San José Neighborhoods Commission (NC)

Inaugural Special Meeting

10/23/13

at SJ City Hall, West Wing, rm 118

quick and unofficial notes

by L. Ames

[Note: these are my >unofficial< notes and comments, not complete and not necessarily in sequential order. No guarantees, but I will try to capture some of the unofficial action at the various meetings so I can report to my district. I’ll share the notes with my fellow Commissioners and invite them to correct/amend/augment/share these as appropriate.]

First Item: approval of minutes.

Going forward, the official minutes will be “Action Minutes” – only reporting on official actions taken by the Commission: won’t include discussion, etc. Thus, the minutes may say little more than “we met, we approved the minutes of the preceding month, we adjourned”.

Official action: we Commissioners were officially sworn in.

Future of the NC [notes out of sequence:]

By Council Action, the NC has now completed the Pilot Program and has been made an official, permanent commission to the City of San José.

The 17 remaining Commissioners who served on the Pilot Program are “grandfathered in” for a transitional period.

Those Districts with vacancies will have them filled by Council appointment. New members were recruited in Sept. and are to be appointed in Jan. No more “Alternates”.

Four-year terms, sync’d to Council calendar (i.e., terms expire in June).

Commissioners serving odd-numbered districts will be up for re-selection/replacement by community caucus in the spring of 2014; those serving even-numbered districts will be selected by caucus in the spring of 2016.

The caucus process may be similar to that employed some years ago, or may be modified somewhat by the NC and approved by Council, but the intent is to preserve the unique feature of the NC: that the Commissioners are selected by community representatives rather than by the Councilmembers.

However, if there are vacancies during the period, they will be filled by Council appointment rather than calling a special caucus. Miss 3 meetings (per year? in a row?) and you’re out.

Going forward, there will be 2 representatives per district. A few districts are currently represented by 3 Commissioners from the Pilot: they all can continue until their district’s next selection caucus.

City Clerk will develop New Member Orientation/Commissioner Training, explaining Roberts Rules, Sunshine, etc.

Clerk doesn’t want Commissions to have a lot of subcommittees.

Clerk wants all Commissions to have same format for bylaws, agendas, minutes, etc. Templates are now being reviewed by City Attorney.

NC meets 10 times/year: monthly except July & Dec.

**Our charter:**

Neighborhood Quality of Life. Specifically:

\* Neighborhood Safety: working with the Police Dept, Gang Task Force, etc.

\* Transportation. (this wasn’t expanded upon, but I could see it involving bus/rail/BRT, bike routes/paths, “complete streets”, and the like. Perhaps we can discuss traffic on Lincoln Ave.!)

\* Code Enforcement

\* Budget & Finance Measures (e.g., discuss and express community opinions on taxes, bonds, etc.)

The topic of the homeless falls under “public safety”

Starting Jan 18th, the Mayor will begin the next budget process. We on the NC can be more active: for example, holding our own public meetings out in the districts.

At the Nov.13th NC meeting, we are to review/revise the Caucus process.

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Annie Gambelin, staff to Council Liaison Don Rocha, discussed Mayor’s Gang Task Force. Next public meeting: Oct. 28, 6 PM at Bascom Community Center.

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[main agenda item:]

Executive Recruitment for Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement (PBCE, aka “Planning”).

Joe Horwedel is retiring, and the City Manager’s Office (CMO) is looking for a replacement.

>>[Note: Joe is the featured speaker at our upcoming D6NLG meeting Tues 10/29/13, 6:30 PM, at the WG Library on Minnesota near Lincoln.]

Dir. of PBCE is more than just planning:

Promotes the City

Envision 2040 Implementation

Development Services: process & schedule

City is beginning Outreach process now, will recruit in Dec., screen candidates in Jan, and interview in Feb.

City staff members Lee and Ernest (different Ernest, not Guzman) asked NC for comments: what we’re looking for. Various comments:

* Executive Manager; Decision Maker
* ensure “Quality” development
* Outreach; work with community; Policy 6-30; network with community interest groups on policy changes and items of global reach.
* improve Code Enforcement: trash, blight
* address Job imbalance; roundtable with community
* Needs to be able to stand up to Mayor and Council; defend Planning’s recommendations
* Needs to be able to stand up to Developers: stop with the exemptions and waivers
* be aware of concerns & issues: Historic preservation; complete streets; parks; habitats: build the community; work with neighborhoods as well as developers.
* experience working in cities. “SJ is a small town” – experience with towns with population in the range 400k – 1.2M may be more relevant
* experience implementing policies.

The Community is invited to take a survey to give comment: survey is on City Webpage.

Next NC meeting: Wed. Nov. 13th, 6:30, at City Hall, West Wing, room 118.

[free validated parking in the garage below: enter from 6th St.]

The NC does not meet in December.

Larry Ames, Oct. 27, 2013.

ps:

I have created a webpage on the website [www.WGBackfence.net/NC](http://www.WGBackfence.net/NC) where I am archiving these notes, along with copies of agendas, maps, official letters, and other memorabilia.