

Budget Advocate Report to Neighborhood Councils #3

On August 3rd, the Budget Advocates' meeting focused on how to achieve our objectives for the coming year. These objectives arose from surveys on themes and budget priorities from the retreat on July 18th including:

- Equity in the distribution of resources and City services
- Homelessness /Affordable Housing
- the LAPD budget
- Infrastructure investment and City Services
- Economic Development
- Covid-19
- Public Safety
- Balancing the budget

Over the past 4 or so years, possibly due to the increasing demands on board members' time with the City adding liaisons and NCs adding committees, there has been a reduction of appointed/elected Budget Representatives.

While the Budget Advocates can and do communicate with the NCs through their Treasurers and Presidents, these are usually the busiest people on the board.

The Budget Advocates are calling on all NCs to appoint or elect (according to their Bylaws) two Budget Reps per NC to relay their concerns to the Budget Advocates and to relay information to their NC. Budget Reps can be board members or stakeholders but would need to commit to attend board meetings or otherwise interact with the NC board on a regular, meaningful basis so they can accurately reflect the NC's priorities.

This year, instead of one White Paper backed up by reports on City Departments, the Budget Advocates will be issuing a series of short papers, one to two pages, on a wide variety of current issues and concerns.

The Budget Advocates want these issues to be relevant to all NCs and therefore are working to develop closer relationships with the NCs. If NCs are not being visited by the Budget Advocates, board members and stakeholders will be able to see who their assigned Budget Advocate is and communicate their concern to the Budget Advocate Executive Committee.

NC officers are requested to schedule the Budget Advocate report with the elected officials (we are your elected officials) to ensure it reaches as large an audience as possible.

The papers written and release by the Budget Advocates will draw on grass-root Neighborhood Council issues, as well as the continuing concerns about the City budget and services articulated over the past few years.

Even before the pandemic, the City's budget was compromised by not including the new labor agreements with the police and fire departments that resulted in significant deficits. There are increasingly urgent issues about homelessness, affordable housing and public safety. And the lack of transparency at City Hall has cut out most citizen input, especially prior to when decisions are made and could be changed.

The Budget Advocates are hoping to reform the current approach to City budgeting but we need your help.

As Neighborhood Councils you can:

- develop NC-specific and board approved budget priorities and topics as a resolution to your elected officials
- call, e-mail and mail your Councilmembers on issues that concern you and refuse to be stonewalled by entrenched interests
- using Community Impact Statements to get your views on record
- work with the Budget Advocates to amplify your voices

As individuals, you can communicate your thoughts to or work with the Budget Advocates on their new committees, committees about:

City Budget Cuts * Opportunity Zones and Redlining * Corruption in Los Angeles
Homelessness and Affordable Housing * HHH Funds * Looking at the LAPD
Equity and Equality * Rec & Parks and the 2028 Olympics
LA's Undocumented Immigrants * The 15 Councilmembers and their Districts
The Intersection of Public Works & Planning with Land Use
Cannabis: a Profit Center for the City? * Covid-19: Impacts on the City and its Budget
Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood Empowerment
Pensions and City Liabilities * Neighborhood Council and Stakeholder Issues

Please contact the Co-chairs of the Budget Advocates to be put in touch with any of these committees. If you have other ideas, please suggest them as there will be opportunities for other interests as we progress through this year and next.

August 5, 2020: Budget Advocate Report

The Budget Advocates role is to magnify the voices of the stakeholders of Los Angeles to ensure the Mayor and City Council, in making necessary budget cuts, put the needs of the people above those of special interest groups.

The Budget Advocates focus in the next weeks will be to:

- improve two-way contact between the Budget Advocates and the Neighborhood Councils so every NC knows their Budget Advocate and those Budget Advocates know that NC's concerns
- provide expanded information on what the Budget Advocates do and solicit input through surveys and presentations
- explore how we can use the advent of virtual meetings to enhance our outreach to the NCs and stakeholders of Los Angeles through town halls and NC presentations
- develop a training module on the City Budget and Department structure that will be widely distributed

Neighborhood Council Budget Executive Committee

Co-Chairs: Liz Amsden and Jack Humphreville

Vice-Chair, Development: Albert Farias

Vice-Chairs, Outreach: John DiGregorio and Julia Moser

Administrative Secretary: Jennifer Goodie

Corresponding Secretary: Glenn Bailey

Treasurer: Lanira Murphy

Parliamentarian: Carol Newman

August 5, 2020