**Joe’s comments at CPG January 25, 2022 meeting**

**Begin: 20:25 minutes**

**End: 27 minutes**

Draft policy still under revision

Policy discussed at PC; commissioners weighed in; only approved Code changes. Most PG concerns not in actual policy; based on “worst case scenario” as how policy rolls out;

Several requested changes now integrated into draft policy based on community/PG feedback.

Monday (today) post updated policy redlined from November to reflect changes. They are:

* Annual stipend now in 2023 budget plus new stipend added this year
* Will have assigned planners to each PG; not at meetings every month, but Planners will be accessible
* City owned public meetings spaces also continue to be available w/out charge; Where hold meetings if not at city facility? City provided some insurance/indemnification in past; still looking at issue;
* Templates for ethics, public participation, etc.: will get templates for new requirements

BEFORE item goes to LU & H

* Public outreach: Posting on Social Media satisfy Brown Act requirements
* Changes to voting requirements: Household voting limitations removed, but only 1 from household can run/become Trustee
* Attendance requirement for Trustee candidacy still under discussion;
* Pro-rata seats for renters is “old language”; issue is to reflect diversity of community; dedicated seats not mandated & Joe doesn’t support
* Bank accounts; expensive; if PG not interested in stipend, don’t need account;
* Looking at alternatives to checking account (in progress) to reduce cost
* Still seeking clarification on records retention; City records retention now all electronic; getting more info on PG requirement
* City website: keep PGs on city website? still being looked at;
* City will have standardized email for PG submittals
* Plng. Dept. committed to training PGs
* Free PG appeals problematic; don’t know if he can salvage this issue

Initial aggressive approval schedule slowing down; go to LU & H in March; PGs seek recognition in Fall under new Council Policy adopted Mar-June??

Edits PGs have made are important and are being addressed; revised draft Council Policy will be on LaCava website when ready; Wally will distribute revised draft soon

Mayor’s office involved

**Chris Nielsen (UCPG):** elections: cut off dates for announcing candidacy & meeting attendance needs to be settled by February to print ballots; public needs to know who is running and candidates need to know who they are running against; administration can be disorganized mess if candidates announce same day as election; establish defined rules w/ specific dates. *(JLC agrees.)*

**Naveen Waney** : What if PG chooses NOT to comply with reform measures? ***JLC:*** *possibility that community won’t have PG; Joe trying very hard to maintain PGs representing all 55 neighborhoods in city; may do consolidation of PGs if some don’t comply; Joe opposes that strategy*

**Eduardo Savigliano** (**TP PG):** Grand Jury identified conflict between City Charter & document governing operations (CP 600-24); TP PG provided redline version of CP 600-24 to comply; why go beyond what is required? What applies to CPC & what applies to CPGs? Growing problem across America that people don’t feel they are heard by their elected officials; breeds institutional distrust; city should treasure folks who are actively involved & knowledgeable.

**Jeffrey Stevens**: involvement in PGs time consuming, involved and not very exciting except when there is a hot issue; but that constituency is not diverse either; he doesn’t know how to increase diversity, esp. with renters; *(****JLC:*** *City wants better effort in public outreach;* ***Wally:*** *why would city remove informational posting on its website of PG Agendas & Minutes if public outreach is important?* ***JLC*** *will post items for D1 PGs on his Council webpage & take another look at providing common space on the city’s website.)*

**Paul Schumacher** **(Golden Hill):** Free appeals important; GH PG used only twice in last 10 years; is important tool to have staff answer community concerns; appeals based on non-factual biology report & direct misleading of reviewers

**Aria (North Park PG):** PGs flawed mechanism for gathering community feedback; what is rationale to reform them rather than make them only advisory? *(****JLC:*** *city had several options on how to proceed; JLC wants to preserve as much PG integrity as possible. Current process opened dialogue to address long-standing issues; wants to preserve local control; use BID model for elected rather than appointed boards; 42 PGs are all different; his attempt is to reconcile rather than “blow-up” PGs; many groups will continue as they currently operate; PGs are a “go-to” resource for city;)*

**Howard Wayne (Clairemont):** Consider adding disclaimer on website that PG’s do not represent city instead of removing PGs from city’s website; *(JLC: city’s website not easy to navigate; disclaimer difficult for city to do; city still looking at providing neutral ground for posting community info; )*

**Wayne:** Expense of individual website difficult; easier for public to find info on city’s website; City website could be better organized to make it more user-friendly; Appeals: PG has no way to raise funds; City stipend: if provided, can it be applied to appeal directly if not otherwise used? Or, if appeal succeeds, city return appeal fee? His PG has only used appeal process once; need policy consistency between minimum required Trustee number & Trustee number PG needs to remain operative. *(Joe: PG will be recognized if goes below 12 Trustees; City wants wider representation on PGs.)*

**Wayne:** can PG appoint termed-out members if total falls to 10 instead of proposed 12?

(*JLC: Prohibit return of super-annuated members to prevent back-door ways to get on to PG to provide more diverse crowd. )* Howard: PG can only appoint 1 over-term member as policy is currently written; but limit of allowing only 1 PG appointment prevents other volunteers from doing the work if vacancies occur.

**Stu Gross (Scripps Ranch)**: city’s website important for public outreach; some groups not able to have own; Suggestion: create url like “cityofsandiegoplanninggroups.org” that is maintained by city on behalf of all PGs. Need “plan for change”. What is timeline for transition? (*JLC still working on timeline. Change is burden to both PGs & city. Most likely use “batch” treatment of items a CC. Most likely second half of 2022.)*

**Diane Kane (La Jolla):** Supports Stu Gross comments on “plan for change” and adds evaluation component to tweak plan where not working as intended; Supports Chris Nielsen’s comments re: election dates & procedures; Provides reasons for PG appeals: no FAR in LJ Shores; disagreement with DSD staff interpretation of LDC; conflict between community plan & LDC provisions that overrule community plan. Appeals necessary to implement community vision provided by plan that is ignored. No LJ CPA appeals successful during past 4 years.

**Deborah Watkins (PBPG):** city website impt; need appeal tool: same issues as LJ with DSD & code issues; (*JLC: Stipend: $500/yr/ he added to this year’s budget);*

Watkins:What is purpose of PGs with reforms? *(JLC: PG purpose won’t change: PGs can review projects without applicant & provide feedback to City. City needs a place to discuss infrastructure projects. City had multiple options; Joe try to preserve as much integrity to current system as possible; others wanted to have conversation about PGs that is now occurring; use model for BIDs & MADs (locally elected vs. appointed boards); all 42 groups different & have good conversations every month. Current effort combination of City Auditor & Grand Jury report plus “other issues” . When dust settles, result will be similar to current situation; still won’t get many people who want to join or be involved despite changes. Won’t have routine staff support anymore, but CM La Cava will send community rep.*

**Watkins:** Does PG “disappear” if doesn’t use social media, doesn’t have website & city’s website goes dark? (*JLC: hoping to figure out way that PGs can reach out despite loss of city website.)*

**Bob Link (DCPC):** Training opportunities needed to explain changes, esp. e-COW. Good for refresher as well as introduction to PGs. ZOOM meetings have increased community participation; permit virtual meetings in future. (*JLC: Post-COVID ZOOM use dependent on State regs. Under Brown Act. AB 61 ZOOM recently codified into State Law.)*

**Tom Mullaney (Uptown):** CPGs already recognized as “independent”; if no longer recognized, city would receive its info through multiple random channels;

**Korla (Pt. Loma)**: Stipend & website maintenance impt.; PG is the ONLY avenue for public input in Pt. Loma; supports feedback loop & tweaking of proposal;

**Robin Kaufman (Rancho Bernardo):** attendance requirement good idea for potential new candidates so they can understand what they are signing up for. RB has many avenues for public outreach: weekly newspaper, community council that posts notices; own website; different clubs & HOA’s. RB built out so PG membership is down. Urges retention of super-annuated trustees; 2-year break is concerning due to low attendance of volunteers; PG consolidation needed when attendance dropped; City website difficult to navigate but CitySD easy to find; display of all PGs impt. to see popular topics & what other PGs are doing; city DOES use disclaimers on Park & Rec. website. (*JLC: PG issues cut across multiple city depts: why does burden always fall upon Planning Dept.?* *PG funding is ADDED to Plng. Dept. budget. Was clawed back in budget after PG comments.)*

**Wally:** Planning Dept. works for citizens, not other way around; Plng. Dept. is not transparent, doesn’t do sufficient public input; CC sets Plng. Dept. budget to assist their workload.

**David Moty (Kensington**): what is status of request for impaired/multiple language services on ZOOM? MAD can be advisor or manager of MADs.

**William Perno:** PGs know issues better than staff; fee waiver for PGs appeals needed; fee used as way to limit appeals; stipend should increase with cost of living; use DIF’s to fund? pareity for businesses & residents on PGs. Calistoga, CA has link for non-profits; example of how to find PGs on city website.

**Tom Silva (College Area):** PG distrust/mis-trust initially high; tonight has shifted atmosphere; PGs cut out of a LOT of earlier policy changes; 2 yr. hiatus too much;

**Ray Weiss (LJ, public):** was reconsidering 20 yr. involvement of community service due to “reforms”; Charter inconsistencies understood, but consider unintended consequences of change; Appeal process broken. PC staffed by DSD, so violations of LDC & factual errors generate appeals; limiting appeals limits community representation; give PC independence from DSD; make appeals process more balance; fee is now $1000 for EACH appeal level;

**Russ Connoley (City Hts.):** agrees w/ Ray Weiss; appeal fee too high; make process transparent & balanced; 2 yr. break unusual & will discourage participation; elections process complicated; dedicated seat appointments help w/ diversity; translation assistance: Plng. Dept should facilitate for transparency & public outreach; many languages used in City Hts. (**Wally:** neither Grand Jury or Auditor stated diversity was a problem; comment was there was “no data.”)

**Francine Maxwell (public):** how ensure equity for under resourced PG’s? Encanto very diverse; working people can’t go to meetings, so those who attend are not necessarily representative of community.

**Sharon Gehl (Mission Hills, public):** PGs seen people who want to restrict MF housing; don’t give these groups too much power; they can raise money for appeal if have community support;

**Stu Gross (Scripps Ranch):** 2 years off excessive; long-time volunteers know how system works & are very helpful; Brown Act: restructuring means Brown Act no longer required & that would eliminate indemnity issues. (***JLC:*** *City agrees Brown Act probably doesn’t apply, but if followed, indemnification would kick in.)*

**Brian Gile (public):** hot button issues bring out new members; ZOOM helps with attendance & outreach. Attendance elevated due to ZOOM.

**Gail Friedt (Uptown PG):** part of slate to move group in new direction; diversity hard; (16 members, only 4 women); Facebook, Instagram & Twitter accounts impt. for younger people;

**Shital Parikah (La Mesa PG):** if PGs independent, how community get info on projects? (*JLC: applicants not required to go to PGs now; Notice of Application & Notice of Decision used to notify PGs.)* Shital: Can PG’s have “non-binding” vote on PC? PGs really feel they are not heard. It’s wrong. *(Joe: Interesting if probably unattainable idea; PGs kept out of 5 meeting State required threshold.*  (**Wally:** State Code: 5 meeting threshold only applies to housing projects.)

**JLC:** will be an update to the draft policy.