

ALLIED

Neighborhoods Association

BOARD OF OFFICERS

June, 30, 2017

Cathie McCammon
President

Anna Marie Gott
Co-Vice President

Jo-Ann Shelton
Co-Vice President

Judy Orias
Treasurer

Jean Holmes
Secretary

John DeVore
Webmaster

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

*Bungalow Haven
Neighborhood Association*

Citizens for Livable Neighborhoods

Citizens Planning Association

*Flamingo Neighborhood
Association*

*Grove Lane Area
Neighborhood Association*

*Hidden Valley Residents
Association*

Hitchcock Ranch Association

*La Mesa Neighborhood
Association*

Mesa Protection Alliance

Oak Park Neighborhood Association

*Samarkand Neighborhood
Association*

*Santa Barbara Upper East
Association*

*Veronica Springs Neighborhood
Association*

Re: Emailing Comments To Committees Before Meetings

To: Paul Casey, City Administrator
CC: Mayor Schneider and City Council

Dear Mr. Casey:

As you may be aware, with the New Zoning Ordinance reaching a critical point as well as many other concerns arising recently, the pace of meetings addressing critical issues for our community has become both more intense and much faster than it has in many, many years. Allied Neighborhoods Association has been trying to assist the process with inputs representing our member neighborhoods. While we are pleased that the City has adopted a review process that involves citizens on various boards, commissions, committees, and task forces, we are concerned about the short time lines between the announcements of meeting topics and the distribution of letters emailed to reviewing body secretaries and thence to the members. Witness the ABR, which receives all the materials submitted over the weekend before their Monday afternoon meeting on Monday morning. (Please see the appended note for more on time lines.)

We understand the motivation of the distribution process to preclude making public the private email addresses of committee members, but we think that both goals of keeping member email addresses private and giving the reviewing bodies more time to read emailed inputs are possible and, indeed, very simple. Please consider directing staff to turn reviewing body email addresses into reflectors that will forward email not only to the secretaries but also directly to the members. We note that the City has had a positive experience recently with the email reflector Smoking@SantaBarbaraCA.gov set up to support inputs on the Smoking Ordinance. We believe that implementing our recommendation can help reviewing bodies hear the public and in the process benefit the transparency of local government.

Thank you for all your work in this busy time and for considering this request.

Respectfully,

John DeVore
Webmaster for Allied Neighborhoods Association

Appended Note: Two Examples of Time Lines

Agendas for ABR meetings are normally posted on Thursdays. The ABR receives materials submitted over the weekend, before their Monday afternoon meeting, on Monday morning. Since the City is often closed on the preceding Friday, this would mean that materials from Friday, Saturday, and Sunday before a meeting would be furnished to ABR members on Monday.

The Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals only receives public comment emails and written correspondence the day of their meeting.

We think the use of reflectors would help, as these two examples show that reviewing body members may have very limited time to review public comment letters and materials.