



an insider look at city hall

CITYWATCH

citywide edition

August 16, 2005
Volume 3 Issue 8

CityWatcher Edition

CityWatch Today—We got an unusual number of responses to the last issue of CityWatch. Especially to our question about who should share the blame for the glitches in the Greater Wilshire NC election and Commissioner Pat Herrera Duran's pointed suggestion that the GWNC folks stop blaming everyone but themselves. And, to the report that Janice Hahn had been replaced as E&N Chair by Bill Rosendahl. Which some found disappointing and others considered an affront to NCs.

Today we revisit the possible consequences of that appointment, along with the lack of NC response to the multimillion dollar cost of the DWP-IBEW agreement, the infamous Lap Dance issue and more.

Thanks for stopping by.

--Editor.

Say What?

"The problem with LA and its school system is that we have too many dreamers and not enough doers."

--Charles Gremer
North Hills West NC

cityWatcher

Peepless in LA: NCs Strangely Silent on IBEW-DWP Contract

The Department of Water and Power wants to give the union millions of dollars in a salary increase and, it appears, LA's Neighborhood Council voices have fallen silent. A DWP/IBEW deal that could cost rate payers as much as \$75 million over five years ... and would dwarf the cost of the proposed water rate increase that sent them headlong into protest ... has caused barely a stir in the neighborhoods of empowerment.

Brady Westwater, President of the Downtown LA NC, was the lone NC protestant at the last LADWP Board meeting. He told the Daily News that "no one represents the ratepayers in this game."

Meanwhile, in an LA Weekly story, Jim Alger ... who led the fight two years ago to quash the 18% water rate increase ... was identified as "a former Neighborhood Council liaison and a Democratic candidate for state Assembly" ... and said, in effect, that not much could be done because "labor costs were not negotiable."

In either case, not what you would call a call to arms.



DWP-IBEW Add: With the Mayor's new panel waiting in the wings, the current DWP Board approved the new IBEW contract ... with salary increases of at least 17% and perhaps as much as 34%. It now goes to the City Council. Even with concerns about the agreement, the majority said they felt that time was running out and that the City Council had provided earlier guidelines and should be the ones to deal with the controversy.

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Mayor Appoints Three to BONC; Estrada Withdraws

By Sara Epstein

Mayor Villaraigosa named three new members to the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners today. One appointee, Raul Estrada, withdrew immediately.

Estrada is the Executive Director of El Centro de Ayuda. No reason as yet given for his withdrawal.

Labor attorney, Diane Middleton and Tsilah Berman, Executive Director of LA Neighborhood Land Trust, were also appointed. The appointments are replacements for Ron Stone, who resigned, and long-time Commissioners Pat Herrera Duran and Mary Louise Longoria, whose terms have ended. ■



Mayor's Budget Process is a Go—Deputy Mayor, Larry Frank, says Neighborhood Councils will continue to participate in the budget planning and the annual Mayor's Budget Process will continue. Look for an updated, more inclusive, more exciting program, however, from this Mayor. The program's kickoff, Budget Day, is slated for October 1 at City Hall in council chambers. "We're going to do it a bit differently," Frank tells us, "the Mayor will be there and it will be informative, effective and fun." Stay with CityWatch for the rest of the story.



Will New E&N Chair Sit on the NC Non-CIS Proposal? In view of Bill Rosendahl's public comment that he wouldn't recognize NCs until the definition of "stakeholder" was changed, it's a fair question.

Jason Lyon's proposal that NCs be allowed to request Council File Numbers is past due at the E&N. It was supposed to be heard back in June, but the committee hasn't met since June 12 ... and, according to Rosendahl, won't meet in August.

One Fourth Floor Voice says: It would be best to have Rosendahl's support, however, the can still move forward, despite his objections, if it comes to that.

E&N Add: The Education and Neighborhoods Committee will meet now at a new time ... the second and the fourth Wednesday of each month. Still at 2 p.m. and still in City Hall room 1060. No word on when they will meet again. The committee hasn't met since early June.



Lap Dancing Back on City Council Card—The US Ninth Circuit just reaffirmed the City of La Habra's prohibition against lap dancing. Technically they upheld the "no touch rule." Buoyed by La Habra's success, Tony Cardenas has asked the City Attorney to create a similar ordinance for LA.

You will recall, the Council took on a local club and tried to do this once before. But some inattention and hazy strategy brought them up short. And, embarrassed.



Speaking of Council Embarrassment—As most folks know by now, NCs have asked for the right to request City Council File Numbers. Some City Council members are opposed. Among the reasons given: NCs could produce some plain silly motions or requests. Perhaps they're worried about losing their corner on the silly motion market.

A few agendas ago, the City Council was asked by Greig Smith to consider a motion supporting a State Resolution making the second Saturday of December, the Day of the Horse. A move topped only, perhaps, by the Councils prohibition of silly string in Hollywood.



Insider Word Is: Council President, Alex Padilla, will step down in January to devote time to his run for state Senate.



A Marathon Runs Through It—The date of the 2006 LA Marathon has been changed to March 19. More importantly, if your council is in a neighborhood that is impacted, you will want to contact the Marathon folks. They are meeting with NCs to try to work out the street closing issues that paralyze many neighborhoods for much of the running. (www.LaMarathon.com).

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Monitor Now On—The NC/DWP MOU Oversight Committee ...charged with monitoring adherence to the MOU ... is now up and running. First meeting was August 13. Some 45 reps and observers on hand. Among the first MOU adjustment issues: Closing the agreement glitch that leaves them out of the loop on union contract negotiations.



Newsrack News: *Early (8:30 a.m.) press conference is set for tomorrow so Wendy Greuel can announce that the newly amended Newsrack Ordinance is alive and breathing ... and about to be set in motion. Permits, we are told, have been pulled for the first racks in Greig Smith's 12th District.*



Last Call: Downtown Councilmember, Jan Perry, has asked the City Attorney to check on the cost of translating all City ordinances into Spanish and other languages. Think about it. Is this LA or what?

--The CityWatcher
8.16.05

Future Assignments

- The Mayor is reaching out to NCs: New and improved Budge Day; Day of Service; NC appearances. We'll detail the plan.
- The controversial, multimillion dollar DWP-IBEW contract has now been passed on to the City Council ... where it's all about positioning. We'll try to sort it out for you.
- The BONC is undergoing a face lift. Already four new commissioners have been named. What do NCs want of their commission? CW will look for an answer.
- 2006 could be a critical year for NCs. The Charter calls for a Commission to evaluate the NC system. Some would like to use the opportunity to reduce NC influence. CityWatch will explain.

... coming soon to a computer near you.

DayPlanner

- √ City Council
Aug 22-26—In Recess
- √ Education & Neighborhoods
August 24—Canceled
- √ BONC
August 30—No Meeting Scheduled

Special CityWatch: Labor Day LA

Labor in LA and Southern California has left its mark on the movement and played a role in the "making" of the City. Names like Contreras and Chavez come quickly to mind.

Now there are those who believe that LA labor is leading the way into the 21st Century. The teachers and nurses unions come quickly to mind.

CityWatch examines both perspectives ... and more ... in its Special Labor Day LA edition due at your computer doorstep on:

August 31st

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