

**WINNETKA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**CALIFORNIA**

**Public Works &  
Transportation Committee**

**Chair**                      **Vice Chair**  
Armineh                      Wayne Schulte  
Chelebian

**Members**  
JJ Popowich  
Marilyn Robinson  
Wayne Schulte  
Dwight Burgess



**MAILING ADDRESS**

**Winnetka Neighborhood  
Council**

PO Box 3692  
Winnetka, CA 91396

**TELEPHONE: 818-781-0016**  
**FAX: 818-781-0929**

[www.winnetkaneighborhoodcouncil.org](http://www.winnetkaneighborhoodcouncil.org)

**WINNETKA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
**PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**From:**                      J.J. Popowich, Secretary

**Date:**                      August 16, 2004

**Subject:**                      Secretary's Meeting Notes for 08/16/04 Public Works &  
Transportation Committee

---

**Pledge of Allegiance**

1. **The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM, with JJ Popowich acting as chair.**
2. **Roll Call:** The following Board members were in attendance.

Ms. Armineh Chelebian	Mr. Wayne Schulte	Ms. Marilyn Robinson	Mr. Dwight Burgess
Mr. JJ Popowich			

3. **Public Discussion and possible action on a presentation by Ms. Debbie Pham, from the LA City Bureau of Sanitation on the recent settlement agreement filed in the U.S. Central District Court in Los Angeles, which requires the City to expand its program to renew and upgrade its aging sewer system, enhance sewer cleaning, and control. The Bureau of Sanitation will be seeking to increase their wastewater fee over the next 5 years to ensure compliance with the settlement agreement, prevent costly penalties and continue efforts to improve the City's aging infrastructure.**
  - 3.1. Mr. Popowich introduced Ms. Debbie Pham and Mr. Adel Hagekhalil from the LA City Bureau of Sanitation.
  - 3.2. Mr. Hagekhalil provided his presentation. He explained that the city's infrastructure includes roughly 6500 miles of sewers. He compared the mileage as going from LA to NY and then back to San Francisco. He pointed out that Los Angeles is expected to grow

by roughly 700,000 citizens by 2028. Mr. Hagekhalil said over 50% of the city's sewer system is over 50 years old.

He explained that the City was aware that the sewers need to be updated. The result of the court case is the City will be repairing and upgrading the sewer system to support the expected growth and the Federal and State regulations and requirements. Since 1994 the City has done a tremendous effort to repair the damage from the Northridge earthquake. He went on to point out that the City was able to do all of this without raising the sewer charges since 1992. They have accomplished this by staff reductions through attrition and careful planning.

Mr. Hagekhalil took time to address the problem of grease in the sewer systems. He pointed out that since 2001 new regulations for restaurants have contributed to reducing spills and overflows by 35%.

Among the recent improvements is a new sewer line activated recently. They will also be adding new filters and carbon scrubbers. Among the changes will be new chemicals to reduce the reliance on large doses of chlorine. The City has installed cameras in the sewer lines to watch for problems before they occur.

The City has spent the last decade in a legal battle with the Santa Monica Bay Keepers, EPA, and the state of California over the condition of the city's sewers and the runoff. The suit called for \$550,000.00 dollars in penalties and \$6 billion dollars in upgrades. The City was able to settle for much less in penalties and the agreement to upgrade and build new sewer systems.

In an effort to fund the settlement's new construction the City will be imposing a sewer rate increase of about 69% over 10 years. All funds from this increase will be directed to sewers only (per state and federal law), and not the General Fund. He went on to point out that Los Angeles is in the middle of the pack of large cities in its expenditures even under the new proposal. The agreement still must pass the City Council, and the Sanitation Department is required to come back each year to provide an update to the Council on its progress.

3.3. A stakeholder asked if this requires streets to be dug up including those that have recently been paved.

3.3.1. Mr. Hagekhalil responded that the Sanitation Department is working with the Bureau of Street Services (BOSS) to coordinate their efforts in an effort to avoid digging up as many streets as possible. But sometimes it will happen.

3.3.2. Mr. Popowich asked if they would be fixing them during or before streets are repaved.

3.3.2.1. Mr. Hagekhalil responded they are trying, but they are not perfect every time.

3.3.3. Mr. Schulte commented that it can't be too hard to coordinate with the BOSS.

3.3.4. Mr. Hagekhalil said that one of the difficulties is they have to prioritize. If an area is in bad shape they need to address it.

- 3.3.5. Mr. Schulte commented that plastic is great because it's easy to clean (in regards to new sewers).
- 3.4. A stakeholder asked how we would know when a street will be done. This stakeholder has had requests and promises for years to address the potholes, debris, etc from their street (Valerio & Corbin).
  - 3.4.1. Mr. Popowich asked if there was a list of projects which can be distributed.
  - 3.4.2. Mr. Hagekhalil asked if Mr. Popowich could email him an example of what he has seen from other Councils. He would also try to send Mr. Popowich an annual list of projects. They are also working on maps.
- 3.5. Ms. Chelebian asked if they had standard hours when they can start and work.
  - 3.5.1. Mr. Hagekhalil said they do and most of the time it is between 7 AM and 6 PM. However, for busy areas they may work at night.
    - 3.5.1.1. Ms. Chelebian pointed out that this can really interrupt the quality of life.
- 3.6. Mr. Hagekhalil said that he does want our feedback. He is looking at setting up a meeting every month to two months with the Board of Commissioners to improve the communication between the NC's and the City.
- 3.7. Ms. Chelebian said she would like to see a way for the stakeholders to come to the WNC so we can funnel a list of issues to the City.
  - 3.7.1. Mr. Hagekhalil responded that he is looking towards a larger gathering of NC's to send a representative to and to discuss the issues for specific larger areas. He will be working on a way for the NC's to work more closely with his office. He sees the public works committees as an extension of his department.
- 3.8. A stakeholder said the City marked the street and did a specific area and that was it.
  - 3.8.1. Ms. Chelebian asked if he had an email we can contact him for issues.
  - 3.8.2. Mr. Hagekhalil said he would provide us a contact. He reassured everyone that while resources are strained his department does need to know the citizens priorities.
  - 3.8.3. Mr. Schulte commented that we should make the City employee's work harder.
  - 3.8.4. Mr. Hagekhalil responded that some are great employees and some aren't. He said there have been a lot of changes.
  - 3.8.5. Mr. Popowich asked whether the annual increase was yearly for 10 years or did it have an end date.
    - 3.8.5.1. Mr. Hagekhalil said it was yearly for 5 years.
- 3.9. A stakeholder asked who was responsible for trees that impact the sewer lines.

3.9.1. Mr. Hagekhalil responded that the homeowners are responsible for the sewer lines from the street to their house. He went on to explain that some cities only state to the “curb”.

3.9.2. At this point the presentation was wrapped up. No votes or decisions were taken.

**4. Discussion and possible action on a request by the Department of Public Works to provide comments on a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Integrated Resources Plan which has been prepared for review and comments. They are requesting written comments by August 31, 2004. All comments will be incorporated in the draft environmental impact report and a public hearing is tentatively scheduled for summer of 2005.**

4.1. Ms. Chelebian introduced the next item on the agenda as she assumed the Chair.

4.2. Mr. Hagekhalil advised that he was also managing the IRP process. He offered to stay and say a few words about this as well. He said this plan provides for future development on how we can manage our water resources for the next 20 years. He said this process actively involves the community in planning and designing the projects.

The plans do not call for any new plants to be built in the City. The goal is to expand existing plants. They have heard a lot of feedback from the community that this is what they would like.

The IRP is in keeping with the desire to conserve as much water as possible. They want to work together with communities and water suppliers to make sure that resources are used smartly. Previously everyone worked on their own. This plan also calls for reusing water for irrigation.

4.3. Mr. Schulte asked if the City has considered desalination.

4.4. Mr. Hagekhalil responded that the City has considered this. He also said that prices have been high in the past, but that the costs are decreasing. There are no plans for that in these proposals.

4.5. Mr. Popowich noted that the deadline to be involved is too late for the Council to act on. He asked if the community would continue to be involved and have input on which of the four proposals are ultimately chosen.

4.5.1. Mr. Hagekhalil responded that they would have plenty of opportunities. He said that now that the proposals are together they are expanding the process to involve more community feedback.

4.6. Mr. Schulte commented that he was glad to see that the new plans call for collecting runoff.

4.6.1. Mr. Hagekhalil agreed. He said this really helps to reduce pollution.

4.7. Mr. Popowich asked what the deadline was for providing feedback for this phase.

4.7.1. Mr. Hagekhalil said it was 8/31/04, and they are only looking for feedback if there is something missing in these proposals.

4.8. Mr. Popowich made a motion that the WNC create a liaison to become a subject matter expert on the IRP and who will be required to attend the various meetings and report back to the committee on what they learn and what issues need to be addressed.

4.8.1. Ms. Robinson seconded the motion.

4.8.2. Ms. Chelebian called for the vote and the motion passed 5 – 0.

**5. Public Comments – Comments from the public on non-agenda items within the Committee’s subject matter jurisdiction.**

5.1. There was some discussion about Mr. Hagekhalil arranging a tour of the Japanese Gardens at this point and other possible areas of interest.

5.2. Ms. Chelebian agreed. She also said that we should provide information to the stakeholders on one of the ways Mr. Hagekhalil had pointed out sewer rates could be reduced through separate gauges for water used on lawns.

5.2.1. Mr. Schulte said he could get the cost of these through a supplier and he would share it with the group.

**6. Committee Business –**

**A. Nomination and election of Chair and Vice Chair by Committee members.**

i. A brief discussion was held on the responsibilities of the Chair of the Committee. Ms. Robinson nominated Ms. Chelebian for Chair. Mr. Burgess seconded the motion.

1. Mr. Popowich called for a vote and the motion passed 5 – 0.

ii. This was followed by a brief discussion on who would be Vice Chair. Mr. Burgess nominated Mr. Schulte. Ms. Robinson seconded the nomination.

1. Mr. Popowich called for a vote and the motion passed 5 – 0.

**B. Discussion & possible action on structure (size) of committee, adding alternates, etc.**

i. Ms. Chelebian opened the conversation on whether to expand the size of the Committee.

ii. Mr. Schulte asked if anyone else wanted to serve on the committee.

iii. Mr. Montaine responded that he would like to.

iv. A stakeholder asked what was required to serve on the Committee.

1. Mr. Popowich explained what is required is attendance at the meetings, learning about the issues that we talk about, and becoming subject matter experts.

- v. Ms. Chelebian said that she would like to see it expanded and suggested we take it to the Board.
  - 1. Mr. Popowich said he thought that we should never go up to 10, but would be more comfortable with 7.
  - 2. A brief discussion on the value of alternates was held. Generally it was felt that the alternates would not be a good idea.
  - 3. Mr. Schulte made a motion to expand to 7 members. Ms. Robinson seconded the motion.
  - 4. Ms. Chelebian called for a vote and the motion was passed 5 – 0.
- vi. Ms. Chelebian then opened the discussion in regards to who would serve as the recommended additional members.
  - 1. Mr. Popowich nominated Mr. Montaine. Ms. Chelebian seconded the motion.
    - a. Ms. Chelebian called for a vote and the motion was passed 5 – 0.
  - 2. Mr. Burgess nominated Mr. Tritt, and the nomination was seconded by Ms. Robinson.
    - a. Ms. Chelebian called for a vote and the motion was passed 5 – 0.

- C. Comments on Committee Member’s own activities/ Brief announcements.**
- D. Brief response to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their general public comment rights.**
- E. Introduction of any new issues for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting/request that the item be placed on the next meeting’s agenda.**
- F. Requests for Committee Members to research issues and report back to the Committee at a future time.**

**6. Meeting adjourned.**