

San Diego Community Planners Committee

Keeping Communities in Communication ❖ <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/cpc>

June 25, 2012

Honorable Chair Lightner and Members of the Economic Development & Strategies Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the query raised at the November 2011 Regulatory Relief Day, specifically:

“Suggestion #27, Part 4: Rework the criteria for being a member of the Community Planning Groups to ensure more diversity of viewpoint.”

We take such suggestions seriously both in terms of how we can improve the operation of community planning groups (CPGs) and the Community Planners Committee as well as an insight to the perceptions of the public.

In this case, the suggestion tells us more about public perceptions. While often repeated, the basis for the suggestion is not based in reality.

In 2007, the City of San Diego required a systematic update of all CPG bylaws. The City Council updated Policy 600-24 with a template to guide the CPG bylaw updates. The template offered CPGs the option of designating elected members by geographic area, by function (property owner, renter, business owner, developer, etc.), or simply by open elections. Each CPG was free to choose their method. The new bylaws were approved by staff (if the bylaw complied with the template) or by the City Council (if CPGs sought deviations).

We reviewed the current bylaws of all 42 planning groups, excluding only Center City which recently converted from an Advisory Council to a CPG.

Of the 41 CPGs, 27 of them (66%) require elected members by function. The functions include, but not limited to: business owners, commercial, developers, property owners, geographic areas. In other words diversity is built into their election process. Perhaps of greater interest is that 18 CPGs (44%) specifically require seats to be filled by business owners or professionals.

We informally polled the remaining 14 (33%) CPGs which use open elections as to the current make-up of their groups. For those groups their elected members frequently include business owners, design professionals, and, individuals in the real estate industry.

We need to keep in mind that for some CPGs there is very little land use activity in their community and therefore it is difficult to attract elected members much less attract a diverse

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From: San Diego Community Planners Committee

To: Honorable Chair Lightner and Members of the Economic Development & Strategies Committee:

Subject: Diversity of Community Planning Group members

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elected membership. Some CPGs noted that their bylaws mandate business seats but they have difficulty retaining a seated member.

In summary, despite the suggestion the city's CPGs do indeed have a diversity of viewpoints. Two-thirds of CPGs mandate that diversity while the other CPGs enjoy a diversity of representation in their group through the open election process. As with any democratically elected body, the make-up of each CPG reflects those who chose to serve and their ability to gain the votes to be elected.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond and we are available to present our findings at your committee hearing on this topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph LaCava". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe LaCava

Chair, Community Planners Committee

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