



Neighborhood Council Seeking Candidates for May, 2014 Election

The Neighborhood Council system evolved out of the reform of the Los Angeles City Charter in 1999, as a means of making local government more accessible and representative of the communities that make up the city. The Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa was among the first to be certified in 2001 after a two-year organizational process. There are 31 members on the Board of Directors, representing the various stakeholders in the Westchester, Playa del Rey and Playa Vista community. Today, the NCWP has stakeholders, who by their participation, help influence the direction of our community.

There are many ways to get involved with your Neighborhood Council, whether as a board member or by joining a committee as a stakeholder. Board members are selected by election or appointment. Elections occur every two years, and half of the board seats are on the ballot. Once elected, board members serve for four years. Board members are expected to complete all required training, attend monthly board meetings, actively serve on at least one of the NCWP committees and proactively participate in matters within our community. Fifteen of the NCWP board seats are reserved for residents only while the remainder are reserved for other segments of our community, including education, business, clergy, youth, seniors, community and fraternal organizations.

Stakeholders who do not want to serve as a board member can volunteer to serve on one of the NCWP committees. Stakeholders are invited to attend all of our meetings and to sign up to receive the agendas and to stay informed.

The upcoming Neighborhood Council election will be held on May 18, 2014 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will be held in the Community Room of the Westchester Municipal Building at 7166 Manchester Ave. in Westchester. Stakeholders who are interested in serving on the NC board are encouraged to complete the candidacy application during the period of March 4 through April 3. The application will be available through our website, www.ncwpdr.org, or the City of Los Angeles website, www.empowerla.org. Scan the QR code below for more information.

Please visit the Neighborhood Council website at www.ncwpdr.org to learn more about the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa and to learn about upcoming informational meetings related to the election.

Neighborhood Council Pushes City to Change How It Implements SB1818

Developers have found “the best kept secret on the Westside” – and the way the City of Los Angeles implements the affordable housing elements of SB1818 means taller, denser buildings for our community.

Over the past few years there have been several key corner parcels that were put on the market which have created opportunities for developers to come into Westchester and Playa del Rey and build bigger and taller than we have seen before. Some of this development has been welcome in that it replaced old, tired and blighted properties, which became homes for the homeless or less desirable uses, but some have presented options that have made us question WHY?

Why do they get to build 49 units on a lot where there was previously a single home?

Why do they get to build four stories when the zoning says they can only build three?

Why don't they have to provide guest parking when they build zero-lot-line homes? They look like condos to us.

Why don't we get a “better restaurant than that?”

Over the past few years, it has become apparent that lawmakers in the city and the state clearly believe there is a need for low- and moderate-income housing. But it is clear that the efforts to add more affordable housing may not coincide with how we, as neighbors, view the Community Plan of our neighborhood. In an effort to create this affordable housing, lawmakers have been so unclear in their definitions that developers have been quick to leverage loopholes and take advantage of density bonuses and other benefits, leaving our neighborhood holding the bag and dealing with the traffic, noise and other impacts of these large developments.

In particular, the passage of SB1818, which encourages incentives for developers to build bigger by providing density bonuses, if they include at least some low-income units as part of their project, came without structure as to how this type of legislation is to be implemented at the local level.

Predictably, the City of Los Angeles has chosen to leave the requirements of SB1818 undefined, saying it will handle projects on a case-by-case basis. Of course, the outcome is inconsistent application of the ruling and mass confusion, coupled with a lot of unhappy neighbors.

At the March Neighborhood Council board meeting, the NCWP Planning and Land Use Committee presented to the board of directors a request to support a letter to Councilmember Mike Bonin asking him to confront the issues surrounding SB1818 and the urgent need for the city to define its implementation in our community and throughout the city. We should not have to accept that we are helpless against the developers, who in their own defense, are just doing what the city is allowing them to do under SB1818. If there is enough of an outcry from Neighborhood Council leaders, residents and other community leaders, City Hall will finally begin to listen to the concerns of the stakeholders who are being impacted by SB1818 developments.

Most recently, the community has been faced with two developments in our community that sought to implement the SB1818 density bonus. Each of these were developers who designed mixed-use projects that included ground-level retail with several levels of apartments and subterranean parking. Instead of being forced to accept these developments that are borne out of SB1818, we need for our Councilman to lead the City Council and the rest of City Hall to a workable program for our communities. Let's not allow lazy planning and lack of foresight doom us to overly dense development in the name of creating more affordable housing.

Planning Forum Set for March 20

In an effort to encourage everyone in the community to learn more about planning issues and the impacts of SB1818, the NCWP Planning and Land Use Committee has invited key speakers to join us to explore and learn. The forum will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, in the Community Room at the Westchester Municipal Building, 7166 W. Manchester Ave. This meeting is free and open to the public. All are invited.

