

City Neighborhood Council
www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil
Monday, Oct. 27, 2008
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.
West Precinct Conference Room
810 Virginia Street

Chair: Chris Leman (Lake Union), cleman@oo.net, (206) 322-5463
Vice Chair: Pete Spalding (Delridge) bayouwonder@comcast.net
Secretary: Peter Aberg (Northeast) petersea2001@yahoo.com

DRAFT AGENDA:

- 6:30 Introductions, review/approval of agenda and of September minutes (see link below)
- 6:35 Preparing for performance audit of district councils/CNC system--City Auditor staff (see below)
- 7:15 Reports of CNC's committees
Budget Committee--Ron Boddie, Chair (see below on draft letter for CNC consideration)
Education Committee--Peter Aberg, Chair
Neighborhood Planning Comm.--Irene Wall, Chair
Neighborhood Matching Fund Oversight Committee--Laine Ross, Chair
Transportation Committee--Ref Lindmark, Chair
Nominations Committee report
CNC executive committee
- 7:45 Discussion of application for at-large CNC position (see CNC executive committee report, below)
- 8:45 Update on the Oct. 28 Seattle Neighborhoods Summit (see link below)
- 9:00 Adjourn

UPCOMING

All CNC and district council events are open to the public. CNC agendas and minutes (including the draft minutes from CNC's Sept. 29 meeting) are available at <http://seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil>, which also has CNC's by-laws, work plan, contact information for district representatives, correspondence, authorizing legislation, and other documents, videos and links. An on-line meeting calendar that includes the district council meetings is <http://seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/meetinglocations.htm>.

Oct. 28 Seattle Neighborhoods Summit. Next Tuesday, citizens take over the City Hall--doors open at 5:15, program is 6-9 p.m. . For information: [http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/SNS Summit Flyer102808.doc](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/SNS_Summit_Flyer102808.doc) (pdf version also available). Don't miss this unique opportunity to speak your mind--14 focus groups to choose from, twice! Light supper available throughout, and parking is free, in the commuter lot under I-5 that is entered southbound from Sixth Avenue just before Cherry St.

CNC Oct. 27 meeting. Agenda is above.

CNC Nov. 24 meeting. Also to be 6:30 p.m. at the West Precinct, 810 Virginia St. CNC's executive committee welcomes suggestions for the draft agenda (final agendas are adopted at the beginning of each CNC meeting). Possible guests include City demographer Diana Canzoneri, and a possible roundtable on the Major Institutions Process.

CNC Executive Committee. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, Nov. 6, 5-6 p.m. at the Fremont Neighborhood Service Center, 908 N. 34th Street. All are welcome to attend, or if you would like to participate by conference telephone, contact Chris Leman at (206) 322-5463 or cleman@oo.net.

CNC Budget Committee, chaired by Ron Boddie (Central District), rjboddie_2@msn.com. Next meeting is being scheduled.

CNC Neighborhood Matching Fund Oversight Committee, Chaired by Laine Ross (Downtown District), laine@ceoworkz.com. Next meeting is being scheduled.

CNC Transportation Committee, chaired by Ref Lindmark (Northwest District), refl@nwlink.com. Next meeting: Friday, Nov. 14 (11:30 a.m. in room 4090 of the Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue).

CNC Neighborhood Planning Committee, chaired by Irene Wall (Northwest District), iwall@serv.net. Next meeting: Tues., Nov. 18, 6:30 p.m. at the West Precinct, 810 Virginia St.

BACKGROUND

Draft minutes. Draft minutes from the Sept. 29 CNC meeting (and approved minutes from previous meetings) are available at <http://seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil> by clicking on "Meeting Minutes and Agendas."

CNC nominations and elections. As required by the by-laws, CNC's nominating committee (Peter Aberg, Chris Leman, Andrew Taylor, and Irene Wall) will present its recommendations at the Oct. 27 meeting, CNC will vote at the Nov. 24 meeting, and the new officers will take over at the January 26 meeting.

Performance audit of district council/CNC system. Guests at CNC's Oct. 27 meeting will be Assistant City Auditors Mary Denzel and Virginia Garcia. On Sept. 15, their office informed CNC and the district councils that, at Councilmember Sally Clark's request, there will be a performance audit (not a financial audit) of the district councils/CNC system. This announcement is at http://seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/Process_audit_system.pdf or by going to the "What's New" section of <http://seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil>. Although Clark did not consult with CNC or the district councils in whether to do this audit now (a similar audit was done in 1999) or what would be its basic charter, all performance audits by the City Auditor start with examining need, issues, and citizen input, and drafting an audit plan before the "go/no-go" decision is made. Concerns that have surfaced so far include that the audit's charter does not mention evaluation of the level and character of Department of Neighborhoods involvement with the district councils and CNC; and that the audit's charter does not specifically reference the SE district council controversy. The auditors welcome citizen views on how the audit should be conducted and what its conclusions should be. For questions or to send your views: mary.denzel@seattle.gov or 684-8158.

Report of CNC's Executive Committee on SENDC's application for an at-large voting position. On Sept. 25, CNC received an application from a non-profit organization called the Southeast Seattle Neighborhood District Council (SEDC) for an at-large CNC voting position, which according to CNC's by-laws is for a term of one year. The application is at http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/SEDC_App_CNC.pdf. CNC's by-laws are at <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/bylaws.htm> and CNC's process for applying for an at-large position is at http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/Application_process.pdf.

As required in by-law section 2.2, CNC's executive committee has reviewed the application and finds unanimously that it is complete and that, according to the same by-law section, CNC can vote on it, at the earliest, at the Nov. 24 CNC meeting. By-law section 2.2 also requires that

CNC's executive committee "make a recommendation to the full CNC for action." The rest of this report is made by executive committee members Peter Aberg and Chris Leman, with Pete Spalding abstaining:

We are not recommending "yes" or "no," but offer the following cautions and questions that we suggest every district council consider before deciding how and whether to direct its representative to vote on the matter.

(1) Under CNC by-law section 6.2, an organization with an at-large position has an equal vote on the CNC with the thirteen district council representatives. Admitting SENDC in addition to the current seat for the Southeast District Council (SEDC) would give Southeast two votes--twice that of any other district. Altering CNC's historic voting balance among the thirteen districts should be done only for the weightiest of reasons, and if there is no alternative.

(2) City Council Res. 28948 (<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/28948.pdf>) allows CNC to add additional positions only "in order to make the membership reflective of the City's diverse population." It does not appear that this application is being presented primarily for this purpose. The five groups comprising SENDC believe they are not being represented by SEDC, and we find that they have some justification for this belief. However, we believe that, without the proper conditions, SENDC's addition as an at-large voting member will not address, and could well worsen, the underlying problem, namely a failure of conciliation on both sides of the SE district dispute.

(3) SENDC's position is that CNC's decision should disregard the wishes of SEDC, and indeed that SEDC should be prevented from voting on the matter. This position cannot be sustained. The City Neighborhood Council values the views of all of its district councils, especially on matters within their borders. This is what every district council would expect for itself if another group were created that seeks to share or assume its district council responsibilities.

(4) The co-existence of two district council organizations in SE is not tenable. It is confusing to the public and is disruptive of policy discussions there, in other district councils, and in the City Neighborhood Council. The disputing parties must find a way to coexist and cooperate within a single district council. If it were done with conditions designed to achieve conciliation between the parties, it is possible that CNC could add SENDC for a one-year at-large position in a way that successfully resolves the dispute and brings Southeast back to consensus on a single district council.

(5) CNC could pass a resolution asking both SEDC and SENDC to engage in good-faith discussions, facilitated if necessary by a mutually agreed mediator, toward resolving their dispute and returning to a single district council for SE. As directed by CNC in April 2007, CNC's executive committee has been working toward a resolution of the SE district dispute, most recently by arranging for an offer by former Department of Neighborhoods director Jim Diers to meet with both parties. While some on both sides are willing to engage in discussions, others are not. A breaking of the current standoff might be helped if CNC passed a resolution asking both sides to embark on conciliation efforts designed to reunite them within one district council.

(6) CNC could state its intention that adding SENDC for one year as an at-large voting member is a decision that will not be renewed for additional years, and is adopted only to facilitate conciliation between SENDC and SEDC, toward their re-unification under one district council.

(7) CNC also could ask each of the disputing sides to make a gesture in the other's direction, to show good faith. For example, SEDC could be asked to support the addition of SENDC to CNC as an at-large voting member for one year; and SENDC could be asked to change its name and by-laws to remove the term "district council," along with its by-law claims of the official powers of a district council that SENDC does not have, with or without an at-large CNC position.

(8) CNC could ask for the resolution of two boundary issues between SE and the Greater Duwamish District Council: (a) SENDC could be asked to withdraw its by-law provision defining its west boundary as the "foothills of Beacon Hill/Cheasty Greenbelt," apparently encompassing territory of the Greater Duwamish District Council; and (b) SEDC and the Greater Duwamish District Council could be asked to bring to CNC for its approval their proposal that NewHolly (which is west of the official dividing line of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way) become a part of the territory of the Southeast District Council.

We ask each of the district councils to recognize that changing the membership of the City Neighborhood Council is an important and even historic decision that requires the most thoughtful deliberation. We also recognize that there are good people, and legitimate grievances, on both sides in the SE district, and we urge that whatever CNC does, it be designed to help resolve this tragic and unproductive dispute.

The above report to the district councils is submitted by Chris Leman, CNC Chair; and Peter Aberg, CNC Secretary

Draft letter on budget. CNC wrote to the Mayor and City Council on June 25 with its budget recommendations; the letter is at http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/June_2008_letter_on_2009-10_budget.pdf On September 29, the Mayor proposed his budget, which can be found at <http://seattle.gov/financedepartment> The City Council's considering of the budget can be followed at <http://seattle.gov/council>. At its Oct. 22 meeting, CNC's budget committee drafted the following letter, which it submits for CNC's possible revision or adoption at the Oct. 27 meeting. Suggestions for its revision are welcome to committee chair Ron Boddie, rjboddie_2@msn.com.

To members of the City Council:

Now that the Mayor has released his budget proposals, the City Neighborhood Council finds that much of our June 25 letter to you still applies, and thus we attach it here. We also offer the following additional comments:

Release the NMF evaluation. In last year's budget, the City Council required the Department of Neighborhoods to conduct an evaluation of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. This evaluation has not been released, and it should be, in order to be of some use in the budget process.

"Earmarking" strikes the Neighborhood Matching Fund. The Neighborhood Matching Fund was designed to encourage the widest possible range of citizen initiatives, but in recent years, the amount of NMF available on this basis has declined as the Mayor or City Council have earmarked parts solely for designated purposes (proposed this year for the youth violence initiative and the food action plan). While these and other causes are worthy in themselves, they are eligible anyway for NMF, where they should be weighed with other worthy applications. If there is a desire to encourage certain topics within NMF, don't use earmarks, but consider giving extra rating points, as was done in the early years of NMF.

Neighborhood planning outreach funds. The Department of Neighborhoods outreach funds currently budgeted are too low to be successful, and should be greatly increased, with some made available to grassroots groups, which know their neighborhood best and can get the most outreach out of limited City funds.

Major institutions program. Better funding of this Department of Neighborhoods program is needed to ensure independent review of the proposed expansion of major institutions. Past cuts have made the advisory committees too dependent on administration by the major institutions themselves.

Increased community center hours. CNC appreciated the City Council's addition of \$500,000 for this purpose last year, and regretted that the Mayor diverted it to other uses. Even amidst the budget crunch, it can't make sense to leave our beautiful community centers closed to early users (often seniors) and late users (often teens.)

Webcast and broadcast of boards and commissions. As outlined in our June 25 letter, please provide modest funding to make it possible to broadcast or webcast more board and commission meetings. Cable franchise fees, not taxes, can fund this essential element of open government.

Cascade People's Center. This valuable program, which largely serves largely low-income families and is staffed primarily by volunteers, is likely to close unless it receives some City funds, a suggested \$75,000.

Translation and interpretation. As outlined in our June 25 letter, please assist neighborhood organizations in reaching out by paying for interpreters and offering the names of interpreters who a neighborhood organization can ask to volunteer or to serve on a low-cost basis.

[end of draft budget letter]

Exclusionary discussion of inclusiveness? The Department of Neighborhoods is organizing another closed meeting with the district council chairs or their designees (not publicized or open to the public, no volunteer input into or adoption of the agenda, and if past experience holds-- recording not allowed, and minutes slow, fragmentary, unapproved, and unavailable on the web site). It will be Mon., Nov. 3, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Queen Anne/Magnolia Neighborhood Service Center, 160 Roy Street. The topic is "District Council Expansion and Inclusiveness," with Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis and Office for Civil Rights director Julie Nelson. Given how the administration's stance on this topic seems to have reduced, not increased trust in the SE district, being exclusionary in raising issues of district council expansion seems not the best approach. Plus, there are no hard data, but will be through the performance audit (see above). The City Neighborhood Council's meetings are open to the public, publicized, audio-recorded, and the agendas and minutes are approved and published on the City web site. CNC exists to enable open, accountable dialogue between the district councils and City officials. The administration can best support and engage CNC and the district councils if it brings data and proposals openly to them. The process for developing and adopting the agendas of CNC and the district councils is an open one, and suggestions are always welcome. CNC's by-laws require it to meet at least ten times a year, but additional CNC meetings can be scheduled if there are topics that cannot be addressed adequately in our existing monthly meetings. Your thoughts and suggestions on any of the above are most welcome, to CNC Chair Chris Leman, (206) 322-5463, cleman@oo.net.

Input in hiring of district council managers. In the past year or so, the Department of Neighborhoods has selected some neighborhood district coordinators and some higher-level managers of the districts/CNC system without input from district-level volunteers. Also, a neighborhood district coordinator position was recently filled without being opened to all applicants. And district councils and the CNC generally are not receiving notice that these positions that affect them so directly are being advertised or filled. CNC has not received a response from a request that CNC chair Chris Leman made on Sept. 23 that DON director Stella Chao provide CNC and the district councils timely notification of openings for the position of district council coordinator and for other Department of Neighborhood positions that have direct responsibility for the district councils or the CNC; to include at least one neighborhood volunteer on any committees that interview candidates for the district coordinator positions and the position of manager of the district coordinators (a position that, with the recent departure of Alex Wiggins, is again open); and occasionally to provide CNC and the district councils the position descriptions so that they might suggest revisions.

Citizen guide to neighborhood growth targets. CNC's neighborhood planning committee has a valuable new addition to the CNC web site at http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/cmcm_overview.pdf and http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoodcouncil/growth_targets.xls It's an overview and Excel guide to how the City has "grown" the growth targets that the 1994 Comprehensive Plan assigned to each urban village and urban center. "City Math" is endlessly imposing new targets, obscuring that many neighborhoods have already met the original targets. Also offered is "Citizen Math," which tracks how each urban village and urban center has done in meeting its original target, and how much more growth the new targets would impose. Everyone owes it to themselves to look up in the Excel document how their urban village or urban center is faring. Thanks to committee vice chair Cindi Barker for this remarkable resource.

Community contacts list. Res. 27709 and Res. 28115, which established the City's neighborhood programs, state: "A community organization mailing list shall be maintained" and shall be "made available to all City departments and neighborhood groups." An item in CNC's 2008 work plan is to work with DON to ensure that this list is updated and is made available to the public.

Monthly review of neighborhood activities. Each month, the neighborhood district coordinators prepare a summary of activities and issues in the City's many neighborhoods. These reports are archived and available to download or read at <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nsc/mr/default.htm>. You may also request from wendy.watson@seattle.gov to arrange to receive by e-mail the latest Monthly Review as soon as it comes out. Neighborhoods would be wise to check what is said in the Monthly Review, as it is circulated widely within City government.

The above information was prepared by Chris Leman
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