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Subj: [SJ-D6NL] Ngbrhd Cmsn notes 1/9/13

Hi, all,

I'm tired, but before I forget:

quick notes from Nghbrhds Cmns mtg tonight:

Cmsn has 30 positions: 21 members and 9 vacancies (no one represents D10); a quorum is 16; tonight's attendance was 15: no formal actions allowed.

No minutes to be approved -- still "in work" (from a year ago Jan!!)

New Council liaison: Don Roche. Councilmember didn't attend, but aide Ann spoke on his behalf. Says Councilmember is interested in parks, nghbrhd services, and impact of city employee layoffs on them.

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Kip Harkness was delayed, so Agenda item taken out-of-order:

Item (g3): introduced Casey Tran, intern, fresh from UC Berkeley, working for year on city volunteerism.

something like 17(?) different programs within city (libraries, parks, ...): any way to coordinate them?

[my comments: there are different types of volunteer efforts: towards a project (e.g., tree-planting along creek or road), individual efforts (e.g., daily walk to clean a trail), organized events (rose pruning), regularly scheduled (library, senior center): one size doesn't fit all. Do need support (liability coverage, supplies) and reward (recognition, tee shirts, food). Don't abuse volunteers: don't ask us to clean park toilets every Monday!]

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Item (g1): Kip Harkness (Dept. City Manager) leads discussion on purpose / future of Nghbrhds Cmsn.

How City Admin sees the NC:

Strengths:

\* not "single silo" perspective: we are cross-disciplinary rather than just parks or libraries

\* selected by community rather than reflecting council viewpoint

\* geographic diversity

Weaknesses:

\* structural: narrowness of scope: overly defined by our charter of "thou shalt not do anything done by other cmsn"

\* selection process by caucus is too cumbersome

\* feedback is not timely [see comment on Minutes, above.]

\* budget input was useful, but would have been better if more timely.

NC needs to have, or needs to improve, a >Vision< and a >Mission Statement<

>>What is the "value proposition"? (rephrase: What do we do that others don't do better?)

Cmsn size (30 members) is cumbersome, but it does provide diversity in opinions.

Rather than be limited by what others cmsns could be doing, we should look to see what's being missed.

>>Many topics fall across (between) other cmsns: with our broad background and interests, we can help represent nghbrhd point-of-view on topics that span departments. [I had given my favorite list of topics, such as riparian setbacks, urban villages, main streets, etc.; Kip later pointed out that Main Streets straddles traffic and zoning/planning (and riparian is across parks / infrastructure / planning)]

NC can be the mingling of "flow down" from City and "flow up" from nghbrhds. [My emails to/from D6NLG are an attempt at that...]

When asked what we need, I suggested a facilitator -- I don't want us stuck w/ subcmtes drafting positions that then get argued over for months (we don't have the time!), but I don't want us askew the Brown Act on private emails either: have mtgs where someone records brainstorm ideas, teases out the essence, and guide us towards consensus. Don't know if we'll get one; don't think we'll have special sessions to work on this; perhaps it'll be done at "Executive Cmte" (which is open to public and which I intend to crash...)

This defining of our own charter is an opportunity: it is not that we were bad and are "being punished" by having to justify our presence.

Defining of charter will take most of next several mtgs: little time for much else besides city budget and support of volunteer study.

Charter will be work; should be useful.

Two members of public spoke (Pete Kolstad (downtown) and Steve Landau (D1), both generally supportive of Nghbrhd Cmsn and of our efforts to define our purpose.

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Item (g2): city budget exercises Jan 26, 8:30 AM. Rumor >not< true, it wasn't canceled, but it was downsized from original plans: it will again be at City Hall (and not at the Convention Cntr as once conceived). Need to RSVP for reservation: I've sent the invite by separate email.

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Communications:

I forwarded the comments received from D6NLG, confirmed that is okay w/ Brown Act to do so, and encouraged other cmsnrs to also collect and forward community concerns.

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Upcoming dates:

\* Thur 1/17/13: planning dept. discussion on billboards/signage, bike parking, transit-oriented development, and more: 6:30 PM, City Hall Tower, rm 332

\* Sat 1/26/13: budget exercise: 8:30 AM at City Hall (limited attendance: register now)

\* Tues 1/29/13 (the 5th Tues): the D6NLG, 6 PM. (Nghbrhd Cmsnrs: contact me if you'd like to attend and see how we do it in D6...)

\* Thur 2/7/13: State of the City address: RSVP req'd. (Get yours today!)

As usual, these are just my quick recollections and are >not< formally-approved minutes: if anyone has corrections or additions, I'd be glad to amend and resend!

~Larry, a D6 rep on Nghbrhds Cmsn.