



**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA**



SILVER LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Serving the Silver Lake
Community Since 2003

EMAIL: board@silverlakenc.org

PHONE: (323) 413-SLNC (7562)

MAIL: PO Box 26385, LA CA
90026

URL: www.silverlakenc.org

SLNC OFFICERS

CO-CHAIRS

Heather Carson
Anne-Marie Johnson

VICE-CHAIR

Jerome Courshon

TREASURER

Patty Jausoro

SECRETARY

Scott Plante

Election Committee

Monday, August 8, 2016, 7-8:30 pm

Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic, 3324 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

Street parking, by the Sunset/Micheltonena Bus Stop

A G E N D A

The City's Neighborhood Council system enables civic participation for all Angelenos and serves as a voice for improving government responsiveness to local communities and their needs. We are an advisory body to the City of Los Angeles, comprised of volunteer stakeholders who are devoted to the mission of improving our communities and bringing government closer to us.

The Committee does not take action on behalf of the full Neighborhood Council Board. It considers proposals and forwards Committee-approved recommendations as proposed motions to the full Board. The Board will consider the Committee's recommendations at a future public Board meeting and may take final action on the recommendations.

1. WELCOMING REMARKS:

- A. Call to order
- B. Committee roll call

2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

3. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

- A. Review and Adoption of April 2016 Minutes
- B. Review and Adoption of May 2016 Minutes

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATION AND REPORTS/MOTIONS & RESOLUTIONS:

- A. Discussion and Potential Action on Election Committee Report and Recommendations to the SLNC Board

5. REQUESTS/MOTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

6. ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC INPUT AT NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MEETINGS – The public is requested to fill out a “Speaker Card” to address the Board/Committee on any agenda item before the Board/Committee takes an action on an item. Comments from

the public on agenda items will be heard only when the respective item is being considered. Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda that are within the Board's jurisdiction will be heard during the General Public Comment period. Please note that under the Brown Act, the Board/Committee is prevented from acting on a matter that you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a member of the public may become the subject of a future Board/Committee meeting. Public comment is limited to 2 minutes per speaker, unless adjusted by the presiding officer.

PUBLIC POSTING OF AGENDAS – Silver Lake Neighborhood Council agendas are posted for public review as follows:

- Mornings Nights Cafe, 1523 Griffith Park Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026
- www.SilverLakeNC.org
- You can also receive our agendas via email by subscribing to L.A. City's Early Notification System at: <http://www.lacity.org/government/Subscriptions/NeighborhoodCouncils/index.htm>

THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT - As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices and other auxiliary aids and/or services, may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request at least 3 business days (72 hours) prior to the meeting you wish to attend by contacting the SLNC Secretary, at (213) 375-8836 or email secretary@silverlakenc.org.

PUBLIC ACCESS OF RECORDS – In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the board in advance of a meeting may be viewed at Mornings Nights Cafe, 1523 Griffith Park Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026, at our website: www.silverlakenc.org or at the scheduled meeting. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please contact the SLNC Secretary, at (213) 375-8836 or email secretary@silverlakenc.org.

RECONSIDERATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

For information on the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council's process for board action reconsideration, stakeholder grievance policy, or any other procedural matters related to this Council, please consult the SLNC Bylaws. The Bylaws are available at our Board meetings and our website <http://silverlakenc.org/about/bylaws/>

SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCION

Si requiere servicios de traducción, favor de avisar al Concejo Vecinal 3 días de trabajo (72 horas) antes del evento. Por favor contacte a the SLNC Secretary, al (213) 375-8836 o por correo electrónico secretary@silverlakenc.org para avisar al Concejo Vecinal.



2016 SLNC Post-Election Report

The Silver Lake Neighborhood Council (“SLNC”) Election Committee recently concluded its task of organizing and promoting the 2016 Silver Lake Neighborhood Council Election. 983 stakeholders cast their ballots in the election. 366 of these voters took advantage of early online voting, which was offered for the first time this year. With 34,675 residents in Silver Lake, this translates to a turnout of 2.83%, which is a 30% decline from the 2014 election. Although Silver Lake's turnout declined from 2016, SLNC still achieved the seventh highest turnout percentage of the 89 neighborhood councils with elections in 2016. Silver Lake also had the second highest turnout percentage among the neighborhood councils in Region 7; only Elysian Valley with a population that is nearly a fifth of the size of Silver Lake's had a greater turnout percentage.

We achieved these results despite having only the 51st largest budget toward elections out of 75 neighborhood councils that reported budget figures, and well below the \$7,041.78 average budget neighborhood councils throughout Los Angeles spent toward elections. When compared to the other five neighborhood councils in Region 7, and Eagle Rock which we also reached out to, only Atwater Village, with a population less than half of Silver Lake's, had a smaller budget. Three of the other six neighborhood councils we analyzed - Eagle Rock, Rampart Village, Elysian Valley - had a higher budget than Silver Lake despite a smaller population. A comparison of Silver Lake with the other neighborhood councils in Region 7 and Eagle Rock is below.¹

Neighborhood Council	Budget Spent	Residents	% Turnout in 2016	% Turnout Difference from 2014
Silver Lake	\$3,822.56	34,675	2.83%	-30%
Rampart Village	\$14,402.15	25,145	0.45%	-65%
Los Feliz	\$9,999	37,236	1.06%	15%
Elysian Valley	\$8,000	7,323	5.76%	N/A - Did not exist in 2014
Eagle Rock	\$6,775	32,729	1.58%	110%
Echo Park	\$6,300	53,022	0.42%	-61%
Atwater Village	\$1,480.30	14,931	2.43%	34%

¹ Numbers were provided by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (“DONE”).

In the weeks following the election, the SLNC Election Committee conducted conversations about the election both internally and with members of the Eagle Rock, Echo Park and Los Feliz election committees. This report consists of the knowledge gleaned from those discussions.

Raising Awareness

We found that raising awareness of the election was one of the biggest challenges. The vast majority of the stakeholders that we came into contact with during the run-up to the election had either never heard of the Neighborhood Council or was not aware of what its purpose was.

We had a fair amount of success tabling at the Silver Lake Farmer's Market. We were there every weekend possible, handing out flyers about the election and educating stakeholders. We also managed to recruit several candidates from discussing the Neighborhood Council with stakeholders at the Farmer's Market. That said, we felt we ultimately devoted too many resources to maintaining a Farmer's Market presence on a weekly basis and not enough to other avenues of outreach.

Besides the Farmer's Market, we also were present at other community events such as the Visions and Goals Meeting, Spring Egg-stravaganza, GPACC Spring Faire, and the community LADWP meeting.

We had a heavy presence on Facebook and a good clickthrough rate to the SLNC website. Nonetheless, there was a general feeling on the committee that we should have had Social Media Advertising up earlier and more resources to devote to it.

We also sent out an email newsletter to the community, and sent e-mails to SLNC grant recipients and stakeholders who signed-up at our Farmer's Market table.

In addition, we printed up large banners and posters and hung them throughout the neighborhood. We did run into significant difficulties finding good locations for the posters and banners. Most local business owners were unwilling to advertise the election, which was disappointing.

The other committees that we talked with had similar experiences although Eagle Rock, in particular, came up with a couple of clever ways to raise awareness. They printed up 5,000 election postcards, which they mailed (US mail) to every address in Eagle Rock. They also gave the postcards to public schools around the area, which went home in the kids' folders.

Eagle Rock also created a video promoting the election featuring some local celebrities that was quite successful, the link of which is below.

http://laist.com/2016/05/18/eagle_rock_the_vote.php

Candidate Forum

Our experience with the candidate forum that was held at the Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral on Saturday, May 7, a week before the election, was mixed. We handed out hundreds of flyers, posted heavily on Facebook to promote it, and hired a food truck to give out free food. Despite our efforts, only approximately 75 stakeholders attended. We also felt that the moderator was

hindered from asking more interesting and varied questions due to DONE limitations that prevented her from asking candidates different questions.

Lastly, we made the decision to accept some audience questions written on index cards but only after filtering them to remove any pointed, biased or aggressive questions. This placed us in the uncomfortable position of censors and created some ill-will in the room. While it is important that stakeholders feel that the candidate forum is interactive, the next Election Committee should consider whether there is a better way to take stakeholder questions that would not create ill-will between the Election Committee and the stakeholders in attendance.

The other committees had similar experiences, although Atwater Village wound up having a very well-attended and successful forum, perhaps attributable to the quality of their food.

Election Day

On Election Day itself, the Committee did an effective job in addressing concerns raised about parking at Micheltorena Elementary School, where the election has traditionally been held. Upon our investigation we realized that in past elections, there was confusion as to where voters could park. To address the parking issue, we a) received permission from St. Francis Church to use its parking lot as a back-up and b) we had committee volunteers on Micheltorena and in the parking lot on Golden Gate Avenue directing voters to available parking. These steps better ensured that Election Day went smoothly, and that stakeholders would be able to find parking to exercise their vote.

It should be noted that Micheltorena Elementary School was not the Board's first choice of a location for the election; the Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral was. The main concern with Micheltorena was with the parking. However, once the Election Committee was finally approved by the Board, we found out that the Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral was not available on May 14 to hold the election. The next Election Committee should consider whether it makes sense to hold the election at Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Micheltorena, or some other location in the future. And if a location other than Micheltorena is chosen, the Election Committee or the Board should book that location much earlier than was done this time.

Challenges

Nearly everyone we talked to agreed that the biggest impediment to having successful elections was the City of Los Angeles and DONE. Those surveyed found them difficult to communicate with and a source of a lot of conflicting and confusing information. For example, at one point, DONE provided us with paper voter registration forms so we could register stakeholders by paper while we tabled. We found this to be an effective tool since no one on the Committee had a tablet to register stakeholders. However, when we turned the registration forms in, we found out that those who register by hand cannot vote online, and we were told not to register stakeholders using the paper forms again. On another occasion, after we provided DONE with ideas of places to set-up "pop-up voting" locations in response to DONE's request, we did not hear from DONE for days. When we did hear back, DONE picked a pop-up location (at a SLNC board meeting) that was not one of the locations that we suggested, and was not an effective location for registering new voters.

With paper forms not an option, we found it difficult to register stakeholders during our outreach efforts without having access to tablets or without DONE representatives who were willing to come with a tablet to register voters when we tabled. We received numerous complaints from stakeholders who encountered difficulties voting online after registering. DONE repeatedly assured us that there were no issues on its end but the frequency with which we heard complaints implied otherwise.

Our Committee also found that the SLNC bylaws and Standing Rules were both confusing and the source of other impediments. For example, the Bylaws are unclear as to whether they preclude Board Members from participating on the Election Committee, and whether only the seven members on the Committee could vote. Although Board Members informed us that Board Members could not serve on the Election Committee, nowhere is that expressly specified in the Bylaws or Standing Rules. Stakeholders communicated to us that they were turned off by the documentation requirements that the Bylaws mandate for stakeholders to vote. These documentation requirements also made it more challenging to register stakeholders on the fly because many do not carry around the requisite documentation on them. We also believe that these documentation requirements likely contributed to excessively long lines on Election Day.

There was also a lot of confusion over the difference between registering for City/State/National elections and registering for the Neighborhood Council elections. This was exacerbated by the fact that our Neighborhood Council election was on May 14, which was overshadowed by the more prominent California primary three weeks later. We did our best to educate stakeholders about this, but this still turned out to be an impediment.

Lastly, we wish we had had greater support from the SLNC board for Election Committee activities. Elections provide an opportunity for Neighborhood Councils to promote the role they play in their communities and to highlight their accomplishments. Board involvement is a crucial component of that. Aside from a couple of exceptions, there was an inability, an unwillingness (or both) from most of the Board when it came to assisting with the elections. This manifested itself mostly in the lack of manpower to help the Elections Committee execute its outreach activities.

Not having at least one board member serve as an active liaison between the Committee and the Board resulted in some confusion that hindered the Election Committee's outreach activities. For example, the Board allocated four election-specific newsletters that were to come out of the Outreach Committee's budget. The Election Committee provided content on several occasions for inclusion in the newsletter. However, instead of going toward an election-specific newsletter, this content was mixed into the SLNC general newsletter. We believe that having a board liaison actively working with the Election Committee could have helped clarify that the content we were creating should be set aside for the election-specific newsletters that were allocated for the Committee.

We understand that some of this hesitancy for the Board to get involved in helping the Election Committee was rooted in confusion over what was appropriate for Board Members to do in connection with the Election Committee. While there were well-intentioned concerns that the Election Committee should have independence from the Board to avoid any improper Board influence on the conducting of elections, that does not mean the Board is not able and should not support the Election Committee in the execution of its outreach activities. This is especially

true for Board Members who are not running for re-election, where their involvement would not raise the same concerns about improper influence of the Board on the Election Committee.

The Future

We have a number of recommendations that the Election Committee and the Board should consider to improve SLNC elections in the future.

Recommendations for Future Election Committees

- 1) Face-to-face interactions seem to be the best technique to improve awareness of the elections. We recommend spending more time canvassing the neighborhood as opposed to focussing on a gathering spot like the Farmer's Market where we tended to see the same people (and the same type of people) each week.
- 2) Start the planning process earlier. We should have a full and active committee in place at least a month or two earlier, so that we could get earlier approval from the Board to operate as a Committee and begin collaborating with the Board, the Outreach Committee, and other committees. This will also enable the Committee to book the location for the election earlier, so SLNC can have the election at a preferred location. We also should have started outreach for the Candidate Forum earlier and focused on more targeted advertising for the forum to better leverage the presence of the food truck as a way to entice stakeholder attendance.
- 3) Assign a Committee member to be a Social Media Coordinator who is responsible for social media advertising. We could have done a better job of having a consistent and strategic social media presence. Having a committee member assigned responsibilities for this would ensure that we are not letting this outreach tool fall through the cracks.
- 4) Utilize the four election-specific newsletters allocated for the Election Committee to be e-mailed out to stakeholders.
- 5) Recommend that the Election Committee not disband until the next election, but stay active to assist the SLNC in implementing these changes and petitioning DONE to improve its practices. If this recommendation is implemented, we hope that the Committee will have stronger momentum to start planning for the next election much earlier.

Recommendations to the Governing Board

- 1) We recommend doubling the budget of the election committee to \$8,000 to at least match the average spent by neighborhood councils in Los Angeles, and to not limit our outreach options. Specifically, this \$4,000 increase will allow the Election Committee to conduct a direct mail campaign, which the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council said cost approximately \$4,000 for a neighborhood council with a similar population as Silver Lake.
- 2) We strongly feel that the Board leadership should encourage Board Members, or at least Board Members not running for re-election, to assist the Election Committee. In particular, the Board should require and enforce the requirement that there be one current Board Member be actively involved on the Election Committee and be a liaison to the Board. This was supposed to be in effect this year, but to little success.
- 3) The Neighborhood Council Bylaws and Standing Rules should be clarified to allow current board members to be involved in Election Committee activities, while also addressing concerns to prevent Board Members from inappropriately influencing the direction of the Election Committee to the benefit of certain candidates. To address this concern, we

recommend revising the Bylaws/Standing Rules to specify that a) the Election Committee can consist of any stakeholder, including current Board Members; but b) current Board Members on the Election Committee would be non-voting members.

- 4) Revise the Neighborhood Council Bylaws to a) streamline the definition of stakeholders to mean “those who live, work, own real property, or attend school in the neighborhood;” and b) remove the current documentation requirements in order to register to vote.

Recommendations to Petition DONE

- 1) Petition DONE to consider scheduling neighborhood council elections at times that are not close in timing to other more prominent national, state, or local elections.
- 2) Petition DONE to coordinate with the state Secretary of State or L.A. County Registrar of Votes so that voters who are registered with the Secretary of State are automatically registered at that address for neighborhood council elections without any additional registration.
- 3) Petition DONE to provide tablets to neighborhood councils to register stakeholders and/or allow neighborhood councils to register stakeholder by paper to vote online or in-person.

Thank you for reading and we hope this report helps the 2018 Silver Lake Neighborhood Council election be an ever bigger success.