

**A Selection of
Public Records
Supplied in Response to a Request
by John Davis**

Dated: Jan. 6, 2005

A. June 10, 2004 - From Jamiko Bell, DONE to League of Women Voters

"Venice has gone rogue..."

"It is possible that the GRVNC might still ask you to participate...I hope LWV will refuse the offer."

B. June 14 - From Gita Isagholian, City Attorney's Office to DONE; HRC; City Council Office; LAPD; Mayor Hahn's Office

Alleges racial intolerance against whites by GRVNC

C. Date unknown - From Arturo Pina, HRC to Gita Isagholian, City Attorney's Office; DONE; HRC; City Council Office; LAPD; Mayor Hahn's Office

Re: Racial tensions - "We are definitely on the same page..."

D. June 14 - From Greg Nelson to DONE, HRC, City Attorney's Office, Mayor Hahn's Office

"The issue of whether or not NCs are city entities, and therefore where NC board members fit in the food chain, is being addressed by the City Atty."

E. June 18 - From Unknown (forwarded by Gary De La Rosa)

"I'm glad that you (Gary) have had firsthand experience at some of the GRVNC meeting." Formation of a working group including LAPD, City Council, City Attorney, HRC, critic of GRVNC.

F-1 June 22 - From Gary De La Rosa to Arturo Pina

Report on GRVNC meeting: "...I believe I have a better idea on how to address this issue now..."

F-2 June 22 - From Gary De La Rosa to Arturo Pina - continued

"Expecting the NC's to develop their own procedures, or to develop a city-wide procedure, is too risky..."

"While the board voted to ask for mediation via City Att.'s office, without any real HR training this will be a futile effort... more desired to, perhaps, sweat people out rather than build conscious."

G. Oct. 26 - From Parker Anderson to Arturo Piña, Gary De La Rosa; Jonathan Martinez

"Note: for the collective record, this represents our perspective."

quote from Jonathan Martinez: "Thinking that we were going to do the challenge, I did a quick review of Myers' challenge and would have written my report to concur with most of the information that he provided."

Jonathan Martinez - Re: Venice Election -- FIY and Update

From: Jerry Kvasnicka <jkvas@earthlink.net>
 Jamiko Bell <jbell@mailbox.lacity.org>
 Date: 6/10/2004 8:21 AM
 Subject: Re: Venice Election -- FIY and Update
 CC: <julierajan@lwvosangeles.org>, Jonathan Martinez <jmartinez@mailbox.lacity.org>

A.

Jamiko,
 Julie and I had discussed the GRVNC situation and concluded that the situation would not provide for a fair election and that LWVLA would not be involved without approved election procedures or bylaws. I have not spoken with Julie today, but want ed to get this to you ASAP. I will be downtown counting the DLANC ballots today and stop by the 2nd St office. I know that Julie is rushing today and tomorrow to clear up thing before jetting off to the East Coast for meetings.

I'm sure you realize that we are in agreement with your position.....and we also emphasize with your tribulations! And, you know, we are always there to assist you. Of course, we hope we all can pull this thing out of the fire...but how? that's the big questions.
 Good Luck and Best wishes ---- let's keep talking
 Jerry K.

Jamiko Bell wrote:

>Julie and Jerry,
 >
 >' 'official FYI:
 >

>As you must know by now, Venice has gone rogue with the June 27th election. The Board voted last Monday to go against DONE advice (see letter below) to postpone and are proceeding without approved election procedures into an election mess the likes of which I think we have never seen.

>Despite what the Board thinks, as of this moment, DONE is NOT authorizing the expenditure of any funds from the Dept related to this election which will include any invoice submitted by LWV if you choose to proceed in your role as their Election Administrator or Arbitrator.

>It is possible that the GRVNC might still ask you to participate and might offer to pay the League using NC funding. Of course, that is your choice, but as an esteemed and valuable member of the Election Procedures Working Group helping to craft policy to prevent these types of situations, I hope LWV will refuse the offer. In addition we are unclear at this time if we will validate the election or recognize those newly elected Board members, and this year Venice loses quorum and might loose their ability to conduct business (pay bills) after June 30th.

>Tomorrow we will be deep in discussions with Greg to figure out where we go from here and how we will respond. I will let you know. Venice is ripe with rumors right now about who said what to whom. If DONE decides not to support them in this endeavor (which we most likely will not) we will issue a formal letter to GRVNC restating our position with a cc to the LWV so that you know all of the facts.

>A formal letter from the LWV to Venice might be also needed.

>Sorry, if you have any questions, call me 323-972-7930.

>Jamiko
 >
 >
 >
 >

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

B.

Arturo Pina - Racial tensions at the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Meetings

From: Gita Isagholian
To: Bell, Jamiko; Freehling, Allen; Kievman, Sandy; Martinez, Jonathan; Nelson, Greg; Pina, Arturo; Skinner, Theresa; Smedley, Gerry; Tran, Viet
Date: 6/14/2004 11:25 AM
Subject: Racial tensions at the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Meetings
CC: I: hillmank@lapd.lacity.org; Williams, William

I know we are all tired of receiving e-mails regarding the GRVNC but these accusations from Mr. Shields, Mr. Feibusch and the countless other comments from Venice residents I think require some comment or intervention from the city.

It is my opinion that racial intolerance in any form should not be tolerated by our city (nor funded) even if the hatred is, strangely enough, directed at white residents by a neighborhood council that is, by the vast majority, white.

Does Human Relations, who has the expertise in this area, have any suggestions?

Thanks,
Gita

From: Arturo Pina
To: Allen Freehling; Gerry Smedley; Gita Isagholian; Greg Nelson; Jamiko Bell; Jonathan Martinez; Sandy Kievman; Theresa Skinner; Viet Tran
Subject: Re: Racial tensions at the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Meetings

Hi Gita...

We are definitely on the same page...

I have been reviewing all of the information that we have been privy to for review. One of my Project Coordinator was at the meeting on last Monday evening and is in the process of preparing a memorandum with recommendations that could possibly mitigate the situation...

In the interim it is strictly a monitor, report and provide the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment with recommendations. As for behavior, if these comments and attitudes are being verbalized by Board Members of the GRVNC, are there any repercussions and/or consequences? What sort of Code of Conduct are Board Members required to abide by? As City Employees we are held to certain standards and are subjected to consequences should our behavior stem from hatred and move in the direction of discriminatory tactics. Board Members, as far as we know, are not bound by any rules or regulations. The Bylaws that are created by each individual Neighborhood Council focus on elections, conducting meetings, protocols, etc. What we are discussing here is are Board Members, via a City certified Neighborhood Council bound by the same rules and regulations we as City employees bound by when it comes to harassment, discrimination and/or targeting of an individual based on race and/or religion?

These questions have been posed before by our Commission and have not been provided with any answers. We have recommendations but it will take a mandate from individuals that create policy. Let's get the discussion going as we have been down this road before and will continue to be unless mechanisms are created to thoroughly address appropriate behavior.

>>> Gita Isagholian 6/14/2004 11:25:18 AM >>>

I know we are all tired of receiving e-mails regarding the GRVNC but these accusations from Mr. Shields, Mr. Feibusch and the countless other comments from Venice residents I think require some comment or intervention from the city.

It is my opinion that racial intolerance in any form should not be tolerated by our city (nor funded) even if the hatred is, strangely enough, directed at white residents by a neighborhood council that is, by the vast majority, white.

Does Human Relations, who has the expertise in this area, have any suggestions?

Thanks,

Gita

CC: Gary De La Rosa; I: hillmank@lapd.lacity.org; William Williams

D.

Arturo Pina - Re: Racial tensions at the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Meetings

From: Greg Nelson
To: Bell, Jamiko; Freehling, Allen; Isagholian, Gita; Pina, Arturo; Tran, Viet
Date: 6/14/2004 1:07 PM
Subject: Re: Racial tensions at the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Meetings
CC: Anderson, Parker; De La Rosa, Gary; Flores, Valerie; Stamus, Theresa

The department prepared a Code of Civility and offered it to the NCs as a option. HRC assisted in the development of that. Several weeks ago, Jan Perry submitted a motion calling for the Code to be made mandatory. It has not been scheduled in committee yet. How to allow an NC to make the Code mandatory is on the City Atty's list of things to do, but no NC has said that it wants to do this. We don't know of any NC that has even adopted it as a guide.

NCs are encouraged to develop their own Code of Conduct, but I don't know of any that have done this.

The issue of whether or not NCs are city entities, and therefore where NC board members fit in the food chain, is being addressed by the City Atty. Their first opinion dealt with the Political Reform Act. Their subsequent reports will add further clarity to this question, and the options that lie ahead for the City.

To keep them in the loop, I'm cc'ing Theresa Stamus and Valerie Flores in the City Atty's office.

>>> Arturo Pina 06/14/04 12:57PM >>>
Hi Gita...

We are definitely on the same page...

I have been reviewing all of the information that we have been privy to for review. One of my Project Coordinator was at the meeting on last Monday evening and is in the process of preparing a memorandum with recommendations that could possibly mitigate the situation...

In the interim it is strictly a monitor, report and provide the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment with recommendations. As for behavior, if these comments and attitudes are being verbalized by Board Members of the GRVNC, are there any

E.

Arturo Pina - Fwd: Racial Tension in Venice

From: Gary De La Rosa
To: Arturo Pina
Date: 6/18/2004 5:38 PM
Subject: Fwd: Racial Tension in Venice

Hi Gary -

It was good speaking with you this afternoon. I'm glad that you have had firsthand experience at some of the GRVNC meetings, and have seen how much anger and emotion is being generated by some of the folks in charge.

To everyone else - Gary is with the LA City Human Relations Commission, and he will be working with the Venice community regarding this issue. The County folks have volunteered to be of assistance if needed, but it starts with City first. I suggested that Gary speak with all of you, and he thought a meeting would be a good thing to coordinate soon.

I just wanted to be sure that everyone has everyone else's contact information, so here it is:

Capt. Bill Williams, (310) 202-4571, williamb@lapd.lacity.org
Ofc. Gerry Smedley, (310) 662-3970 cell, 24160@lapd.lacity.org
Ofc. Theresa Skinner, (310) 662-3968 cell, 31142@lapd.lacity.org
Sandy Kievman, (310) 575-8461, skievman@council.lacity.org
Mary Clare Molidor, (310) 575-8552, mcmolidor@atty.lacity.org
Gita Isagholian, (310) 350-0049 cell, gisagho@atty.lacity.org
Aaron Gross, (323) 228-0526 cell, agross@atty.lacity.org
Susan Wagner, (310) 445-4029, swagner@atty.lacity.org
Rick Feibusch, (310) 392-6605, rfeibusch1@earthlink.net
Gary DeLaRosa, (213) 978-1669, gdelaros@mailbox.lacity.org

F-1

Arturo Pina - In Light of...

From: Gary De La Rosa
To: Arturo Pina
Date: 6/22/2004 7:17 PM
Subject: In Light of...

... the e-mails I've sent you, I believe I have a better idea on how to address this issue now...this is a rough draft I'd started earlier...but thinking about it tonight, and with more info, I'll mostly jump into directions rather than full out reporting of the evening...

Let's brainstorm, please, on this when I get in....I'm off to Le Cont...for reals !!!

On June 7, 2004, I attended the Grassroots Venice Neighborhood Council meeting held at the Davis Center in Venice. The following are my observations of that evenings meeting.

Starting near 7PM, and running til 11PM, among the meeting's highlights were discussions and votes on two NC election matters, and the constant tension and defensive mannerisms displayed by members of the board and the audience.

Of importance that night was the upcoming NC election, set to be held June 27. The board spent some time discussing this issue, especially in light of the fact that DONE's executive director, Greg Nelson, had sent a detailed letter requesting, imploring it sounded, them not to hold the election this month, but to delay it. He apparently also offered DONE's help to pull together the election for a future date that would not be challenged.

Among the noticeable issues of that night was the apparent disregard some have for their opponents on the board. By body language, or more so by their intonations and outright comments, this board is besieged by a number of members who have an apparent lack of respect for one another. Murmuring over others speaking time, snorting or making aware one's displeasure with a speakers point of view occurred throughout the evening. While the president of the board had one member of the board handle the reading of speaker cards and acting as Sargent at arms, she did indeed stand up front and established her presences.

Issues of safety were not really directly discussed this night.

At numerous times, when it seemed as if a "hole had opened up," some people began to offer comments of racism being directed to either themselves, or others. It would appear from that meeting that racism is very prevalent in Venice. As is gentrification. Comments about being tried of being called "a racist and a Cracker" were extorted. An accusation of white racism was given by one board member.....

The board voted to

Recommendations::

F-2

DONE and BONC need to take this issue seriously.

Both DONE and BONC need to agree on framework out of which NC's can both develop and once certified hold even elections. Expecting the NC's to develop their own procedures, or to develop a city-wide procedure, is too risky, given the tendencies we have seen developing across the City so far. To that notion I highly recommend bringing in (the guy from city elections who did Van Nuys0, The City HRC, and then City Att's office to tie it all up.

A serious and deep program dealing with the issues of LA needs to be offered, and required (!) By DONE and BONC for all NC's participants.... along the lines of out HRA program. To let people continue to "speak for the community" when they have little breath of knowledge about the changing demographics, is to then let elite, and exclusive, glorified homer-owners associations to exist.

While the board voted to ask for mediation via City Att.'s office, without any real HR training this will be a futile effort.... more desired to, perhaps, sweat people out rather than build conscious.

I recommend that a full out Human Awareness Program be developed for the Venice community, not just the NC. That it be a must to partake of this program before any further DONE cooperation is considered.

That this should include community members from Oakwood, from boardwalk, and from general Venice, who HAVE NOT been a part of the developing NC.

G.

Arturo Piña - Re: GRVNC Executive Committee comments on arbitration of election challenges

From: Parker Anderson
To: Arturo Piña; Gary De La Rosa; Jonathan Martinez
Date: 10/26/2004 1:54 PM
Subject: Re: GRVNC Executive Committee comments on arbitration of election challenges
CC: Brenda Robinson; Jamiko Bell

Jon - thank you. I am forwarding your analysis/perspective to Arturo and Gary.

Note: for the collective record, this represents our perspective. Obviously, we are not the final arbiter so HRC will weigh this with other points of view such as Jim Smith's before makes its judgement.

Thanks everyone.

>>> Jonathan Martinez 10/26/04 12:06PM >>>

Jim Smith's presentation of dates, challenges received, and recital of the election procedures is accurate; as we predicted, the challenge would probably come down to Richard Myers challenge since he was the only candidate to get his challenge in on time. I do not know when the Official Canvas from Casey Peters was issued since all of my GRVNC e-mails have been taken from e-mail box for use in the PRA (I didn't know they'd actually be taken, so I'll try to get them back), and the date that the Canvas was issued will impact whether Rick Selan's complaint/challenge will be accepted (he was a candidate, too).

I disagree with Jim's interpretation of the facts or their significance.

1. City Atty did not approve procedures.
2. Myers' challenge did NOT focus on ballots, per se, but rather to the following: (a) lack of timely and accurate notification of the election procedures to the Venice community; (b) No duly appointed IEA; (c) two items of business were conducted during the election (board election and stakeholder ratification of bylaws); (d) election was not properly called to order with a quorum of the officers; and (e) violation of bylaws and Brown Act re: notification of election.

Myers wants to resolve this matter by tossing out the results of the board election and stakeholder ratification and have BONC supervise a new board election and stakeholder ratification of bylaws (separate events) in the near future.

Thinking that we were going to do the challenge, I did a quick review of Myers' challenge and would have written my report to concur with most of the information that he provided.

Jonathan Martinez
Project Coordinator
Elections and Policy Development Team

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE)
10221 South Compton Avenue, # 203, Los Angeles, CA 90002
Phone: 323-789-2817
Toll Free: 866 LA HELPS
email: jmartinez@mailbox.lacity.org



> Parker Anderson 10/25/04 05:36PM >>>

hey Jon - this went to HRC (Arturo), Brenda, Jamiko and me. I thought you should take a look at it to make sure you agree.
Thanks.