

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

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May 7, 2024

Honorable Paul Krekorian,
President, Los Angeles City Council

Honorable Council Members,
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Katy Yaroslavsky, Fifth District Councilmember
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Kevin de Leon, Fourteenth District Councilmember
Tim McOsker, Fifteenth District Councilmember

While the members of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) appreciate the well-meaning intent of the motion referenced by Council File 15-0389-S2, granting Community Councils the same privileges as those afforded to Neighborhood Councils pursuant to Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.819, the BONC must oppose the motion for the following reasons:

All certified Neighborhood Councils are required to comply with the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, and the policies and rules of the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and the City Clerk's NC Funding Program and NC Election Divisions.

Neighborhood Council Board members must take several trainings including Ethics, Anti Bias, and Gender Bias and comply with a Code of Conduct.

Neighborhood Council meetings must comply with the Brown Act by giving notice of meeting times and locations, the timely filing of agendas and being open to the public.

Neighborhood Councils are prohibited from activities such as raising outside funding, supporting or opposing candidates and ballot measures, and suing the city. Depending on their status Community Councils may support candidates and ballot measures.

Community Council members are not required to take any type of training, they can restrict board membership in any way they choose, they do not need to give notice of meeting times and locations, allow the public to attend and address them, or let the public know what they are discussing and deciding. Where Neighborhood Councils are supposed to be open and not discuss or decide issues before them in any manner other than at a public meeting, Community Councils can meet and decide issues in ways that are opaque and secretive. Depending on their status Community Councils may support candidates and ballot measures.

Some years ago, Pacific Palisades Community Council declined to seek Neighborhood Council status because they did not want to comply with the Brown Act. Brentwood Community Council requires each board member to donate \$150 yearly to the Community Council. While Westwood Community Council is not mentioned in the motion, it operates in an area covered by two Neighborhood Councils. It solicits annual “voluntary dues” and contributions.

If this motion is adopted by the City Council, it will mean that other Community Councils, Civic organizations and possibly Homeowners organizations throughout the city can demand the same privileges.

It sets a bad precedent for possibly ceding more privileges to Community Councils in the future and diluting the value of citizens organizing as open and diverse certified Neighborhood Councils.

Rather than providing special treatment of Community Councils, the City Council should instead encourage the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to prioritize the formation of Neighborhood Councils in areas where they do not now exist, with the goal of achieving 100% coverage of the city by certified Neighborhood Councils.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy Atkinson".

Joy Atkinson,
Vice President, Board of Neighborhood Commissioners