



WINNETKA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

PO Box 3692, Winnetka, CA 91306

www.winnetkanc.com



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January 19, 2010

Wendy Gruel
City Controller
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Main St. Ste. 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Gruel:

I am contacting you today on behalf of the Winnetka Neighborhood Council (WNC) to officially and personally ask for your assistance in restoring WNC funds illegally withheld by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE).

The WNC has been experiencing tremendous problems with DONE for most of 2009. Bills have gone unpaid and other bills have been held up for payment by DONE with varying excuses from losing paper work submitted to excessive requests for additional documentation. Some bills are almost a year old. Some are causing multi-year community improvement projects like the Sherman Way Improvement project to be held up. Not to mention the impact the unpaid funds and lack of funds has on our ability to hold our March 2, 2010 elections.

In December of 2009 our Treasurer was informed that all WNC funds had been exhausted. We were further informed that those bills that were paid earlier this year, including a large expenditure for the our Sherman Way Median improvement project were paid with current fiscal year funds, when they should have been paid with the earmarked roll over funds we have built up.

We have received two very different excuses from DONE for why our rolled over funds were not used. Per DONE either the funds were swept by the Mayor (which we maintain cannot occur without approval from the City Council modifying the 2009-2010 FY budget) or due to DONE's own admittance of negligence, in having no record of the WNC earmarking funds for specific project uses. The latter despite the fact that we have dutifully submitted our yearly fiscal budgets clearly stating the funds were earmarked and reserved.

DONE has not processed over three years of audit and budgets that we have submitted. In addition, we have been informed that they have lost several years of annual audits that were submitted to them in the past. In short, the WNC is being punished unfairly, as are other NCs throughout the City, for DONE's internal problems.

You may recall that you spoke with Art Sims, WNC Vice President, and Erick Lace, WNC Treasurer at the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Council meeting on Thursday, January 14, 2010. Please accept my apologies for not being able to attend. I had wanted to meet with you myself to discuss these problems, but I had to work late.

From all accounts of that VANC meeting I understand that you were very honest, straightforward, and informative. My Vice President and Treasurer both informed me that you advised those in attendance that the you had not instructed DONE to withhold or freeze funds for NCs. However, DONE is claiming that they have acted on recommendations from your office.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter we recently sent to DONE General Manager Kim demanding the release of our funds. I sincerely hope that you will do everything you can to see that our funding is restored in full so that we can carry on with the business that we were elected to do and so that we can pay our outstanding bills.

We look forward to your response and your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me at my office, 1-626-564-6000, ext. 4520 to discuss the issue.

Sincerely,

JJ Popowich
President, WNC

Windsor Neighborhood Council

WNC

**Celebrating Diversity with Unity
and Dedication to the Community**