

912 Commission reviewing the Neighborhood Council System

When the voters of the City of Los Angeles created the system of neighborhood councils in 1999, Section 912 was added to the city charter. Section 912 requires the city council to create a commission to evaluate and make recommendations about the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and the entire neighborhood council system. The commission is formally known as the Neighborhood Council Review Commission (NCRC). These are 29 people who are volunteering their time to serve the community. They are deeply committed to understanding what has worked with neighborhood councils and what can be improved.

Commission Composition

The Commission is comprised of:

- 1 member appointed by each City Council member (15)
- 7 members appointed by the Mayor
- 7 members appointed by Neighborhood Councils (grouped by the seven Area Planning Commission areas)

The commission has been meeting for several months now. Their work will conclude in late September 2007, when they take their recommendations to the city council. You can follow its progress at the website, www.ncrcla.org. You may have seen or will see some of their meetings on Channel 35. As required by law, they meet in public and are holding hearings throughout the city. Hopefully, you can attend to offer ideas and suggestions for a better neighborhood council system.

Clean Air

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"The primary purpose of the Plan is to address the near term needs to address immediate emissions reductions. The Plan evaluates all potentially feasible measures available in the immediate term and has a program (Technology Advancement Program) to address emerging technologies as they are developed that can be integrated into the Plan as it is updated annually."

The Air Quality Subcommittee requested the Ports consider support of user fees, such as per container, to fund air quality initiatives, and the Ports responded, "The Ports are exploring various mechanisms (including) application of impact fees associated with movement of cargo or sources (i.e., trucks, locomotives, vessels, etc.). Staff is committed to evaluate the use of fees to accelerate emission reductions from all source categories."

We expect implementation of the air quality measures as stated in the CAAP including the commitment to longer term solutions which may not currently be proven feasible. For example, the Air Quality Subcommittee requested implementation of a LSF Program for ships in August 2002, the very plan Maersk announced in May 2006 and that the Ports plan to implement by Fall 2007. With a five-year lag between recommendation and implementation and with Port growth at 6 percent per year or greater, future solutions must be investigated without delay, as in the CAAP's Technology Advancement Program.

While the Air Quality Subcommittee's multiple recommendations in the past four years found their way into the CAAP, we also have great interest to ensure that the Subcommittee continues within the Port Community Advisory Committee structure. Let us hope the Ports maintain their commitment to the CAAP and the Air Quality Subcommittee and that they uphold their responsibility for public health.

Cabrillo Boathouse & Beach Improvements



Site Plan and Historic Images

Cabrillo Beach Boosters Plan to Rebuild Historic Buildings

Cabrillo Beach proposal includes Boathouse and Pavilions

by John Stinson

They started with the idea of renovating the Cabrillo Beach Bathhouse and today it is a reality. The Cabrillo Beach Boosters, with a vision, determination and a little help from their friends and local government, managed to turn a dilapidated structure into a beautiful facility that the community can use once again.

That was just the beginning.

PCAC in limbo

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To act upon the recommendations from this study, what needs to happen is for the BOHC to clearly lay out its new interpretation of the China Shipping provision that mandated an advisory committee, come to agreement with the litigants as to the proper function of a PCAC and work collaboratively with the citizens of the Harbor Area to form a process that meets both the needs of the Commission and the needs of the affected citizens. So far, the BOHC has only engaged the staff of the Port for recommendations and is forcing PCAC members and citizens' groups, such as Neighborhood Councils, to go before it in three-minute sound bites to plead its causes.

Three minutes is all one has to address the Board in open public comment session time.

What you can do is get engaged in the public debate about PCAC. Appear before the Harbor Commission to ask the Commission to honor the China Shipping judgment in spirit as well as form, voice your perspective on just how and what a citizens' advisory committee to the Board needs to accomplish from a citizens' point of view and finally, demand that the new PCAC continue to operate as an open community process whose meetings fully meet the requirements of the Brown Act. Both the consultant's and Dr. Knatz's reports are on the Port website at www.portoflosangeles.org.

Whatever the shape, scope and mission of the new PCAC, it must bring community needs and insights to the Board, consist of representatives chosen by the affected citizens' groups and have both the structure and resources made available to it to give the Board its studied and deliberated recommendations. Any format or mission not meeting these goals will be shortchanging the citizens of the Harbor Area and not aid the Board as it seeks to meet both the Port's expansion and Harbor Area citizens' needs.

For the present, POLA has delayed staff recommendations citing the need for further study. Now is the time to attend the Harbor Commission meetings and voice your opinions with regard to PCAC's continuing role in port oversight.

They are now turning their sights on rebuilding the Boathouse and Pavilions that once graced the beach. Built for the 1932 Olympics, the original structures fell into disrepair and were eventually torn down in the late 1970's. Their plan is to rebuild those structures using photos of the buildings as a template for creating new ones since the original plans have not been located. The clock starts ticking now.

I was asked to join the Boosters five years ago and I said OK," said Gary Dwight, current President of the Boosters and fourth generation San Pedroan, "but only if I could initiate plans to rebuild the boathouse and pavilions. I remember them as a kid, my parents remembered them and my grandparents remembered them."

So the plans are to rekindle those memories by rebuilding the Boathouse and Pavilions, as well as build a permanent lifeguard building, a teaching facility for kayaking, windsurfing and the like, to get the storage containers off the beach that store kayaks, softboards, etc. and build an on site facility for the park rangers to help eliminate some of the graffiti and security issues.

But it won't be an exact replica in design or layout. The proposed layout of the pavilions is a semi-circle, back further from the shore for less light pollution, that accommodates some concerns and needs of the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. However, the pavilions will be a glass and metal structure with barbecues and sinks like the old days. The scale of the boathouse will probably differ from the original as well and its pier could possibly be used as a pumping platform to recirculate water in the inner beach to address some pollution issues.

"For now, we're looking for public acceptance and support from neighborhood councils, Department of Recreation and Parks, Port of Los Angeles, the City Council as well as community groups which will allow us to move forward," said Gary Dwight. "We realize there may be many opinions and concerns about this project (this being San Pedro), but at the moment, people have told us to go for it. This beach is under appreciated, under utilized and certainly could use a boost. So we are asking people to join us in making this proposal a dream come true."

For more info call 310-548-7554.