



GREATER GRIFFITH PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
"Your Neighborhood. Your Voice. Your Council"



CERTIFIED NC #36

July 20, 2010

Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
City Hall, Room 303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Mayor Villaraigosa:

The GGPNC Board:

1. endorses Planning Director Gail Goldberg's four initiatives: "*Do Real Planning*", "*Build an Efficient and Effective Department*", "*Develop Innovative Solutions*", and "*Engage the Public*" and;
2. urges the Mayor to appoint, and the City Council to adopt the appointment of a strong and effective Director of City Planning who will effectively involve the community and Neighborhood Councils in city planning and who will continue a commitment to these four initiatives as part of the *Department's* responsibilities.

The four initiatives are summarized in the enclosed Director's resignation letter dated June 30, 2010.

Sincerely,

Ron Ostrow, GGPNC President

By Gary Khanjian, GGPNC – Planning, Zoning & Historical Preservation Committee Chair

Cc: City Council Members, City Planning Commission President, Plan Check NC

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June 30, 2010

Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
City Hall, Room 303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Mayor Villaraigosa:

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

It has been my pleasure to serve as Planning Director for the City of Los Angeles for the past 4-1/2 years. When I arrived in 2006, I set out to change the way planning was practiced in Los Angeles. My goals were to work with communities to create comprehensive and detailed plans that would provide predictability for both developers and neighborhoods. To accomplish that, the Department adopted a strategic business plan with four initiatives to guide our efforts.

Our first initiative, "Do Real Planning," resulted in an aggressive community planning program. In spite of 45% staff reductions over the past year, we still expect that five new Community Plans will be scheduled for hearing in the upcoming fiscal year. We also completed 10 Transit Oriented Development plans that will create zoning and incentives to build a sustainable city that supports our major investment in transit. Additionally, we are currently processing the River Implementation Overlay that will guide the development of the Los Angeles River Comprehensive Master Plan. We have expanded our planning functions with the addition of the Office of Historic Resources and the Urban Design Studio.

Our second initiative, "Build an Efficient and Effective Department," has resulted in significant process changes that are the impetus for the major department reorganization that is currently underway. Moving away from our functional silos and in response to previous audits of the Department, this reorganization will achieve a more streamlined development process and bring planners closer to the communities they serve. The Department also undertook a fee study and established a special fund in order to restructure our budget from wholly General Fund support to one that now receives 75% of its resources from special funds. This begins to ensure the long term fiscal sustainability of the Department and the City.

Our third initiative, "Develop Innovative Solutions," resulted in neighborhood pilot parking programs and creative policies and regulations to facilitate downtown development. We have developed major city-wide policies to curtail mansionization, limit medical marijuana facilities, and provide affordable housing. We helped to save land for jobs and brought forward innovative

Letter of Resignation

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code reform to streamline the entitlement process. Our partnership with the Getty provides for a five-year city-wide survey of historic resources to help us protect neighborhood character and inform future development. In difficult economic times, we created an extensive internship program and brought in more than \$5 million in planning grants to supplement the general fund.

Our fourth initiative, "Engage the Public," created meaningful interaction with all of our planning constituencies, including the development community and neighborhoods. This resulted in a unit to assist communities in a revocation process for non conforming use permits. This engagement generated broad consensus among developers and housing advocates for our State approved Housing Element. It brought together bicycle advocates and City agencies to create a new draft Bicycle Plan. We have partnered with Neighborhood Councils to provide early notification of projects and developed relationships that have enhanced our planning efforts. Hundreds of public meetings have shaped our policy development and regulatory reform.

I am enormously proud of the achievements that the Department has made over the past 4-1/2 years. While I recognize there is still much to do, I have long been ready for retirement and new adventures. As the new fiscal year begins, this seems to be an opportune time to turn over the reins of the Department. I am, therefore, with this letter, announcing my intention to retire officially at the end of August 2010, with anticipation that my last day in the office will be July 16, 2010.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity you have given me to serve the City of Los Angeles. I would encourage you to continue to see good planning – and the work of our Planning Department – as a centerpiece for your efforts to spur economic recovery and enhance the quality of life in Los Angeles' neighborhoods. Your Planning Department staff is one of the most talented and dedicated that I have had the pleasure to work with over the past years. I believe that we have served you and the city well.

Sincerely,



S. Gail Goldberg, AICP
Director of Planning

cc: Jeff Carr, Office of the Mayor