

Grant Neighborhood Association



To: Elected Officials of Long Beach

From: Ken Osborn
President
Grant Neighborhood Association

Sept. 3, 2012

Subject: Upcoming budget negotiations and vote.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

As the president of the Grant Neighborhood Association I am compelled to come forward to protest the proposed cuts to public safety in the FY 2013 budget. I am a home owner and a local realtor and I can tell you from experience if the level of crime continues to increase due to diminished police resources the citizens and reputation of Long Beach as a whole will suffer.

The police department and prosecutors office have done a fine job at keeping the gangs in check as well as making our streets safe to walk both day and night. A key part of this success has been the injunction created by the prosecutors office and the specialized gang unit created to enforce it.

We strongly oppose the proposed cut of this gang unit. If it is lost, the specialized institutional knowledge will be diluted throughout the police force and the special relationships that serve to increase the effectiveness of the injunction will be lost.

We cannot afford to let that happen. I know we all complain about taxes and fees but the time has come to look at revenue increases so that we do not have to go through this exercise for 10 more years. In the short term we support the increase of the basis price of oil to cover the shortfall in revenue. My message to Mayor Bob Foster is , "All of the oil money is the property of the people and must be used for the benefit and public safety of Long Beach"

I think if the city council makes the effort to educate the public as to how deeply they have already cut programs and services,streamlined process' and made efficiencies, the public will be open to giving back. This could come in the form of a minor increase in the sales tax (1/4%) which was recently lowered or in the utility fee that continues to drop. I urge the members of the council to do the right thing.

We the board of the Grant Neighborhood Association, are building a coalition of organizations across the city to stand with us in our opposition to the Mayors proposed cuts. We urge the council to work together to keep our public safety funding at its current levels including the upcoming academy class.

As citizens of Long Beach, we deserve safe streets and peaceful neighborhoods. Please take another look at the budget and put "everything on the table". It is time to come together and listen to the will of the people. It is time to restore our public safety budget.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Ken Osborn

Below are the 10 principles we are coming together to support as well as a graphic representation of the gang territories in the city overlaid with shootings and murders last year.

Long Beach Save Our Services (SOS)

Who we are:

We are a newly forming grass roots effort among neighborhood associations and community activists organizing around the basic principle that we have had enough of the annual cuts to our city's core services. We have realized that these cuts, no matter how deep or severe, will not resolve the underlying structural budget deficit problem, and certainly not without taking a terrible toll on our children and future generations. We say "enough." It is our responsibility to leave our city services and infrastructure in an "as good or better" condition, to future generations. We also believe the following:

1. The City of Long Beach will not thrive and reach its highest potential as long as it maintains the current levels of violent crime and its reputation for gang activity.
2. In order to change the reputation of the city, we have to continue to change crime and gang trends in a POSITIVE DIRECTION. We cannot be satisfied with "historically low levels" of crime. In addition, these "historically low levels" do not represent the upswing of crime in our city today. In order to improve the quality of life in our city, our law enforcement officers need our full support to further reduce the incidence of crime and gang activity. Police reductions adversely affect all citizens and their quality of life.
3. Improving the image (perception) of the City will attract more business and investment, as well as increases in property values.
4. We do not accept the concept of a "new normal" when it comes to repeated drastic and devastating reductions to all city services. Nor do we accept that these repeated cuts to services are the first and best solution to the annual budget deficit.
5. Eliminating city services "proportionally" makes no more sense than eliminating city services one department at a time. After years of cuts, with no end in sight, the end result is the same. Gutting city services is as irresponsible as not balancing the budget.
6. Budget cuts are a short term solution to the city's budgetary problems. There have been service reductions due to general fund deficits for years, even when the economy was booming. If we have learned anything over the last 10+ years of structural budget deficits, it is that we cannot cut our way out of this problem.
7. If our children and grandchildren are to grow and prosper as we have, they need to be provided the same levels of service and police protection that we have inherited and benefited from.
8. The City must increase revenues as a long term solution to the budget problem rather than eliminating services that harm the quality of life.
9. The City should fully utilize surplus funds and/or a portion of reserve funds to act as a bridge for the FY13 so that more permanent/long term solutions can be implemented in the following fiscal year(s).
10. Although we appreciate the "community budget meetings" and other efforts the city has made to involve the public in the budgetary process, the current framework pits neighbors, council districts and city departments against each other in an increasingly bitter battle for ever diminishing resources.






Long Beach Save Our Services (SOS)

Potential Revenue Side Solutions:

1. Raising the estimated per barrel price of oil.
2. Raising the relatively low docking fee for the harbor cruise ships.
3. Introducing or raising the real estate transaction fee a modest amount as the City of Los Angeles is considering.
4. Asking for 5% contract "give backs" from all City contractors similar to what City Light and Power has already agreed.
5. Raising the UUT tax by 2%
6. Raising sails tax by 0.5%
7. Introducing "Zero Based Budgeting" techniques.
8. Modestly increasing the rate of tax on the oil extraction operations.
9. Increasing oil production in appropriate areas.
10. Introducing an annual consumer price index percentage increase to city fees.

"Most violent crimes are gang related"

-City Prosecutor Doug Haubert

-  Shootings Resulting in Murder (2011)
-  All 2011 Shooting Locations
-  Council District 1
-  Insane Crip Gang Safety Zone
-  Longo and Sureno Safety Zone

