

February 20, 2015

Letter to Post Editor

As noted in a Post article of September 19, the PPCC board recently heard from various individuals about the neighborhood council process in Los Angeles. The meeting was intended as a *beginning* discussion about neighborhood councils for those interested in this issue. If there is continuing interest and a board member request, we will take up the matter again at a future meeting.

The Post article states that “community council” leaders were invited to speak at the meeting. In fact, readers should know that *only one community council* president spoke (from Westwood Community Council), while several leaders and others involved with the *neighborhood council system* provided information to the board, including Mr. Soong from the City’s Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, two current presidents and a past president of *neighborhood councils* (as explained at the meeting, Mar Vista Community Council is a certified neighborhood council, despite its name), as well as an individual who is a board member of both the neighborhood *and* community councils in Westwood. Westwood leaders have a unique perspective because theirs is the only area in Los Angeles with both a neighborhood council and a community council; if there is any interest in forming a neighborhood council to exist alongside PPCC in the Palisades, it would be important to know what the Westwood experience has been.

PPCC has been the voice of the Palisades community since the council’s founding in 1973. As discussed at the September 12 meeting, PPCC was the model for the current neighborhood council system (formed in the early 2000s). If “under-representation” is now believed to be an issue in the Palisades (as expressed by only one audience member at the meeting), formation of a neighborhood council will not necessarily be a panacea; indeed, as Westwood leaders cautioned, having two councils in one area could be divisive and may lead to a weakening of our community’s position vis a vis elected officials.

Comparing PPCC’s structure and process with those of the other 12 member-councils of the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC), PPCC compares favorably or even surpasses some councils in terms of public representation. PPCC has nine elected area and at-large representatives and an equal number of organizational (appointed) representatives. Representation on the PPCC board includes *all geographic areas* and almost all categories of organizations in our community (with the exception of faith-based institutions, which in the past were invited but declined to participate). In contrast, no other community council in the City (*i.e.*, in Brentwood or Westwood) has *any* elected representatives. Moreover, the ratio of elected vs. organizational (appointed) voting members (other than officers) varies widely among neighborhood councils – ranging from one council with 43 organizational (appointed) members and *only two* elected at-large representatives (Bel Air-Beverly Crest), to another council with 14 elected non-officer members (“Community Officers”) from *no particular geographical areas* and no organizational members at all (Venice). In addition, in 10 of the 13 WRAC member-councils (including PPCC), officers are elected by the board.

Our community faces many important issues which PPCC addresses – and has addressed for 42 years – on a regular basis. I encourage all Palisadians to get involved, become engaged and add your voices to the discussion. Visit our website, [pacpalicc.org](http://pacpalicc.org), for more information. Send your inquiries, comments and suggestions to [info@pacpalicc.org](mailto:info@pacpalicc.org). Attend our public meetings held twice a month. And don’t forget to Like Us on Facebook: [facebook.com/pacpalicc/](https://www.facebook.com/pacpalicc/)!

Sincerely,  
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