCs now direct half the funding they had when they were first created; compounded with inflation, this has significantly impacted NCs ability to cover operating costs while providing other benefits to the community such as awarding Neighborhood Purposes Grants, hosting events, and executing neighborhood improvement projects. When the City faces a fiscal crisis, NCs incur disproportionate cuts, but have never seen our funding restored when the fiscal situation improves. Our largest Neighborhood Councils have only \$25,000 a year to serve and inform over 100,000 constituents. The pattern of offsetting fiscal restraints, in part, by reducing the overall NC budget is not sustainable; and seems designed to limit and constrain the power and impact of NCs even further.

5. Amend guidelines as set forth by Charter Section 218 that dictates salary guidelines for the Mayor, City Council, and others. Currently, the standard is that "Members of the City Council shall be paid a salary equal to that prescribed by law for judges of the Municipal Court of the Los Angeles Judicial District or its successor in the event that court is dissolved or reconstituted" with the Controller, City Attorney, and Mayor awarded amounts in excess of this standard in increments of 10%, 20%, and 30% respectively. This standard is excessive relative to the Median, and Average wages of City Workers and Angelenos at large. It is not fiscally sustainable, nor does it allow for elected officials to maintain an ongoing understanding of the economic challenges faced by the vast majority of the constituents they serve. The standard guideline should be based on one, or an amalgamation of the following: An amount not to exceed the highest annual salary earned by a teacher working in the Los Angeles Unified School District; or double the median income of the population of the City of L.A.; or triple the lowest salary of workers employed by the City of L.A. Furthermore, in the event that the City of L.A. is under a declaration of a Fiscal Emergency, City Councilmembers should be put under a furlough that reduces their regular salary payments to an equivalent of \$60,000 annually until the Fiscal Emergency declaration has ended. Also, consider reducing the number of meetings a member of City Council may miss, consecutively or sporadically, while being awarded their salary in full.

**Los Angeles City Charter, Sec. 900. Purpose. To promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs, a citywide system of neighborhood councils, and a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is created. Neighborhood councils shall include representatives of the many diverse interests in communities and shall have an advisory role on issues of concern to the neighborhood.*

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

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Notices to be provided include matters to be considered by the City Council, City Council Committees, and City boards or commissions.

MOVED: Segarra-Bohlinger

SECOND: Katchen

MOTION TO AMEND: *[To add the following language at the end of section 1]
Include adequate time, at least 60 days, from inception of a council file until City Council holds a vote, barring emergencies or time-sensitive matters, to ensure the NCs have ample opportunity to deliberate through committee, seek stakeholder input, and properly move an item through the full NC board, and present a CIS to City Council during designated NC presentation period for CISs.*

MOVED:Materna **SECOND:**Durbin

YES: Materna, Imber, Segarra-Bohlinger, Katchen **(4)**

NO: (0) / ABSTAIN: (0) / ABSENT: Durbin **(1)**

Motion to amend item 6d carries unanimously 4-0-0-1

MOTION AS AMENDED

YES: Materna, Imber, Segarra-Bohlinger, Katchen **(4)**

NO: (0) / ABSTAIN: (0) / ABSENT: Durbin **(0)**

item 6d carries unanimously 4-0-0-1

7. Closing Announcements-

Materna

- *Meeting upcoming with Councilmember Raman of CD4 on issues regarding the removal of members of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) by Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA)*
- *Deadline for public comments on most recent phase of Sepulveda Corridor Project upcoming (8/30/25)*
- *Issues relating to audit of Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) lawsuit and incurred legal fees*

Segarra-Bohlinger

- *remarks about Charter Reform Commission (CRC), necessity of participating, advocating for NC interests*

Imber

- *Briefing of dates, topics for upcoming CRC meetings*

Katchen

- *Request assistance in sending CIS directly to CRC*

Member of the Public

- *Emphasizing the level of contention and tumult in previous Charter Reform efforts*

8. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:57pm

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Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stacy". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'S' and a trailing flourish.