

**Item #1 When Something Doesn't Meet Your Expectations,
Lower Your Expectations And See If That Works**

I'll admit it. I came to the West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council with high expectations -- probably too high. I wasn't looking to be involved in the political land grab that many neighborhood councils currently seem to be overreaching for. My belief instead is that for better representation in our district we need to work closely with our City Council members, not try to bypass them. I believe a neighborhood council should be the conduit to our city leaders to instigate action, not another layer of beauracracy. Sometimes, I'm pretty naïve.

We need to light a fire under our own collective seat here at the West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council. On March 30th 2005, we were sworn in as officers and held our first actual meeting on April 27th. September marks our seventh general meeting and bookends five months of real activity. Yes, we have raised and discussed issues, but too few. We have gone so far as to refer specific issues to standing committees that, after five months, have yet to meet. We have created committees with the promise of bringing new ideas and new energy to our little district of 43,000, but that promise has not been kept. Surely, we can do better.

Last month, when our stakeholder attendance for a general meeting hit a new high, we did not have enough elected neighborhood council members in attendance to achieve a quorum. We were legally prevented from taking any action that could benefit our community. Surely, we can do better.

We are currently sitting on \$25,000 that is meant to be spent on the betterment of our community. To my knowledge, this money does not accrue interest. In another two months, we will receive another \$12,500. My friends, the time has come to start proposing ideas. It is time to start talking to your neighbors about their ideas. It is time for each of us to reach out into our community. Remember, to gain our election, we petitioned our friends and neighbors so we could represent them on this council. Beyond that, each one of us represents almost 3,000 stakeholders. Each one of us stands at the front of a line of almost 3,000 people.

So, this month, my challenge to the board is to continue doing the job you are doing and spending the time you are spending, what you have been doing is good and necessary to our community -- but to please add one tenth of one second for every person in our district that you represent and spend that extra five hours over the next month representing the needs of those 3,000 stakeholders. The first task for each of us is to bring to our next board meeting the name of one street in need of either a slurry seal, a resurface, or reconstruction. And be prepared to debate. We have \$100,000 to spend in street repair from Public Works and next month we are going to spend it. Stakeholders in attendance, this is your lucky night, if you believe your street can use any one of those services, after this meeting, grab the first board member you can get a hold of and tell them you need them to represent you and your street.

Item #2 Hug Your Local State Legislator

Was up in Sacramento on the last week of August, lobbying the State Legislature on some environmental issues for the Sierra Club and dropped in on the offices of Assemblymember Lloyd Levine (40th District) and Senator Richard Alarcon (Senate District 20). Both offices were very attentive when I brought up my desire to see a little more "vertical interaction" between their staff and the West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council.

Item #3 Neighborhood Watch Forum

Our first Neighborhood Watch Forum with LAPD Senior Lead Officer Ron Carter will be held on October 18th at 7:00 p.m. at Lake Balboa Studios (7412 Balboa Blvd.). It will be an opportunity for stakeholders interested

in starting new neighborhood watch groups to get more information and for already established groups to network. This forum will also promote the program recently initiated by the WVNLBNC, which covers the cost of signage for new groups. The WVNLBNC has set aside \$1,000 for this purpose. Last month, we reported two new areas entered into the neighborhood watch program and it looks like this month we will also have two new start-ups, one at Hart Street and one at Amestoy. If you are interested in starting your own neighborhood watch group, you can email SLO Ron Carter at

Item #4 Densmore Avenue Update

Last month, West Van Nuys Densmarians invaded our meeting with Dept. of Transportation and MTA. I am pleased to report that the petitions have arrived and are ready for signing.

Item #4 Community Beautification Grants

October 27th is the deadline for Community Beautification Grants through the Board of Public Works. If you know of an area within our district that could use \$20,000 worth of beautification, please see me after the meeting and we will get the ball rolling.