

Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council (STNC)

Special Board and Committee Member Training 8/26/23

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions /Why did you join the board? Committee?/ What do you want to accomplish?

3. Purpose of Neighborhood Council

To promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs, a citywide system of neighborhood councils, and a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is created. Neighborhood councils shall include representatives of the many diverse interests in communities and shall have an advisory role on issues of concern to the neighborhood.

Voice of the community

Neighborhood Councils are the closest form of government to the people. They are advisory bodies, who advocate for their communities with City Hall on important issues like development, homelessness, and emergency preparedness. Neighborhood Councils are part of the Los Angeles City government, and have annual budgets funded by taxpayer dollars. Neighborhood Council board members are City officials who are elected by the members of their local communities, but they donate their time as volunteers. The Neighborhood Council system was established in 1999 as a way of ensuring that the City government remains responsive to the different needs and lifestyles of Los Angeles' rich variety of communities. There are currently 99 Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles, each serving about 40,000 people.

A Neighborhood Council is an officially recognized advisory body that is part of the Los Angeles Citywide System of Neighborhood Councils. Neighborhood Councils are City Entities that are advocates: the eyes, ears, and voice for the communities and stakeholders they represent.

Neighborhood Councils members take-action as a board, and not as individuals, so they do not take an official position without a majority vote first.

4. Community Impact Statements (CIS)

The Community Impact Statements (CIS) issued by Neighborhood Councils are official letters stating the position that board has voted to take on City issues. CIS are one of the primary means by which LA's Neighborhood Councils fulfill their advisory role in the City government. CIS letters get added to the file that the City maintains on each issue, and are considered by the City Council as part of their discussion of an issue.

CIS can be viewed by the public on the City Clerk's Council File Management System (CFMS) – a comprehensive index of all matters that are or have been considered and acted upon by the Los Angeles City Council. This index can be searched by keyword or Council File number – view it at CityClerk.LACity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm. CFMS also gives you an option to subscribe to get email notices whenever a file you're interested in is updated.

The City also provides "Early Notification Subscriptions" (ENS) for agendas for the following meetings: Neighborhood Councils, City Council, Council Committees, Commissions, Department of City Planning Bi-weekly cases, and other City Departments. Both Neighborhood Councils and the public are encouraged to participate

- a. What are they?
- b. How do we file them?

- c. Public Comment
- d. Letters
- e. Bring out city services
- f. Education of public

5. Committees

The Standing and Ad hoc committees are where the business of the Council is introduced and deliberated. The purpose of the STNC committees is to deliberate issues presented to the committee, create and vote on motions in response to these issues, and then provide a recommendation to the Board of Directors of the STNC. Any action taken by a committee must be submitted to the Board of Directors for final approval.

To ensure documentation is accurately completed

Ad Hoc Committees have a defined purpose and a time frame to accomplish that purpose. An ad hoc committee may be established by the Neighborhood Council President or by a majority vote of the Board. Ad Hoc committees cease to exist when their task is completed or at the discretion of the Board. A specific term may be designated.

Does the Brown Act apply to committees?

Yes, the committee has an ongoing jurisdiction over a specific matter, it is considered a standing committee and would be covered under the Brown Act. However, if a Neighborhood Council establishes a temporary committee to review and make recommendations on a specific task or issue, the Brown Act does not apply because after the committee finishes its review and has given recommendations to the full governing body of the Neighborhood Council, the committee would be disbanded and thus no longer has jurisdiction over that matter. However, the temporary committee must comprise less than a quorum of the governing body, or else the Brown Act will apply since its provisions govern “meetings” of a legislative body at which a majority of the members are present. (Ralph M. Brown Act § 54952(b))

Committees are the lifeblood of our Neighborhood Council. Most issues reviewed before the Governing Board originate from the Committee level

The Sunland Tujunga Neighborhood Council is organized into committees to provide adequate consideration, expertise, and deliberation to community issues. Most committees are made up of community stakeholders and at least one Board member. Committees are an opportunity to empower the Sunland Tujunga community to come together to weigh in and recommend action to the Sunland-

Tujunga Neighborhood Council on a wide range of issues. Meetings are open to the public. Stakeholders interested in serving on a committee should contact the committee chair.

a. Review Current Committees

- i. Beautification
- ii. STARC Arts, Recreation, and Culture
- iii. Budget and Finance
- iv. Community Improvement and Government Affairs Committee
- v. Executive Committee
- vi. Safe Traffic and Transportation Committee
- vii. Public Safety Committee
- viii. Senior Committee

- a. Why do Committees need to be involved in filing CIS'S?
- b. Additional Committees?
- c. ALL committee members represent the board
- d. Attendance
- e. ALL members must follow same rules as board members
- f. Outreach and Community Improvement through committees
- g. Responsibility for Board Members
- h. Responsibilities of Group Reps
- i. Listen to the Stakeholders
- j. Responsibility of Committees
- k. Outreach and Community Service Projects are done through Committees
- l. Reporting to the Board/ Monthly Agenda Item
- m. Submitting Agenda Requests through the Portal
- n. If requesting Funding/ All information must be included.
- o. When to submit funding items?
- p. All Committee Members need to sign the Code of Conduct within 30 days
Just like the New NC Board members.

6. Agendas

- a. Creating Agendas
- b. Posting Policy/ Special tape
- c. Posting Agendas/Who do I send them to?
- d. Take photos of posted Agendas
- e. Adding Items to the Board Agenda
- f. ENS getting agendas

The Brown Act will generally apply * when there is a quorum or majority of the governing body of a Neighborhood Council present. The essential provisions that should be complied with include: meetings must be open (§ 54953.3); agendas of meetings must be posted 72 hours in advance for regular meetings and 24 hours in advance for special meetings (§ 54954.2 and § 54956); at the meeting the legislative body is limited to acting on the matters on the agenda (§ 54954.2); members of the public must be given an opportunity to speak to the legislative body on agenda items and non-agenda items within the jurisdiction of the Neighborhood Council ballots or deliberations are permitted (§ 54953); and agendas of public meetings and any other distributed writings are public records and shall be made available upon request without delay (§ 54957.5).

7. Documents

- a. By-laws
- b. Standing Rules
- c. Code of Conduct
- d. Public Records Act
- e. Conflict of Interest Laws
- f. Brown Act

A state law providing the public access to government records. Neighborhood Councils must abide by a strict time line to respond to Public Records Act (PRA) requests.

Various state and city laws to ensure that government officials are free from bias caused by their own financial interest so they may act in an impartial manner.

The Ralph M. Brown Act is a state law requiring open meetings from government agencies and applies to Neighborhood Council meetings.

g. Los Angeles City Charter

In 1999, the City Charter established the Neighborhood Council System and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment which supports the Neighborhood Councils “to promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs...” Charter Section 900.

h. The Americans with Disabilities Act

A federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to the operations of state and local governments.

8. NC Funding- NC Funding Manual

NC Funding Program Policy 2.0 - Expenditures All expenditures made by an NC are intended for the purpose of a general public benefit and must be approved through board action at a Brown Act-compliant board meeting prior to the expenditure. Expenditures made by the NCs must abide by all laws, rules, and regulations applicable to NCs. Expenditures must be approved by the board during the same fiscal year the expenditure is to be executed. If approval occurs in a prior fiscal year as part of a larger planning effort (for example, a strategic annual budget plan), the expenditure must be reaffirmed during the fiscal year when the expenditure is to be made before the expenditure is executed

10. Unacceptable Purchases/Transactions with NC Funds

i. Any purchases made without prior approval of the Board, and any

purchases that are not identified in the NC approved budget.

iii. Gifts of goods or money, i.e., toys, food, clothing items, school

supplies, movie tickets, gift cards, plaques, raffles, or other similar

items of value that serve an individual and/or personal use,

regardless of value. Such use of NC funds is considered a “gift of public funds”, which State law prohibits.

iv. Any purchases and/or capital improvement projects that impact the value of private property or do not benefit the general public.

v. Events or projects that do not have the required insurance, permits, or contracts.

vi. Third-party payments. Payments must be made to vendors who have billed the NC directly for services or products rendered to and under the responsibility and/or sponsorship of the NC.

viii. Purchases that violate the constitutional separation of church and state (City funds cannot be used to endorse religion and/or interfere with free religious exercise)

ix. Purchases that violate City and/or State conflict of interest laws.

9. Outreach

- a. Priorities and Responsibilities- what is Outreach?
- b. Region Reps
- c. Group reps
- d. Teaching the community how to make public comment on council files
- e. Teaching the community how to put item on agenda
- f. Teaching the community how to submit letters
- g. Outreach events-
- h. Social Media
- i. Website
 - a. Event forms/Continuous

- b. Submitting items for purchase (food, mailers, flyers)
- c. Movies in the park
- d. Outreach at existing events
- e. Regional outreach events
- f. Meet and Greet
- g. Door Knocking

10. Duties of Board members

- a. Attendance
- b. Mandatory Trainings
- c. What if you don't do the trainings?
- d. Voting and Participation
- e. Abstentions
- f. Prepare CIS for board
- g. We need to find and submit statements on council files BEFORE they get to City Council for final approval.
- h. Provide contact point for the community-
 - i. Give feedback to the community
 - j. Check for Council Files

11. City Attorney- All Board members with a potential Conflict of Interest must contact the City Attorney as soon as you find out you may have one. All other Legal Questions go through the President to contact the City Attorney.

12. Conflict of Interest

Summary. Any time any City business is before a ~Neighborhood Council Board member that involves: a business in which he or she or a member of his or her family has an investment; an entity of which he or she is an officer or director or holds some position of management; real property in which he or she or a member of his or her family, has an interest; a source of income to him or her or a member of his or her immediate family; a source of gifts to him or her; or any person or entity with which he or she has a relationship other than in his or her capacity as a City official (a friend, person with whom he or she has a business relationship or an organization in which he or she holds some position of importance), board members

should contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment with the pertinent facts, and the Project Coordinator for .the board member's neighborhood council will confer with the City's attorney for advice to assist the board member. The information will be communicated either directly from the Office of the City Attorney or through the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's Project Coordinator, orally or in writing, depending upon the complexity of the board member's inquiry.

13. Board Member's Inquiries.

- a. Social Media policy
- b. No requirement to record meetings-
- c. Texting during meetings
- d. PRA requests
- e. Workplace harassment
- f. Outreach Calendar
- g. Who is doing what? When?

14. Any topics that were missed for future trainings?

15. Meeting Adjournment