Motion to support NCs and Alliances to have adequate time to present at City Meetings

Agenda Item: GB041615-8
Date: September 18, 2014
Proposed By: Terrence Gomes

Full Proposal

In the past NCs have experienced many delays in their operations due to a lack of support from DONE. This lack of support was caused by the lack of staff at the department due to budget cuts created by the fiscal crisis starting in 2008. The Mayor has proposed to increase the staff of DONE by five positions.


Proposed Motion

I. The SORONC moves to support CF 15-0373 to allow DONE to increase their exempts positions to five additional staff members

II. To authorize the Terrence Gomes to submit a CIS to support the position of the SORONC on CF 15-0373

Considerations

Committee review: (highly recommended)  Votes For: Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: $ (applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for: Arguments against:
LANCC and VANC are supporters of the CF More paperwork
MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Members of the City Council
c/o City Clerk

From: Eric Garcetti, Mayor

Subject: Exemption of One Senior Project Coordinator, Three Project Coordinators and One Project Assistant for the Department Neighborhood Empowerment

Date: March 25, 2015

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) has requested the re-exemption of one (1) Senior Project Coordinator, and the exemptions of three (3) Project Coordinators and one (1) Project Assistant positions pursuant to Charter Section 1001 (b), for the employment of persons “to provide management services or render professional, scientific or expert services of an exceptional character.” The Charter allows for a maximum of 150 exempt positions under Section 1001 (b) with an additional 50 added last year by Council pursuant to Charter Section 101(b)(4). Currently, there are 145 approved exemptions citywide. Approval of this request will increase the count.

The Mayor and Council previously approved the exemption for the Senior Project Coordinator position from the civil service provisions of the City Charter. However, this positions recently became vacant. Per Charter Section 1001 (b) which requires that exemptions be re-authorized when the position becomes vacant, DONE is requesting the renewal of the exemption authority for this position.

The Senior Project Coordinator position manages the Planning and Policy program and supports the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates, the Board of Neighborhood training of Community Impact Statements of the Neighborhood Councils. The position is responsible for promoting Neighborhood Council policy as it relates to civic participation in government and in the system of Neighborhood Councils to stakeholders in Los Angeles. The position is responsible for interpreting documents and ordinances relating to the governance of Neighborhood Councils and developing informal training and group programs to support the growth and development of the Neighborhood Council system. The position analyzes data and prepares reports to provide to City departments, elected officials, Neighborhood Council leaders, and stakeholders in the
field. The position may act as a staff supervisor for Neighborhood Council support and projects, and reports to the Department’s General Manager.

The Senior Project Coordinator position requires at least five years of experience working with Neighborhood Councils in the areas of operations and policy, as well as excellent writing skills, a working knowledge of techniques for effective community organizing, and a working knowledge of the City’s Council File Management system, Community Impact Statements, and Board of Neighborhood Commissioner operations and policies.

The first Project Coordinator position will be responsible for developing and executing a peer grievance panel system and enhancing the services as provided by the Planning and Policy program. The position will develop policies and procedures in conjunction with enhancing the Neighborhood Council system and the Department’s operations; support the Neighborhood Budget Advocates for the Mayor’s Budget Day; support Neighborhood Council leaders to work on the Congress of Neighborhoods; monitor Council Files for issues relevant to Neighborhood Councils; and inform Neighborhood Councils and alliances to respond to any issues via Community Impact Statements, education, and tracking. The position will interface with representatives from the Mayor’s Office, City Council offices, City departments, commissions and agencies of the City, as well as leaders of private and non-profit community-based organizations on Neighborhood Councils outreach efforts; compile information, prepare reports, and analyze data regarding project goal implementation and achievements for the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners and present the information to elected City officials; and periodically manage call center inquiries by providing technical assistance and resolving issues with callers. The position will report to the Senior Project Coordinator.

The Project Coordinator position requires at least two years of experience working with Neighborhood Councils in the areas of operations and policy, as well as excellent writing skills, a working knowledge of techniques for effective community organizing, and a working knowledge of the City’s Council File Management system, Community Impact Statements, and Board of Neighborhood Commissioner operations and policies.

The other two Project Coordinator positions will be responsible for community organizing in areas of low civic participation. The positions will work on maintaining the sustainability of the Neighborhood Council system through recruitment of future board members by spearheading relationship-building and cultivating meaningful collaborations with community leaders, local politicians and community organizations; develop strategic action outreach goals for Neighborhood Council collaboration with their stakeholders; mobilize community members to support the Neighborhood Council system; educate and train the next generation of Neighborhood Council leaders; and represent the Department at local events, community gatherings, workshops and training events. The positions will report to the Senior Project Coordinator in charge of Field Operations.

The positions require at least two years of Neighborhood Council operational experience and at least three years of intensive community organizing experience, with a working knowledge of social media campaigns.
The Project Assistant position will provide technical and logistical support to Neighborhood Councils in the area of funding administration. The position will assist in the development of outreach and education materials on the Neighborhood Council funding process; provide direct training and orientation to Neighborhood Council members on relevant subject matter; interpret documents and ordinances related to the Neighborhood Council funding program; interface with representatives from City departments, elected officials, commissions and Neighborhood Councils; and compile information and prepare reports related to goal implementation and achievements for the Neighborhood Council system.

The Project Assistant position requires at least two years of experience working with Neighborhood Councils, with at least one of the years in Neighborhood Council funding; excellent analytical skills; and a working knowledge of Excel, Google drive and QuickBase database systems Commissioners, all Neighborhood Council policy development, and the tracking and

The position requirements include at least one year of professional experience performing duties in administrative, personnel, budget, grants, legislative and/or fiscal activities in a City department, other public or governmental agency, or private industry. Experience with project management, including the ability to coordinate and implement projects according to established guidelines and criteria, is highly desired. A bachelor’s degree is also highly desired but not required.

The exemption will provide DONE with the flexibility to recruit from a broader candidate pool and to select the best-qualified individual with the knowledge, skills and talents necessary to the position. Based on my review of DONE’s request, as well as the review of the Personnel Department, I hereby approve the request for the re-exemption of one (1) Senior Project Coordinator position and the exemptions of the three (3) Project Coordinators and one (1) Project Assistant positions and transmit my action to the City Council, pursuant to City Charter Section 1001 (b) (1).

EG:rc

cc:  Miguel Santana, City Administrative Officer
     Ana Guerrero, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
     Mandy Morales, Legislative Coordinator, Office of the Mayor
     Wendy Marcy, General Manager, Personnel Department
Motion to approve LUED Project Form

Agenda Item: GB041615-3
Date: September 18, 2014
Proposed By: Terrence Gomes

Full Proposal
Because of the improvement in the economy, the LUED Committee is experiencing an increase of application for projects in the area. To help streamline the process and to help applicants navigate the LUED approval process. The form will also allow the LUED Committee to understand the scope of the project and any variances needed.

Proposed Motion
I. The SORONC moves to approve the design and language of the LUED Project Form.

II. To authorize the LUED Committee to post and use the LUED Project Form with the applicants of projects in the SORONC Community.

Considerations

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<th>Committee review:</th>
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<td>Not supporting this Motion will set a precedent that applicants do not have to come prepared to the LUED Committee meetings.</td>
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Motion to support NCs and Alliances to have adequate time to present at City Meetings

Agenda Item: GB041615-7
Date: September 18, 2014
Proposed By: Terrence Gomes

Full Proposal
In the past NCs and Alliances have had one minute to two minutes to present to commissions and Council on a CIS or position that the organization has taken on the matter before the body. Council President Wesson has made a motion to allow NCs and Alliances to have adequate time to present the position of the Board to the official body.


Proposed Motion
I. The SORONC moves to support CF 15-0389 to allow NCs and Alliances to have adequate time to present to commissions and City Council

II. To authorize the Terrence Gomes to submit a CIS to support the position of the SORONC on CF 15-0389

Considerations

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Motion to support NCBA White Paper

Agenda Item: GB041615-9
Date: April 16, 2015
Proposed By: Terrence Gomes

Full Proposal
For the past five years, the NCBAs have produced a White Paper with recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for how certain allocations of the Budget should be funded. The SORONC is an active member of the NCBA.


Proposed Motion
I. The SORONC moves to support the NCBA White Paper that has been presented to the Mayor and will be part of the discussion of CF 15-0600

II. To authorize the Terrence Gomes to submit a CIS to support the position of the SORONC on CF 15-0600

Considerations

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City of Los Angeles

Neighborhood Council

Budget Advocates

White Paper

2015
A NEW VISION for LOS ANGELES
Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates are committed to work with
the Mayor and City Councilmembers in order to make Los Angeles
A WORLD-CLASS CITY

Mayor Eric Garcetti has called for this year’s budget to be organized around five over-arching outcomes:

- Make Los Angeles the best-run big city in America
- Promote good jobs for Angelenos all across Los Angeles
- Create a more livable and sustainable city
- Ensure our communities are the safest in the nation
- Partner with residents and civic groups to build a greater city

To advance these outcomes, Budget Advocates met with key players from thirty Departments and Bureaus as well as Council Members or their key staff of the fifteen Council Districts to learn their concerns, and distilled five key action items that will help advance the Mayor’s objectives, including rebuilding the confidence of residents and businesses in their elected officials and ensuring the prosperity and sustainability of our city.

These are to:

- Redefine our City’s budget processes, practices and philosophy in order to lay out a clear direction for making forward-looking decisions, including resolving the retirement plans and other structural deficits, and change the way the City prepares budgets to focus on planning for economic downturns, in addition to readjusting to the present economic circumstances
- Create 21st century information management systems dedicated to providing integrated and efficient support to stakeholders and facilitation interdepartmental communication
- Rebuild and improve Los Angeles’ infrastructure to standards that exceed the best in the world to take care of our citizens and attract new businesses
- Streamline the City’s hiring processes to proactively anticipate future needs, including potential replacement of the 25% of employees now eligible for retirement as well as attracting and developing a sustainable workforce
- Implement a citywide collections system to realize uncollected revenue, develop more income sources to offset structural deficits, and create the permanent position of Inspector General

Budget Processes, Practices, and Philosophy

The 2020 Commission Report pointed out that Los Angeles is treading water while the rest of the world moves forward, and that the City needs to adapt to the 21st century.

The City must make better use of the great resource it has created in the Neighborhood Council system which not only empowers the public at a local level to have democratic input into all
levels of the City government but also provides the City with a depth of experience and resources unrivaled in most big cities.

In recent years the structural deficit, increasing retirement plan obligations, the impediment of a failing infrastructure and the lack of resources and personnel to implement long-term planning has led to uncertainty during the fiscal year in regards to ongoing labor negotiations, service delivery and longer term planning. In addition to the real costs associated with unsettled finances, this cloud of uncertainty has hampered productivity, impaired employee morale, and limited operational vision.

The Mayor, City Council, and all Departments must embrace a coherent and consistent philosophy that will reverse these problems and build Los Angeles into a city for the 21st century.

The Budget Advocates recommend:

- The City determine what is feasible under its current financial structure and what must be changed to set Los Angeles on a better course for the future
- All budgets, present and future, contain provisions to maintain every infrastructure element to ensure that the livability and safety of our City is maximized, and to justify future investments in infrastructure
- The City establish a realistic plan for ensuring the delivery of retirement benefits to past, current, and future employees and integrate this plan into all budgets
- All Departments commit to a Performance/Zero-Based Budgeting approach and using then-current data and incorporating multi-year obligations, budget only for results, starting each year at zero with each Department accepting accountability for their share of annual and long-term costs
- The City implement a realistic, balanced, five-year budget and 30-year plan, both to be updated yearly and approved together with the annual budget, with the multi-year amortized costs integrated with those of day-to-day operations so future shortfalls will be identified and addressed thoughtfully and transparently long before they can impact day-to-day operations
- The City reconfirm its commitment to the Neighborhood Council system and: 1) approve the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment’s proposed exempt positions and immediately fill all vacancies so as to adequately support the councils; 2) restore annual Council budgets to previous levels and allowing a percentage of funds to rollover for continuity; and 3) fund the online voting for next year’s Neighborhood Council elections, which could also be a test-run for holding city elections online
- The City immediately establish a short-term independent citizens committee pursuant to the recommendations of the 2020 Commission to address the City’s overwhelming and increasing pension and healthcare obligations and to evaluate solutions which will contain that expense, take care of the City’s past, present, and future workers and also be sustainable in our present and future economic environment
Information Technology Upgrades and Interdepartmental Communication

The need for a dramatically improved Information Technology (IT) system was a near universal concern in our investigations into the City’s budget. Several themes within the broader context of an improved IT system arose, including: 1) A lack of coordination of IT services across City Departments; 2) An aging IT workforce; 3) An unreliable internal network; and 4) A consistent lack of long-term investments in our IT infrastructure.

The Budget Advocates recommend:

- A single individual (or team) be empowered to coordinate the IT efforts within the City to avoid redundancies and decrease inefficiencies across Departments, including working closely with departmental IT staff to integrate City needs seamlessly with the ongoing use of proprietary systems and fully testing every added component to ensure that each is compatible with all existing systems before the new infrastructure is allowed to go active
- The introduction of new technologies be complemented with a comprehensive plan to train and expand IT employees to provide improved and expanded services
- The City hire the next generation of IT workers based on their having relevant experience, with skill sets compatible to the new systems, and pay competitive salaries
- The City establish a strong IT infrastructure backbone that is scalable, and modernize the City’s data center operations through public and private cloud options
- The appropriate agent undertake a long-term cost-benefit analysis for all major IT projects before entering into any agreement that might ultimately cost the City more money than it would save

Significant investment in the City’s IT infrastructure has the potential to save millions of dollars in the long run provided, however, the needs and concerns of all Departments and the outside agencies that would be affected by such large-scale projects are adequately addressed. Furthermore, the City should require each Department to review the long-term costs and value of these projects and budget accordingly.

Our IT infrastructure cannot continue to be supplemented with only modest changes. To be able to handle the IT needs of a world class city, our IT infrastructure needs to make a ‘quantum leap’ in IT service and delivery. This entails investing in the high-quality 21st century technologies that will enable the City to achieve its potential.

Infrastructure Modernization

Facing the consequences of the significant infrastructure problems that have developed over many decades of deferred maintenance, the City must assess what needs to be done and lay out a plan, first to fix what is broken and then to establish a program of new construction with ongoing maintenance and upgrades, to make our City attractive to investors, hospitable to its residents, and sustainable into the next century.
The Budget Advocates focused on the infrastructure that is paid for from the General Fund. This includes streets and sidewalks, curbs and corner access ramps, street lights, parks and the urban forest, the fleet of aging vehicles, buildings and facilities (including its internal workings such as plumbing, electrical, cable fiber, and HVAC systems), and IT management information and communication systems.

The City does not have a centralized database that tracks the condition of its infrastructure. Most Departments do not have an infrastructure plan.

The City does not have an accurate estimate of the cost to repair and maintain its infrastructure.

The City’s current deferred maintenance budget is estimated to be in the range of $10 billion and the City has been reluctant to conduct a comprehensive survey of its infrastructure because of the expense of a survey. Yet this vital expense would be just a small percentage of the overall cost. The real cost is not the expense of the survey, but in the erosion of the public’s confidence in the City for the lack of comprehensive infrastructure maintenance.

The City can no longer ignore its failing infrastructure. The rate of failure will accelerate over time, resulting in disproportionately higher costs.

Without repairs, the deteriorating infrastructure will make it harder for the City to attract businesses and maintain its status as a tourist destination, and its economy will suffer.

The City must regain the trust of a skeptical populace which believes that their tax dollars have been diverted to pay for increased salaries, pensions, and benefits for City employees. This will require reform of the City’s finances.

The Budget Advocates recommend:

- The City Administrative Officer determine the status of all of the City’s infrastructure, Department by Department, and the related deferred maintenance costs
- The City develop a detailed operational and staffing plan to repair and maintain all of its infrastructure, Department by Department to ensure that our streets, sidewalks, and the rest of the City’s infrastructure will be maintained in good condition for the next 100 years
- The City develop a comprehensive financing plan which, to earn the trust of the voters, should establish an independent oversight committee consisting of qualified individuals who have the appropriate background, training, and adequate resources to monitor the repair and maintenance of the City’s infrastructure
- In the event the financing plan requires the approval of the voters, the City must place on the ballot a measure that comprehensively addresses the City’s financial constraints by including requirements that the City balance its budget and fund its retirement plans along with the repair and maintenance of its infrastructure

The City should seek to pass bonds now when interest rates are low and the costs of improvements, including materials and labor, are less expensive than they will be in the future. This would create well-paying jobs for many of our stakeholders, encourage people and
businesses to remain, and attract new investment and business opportunities from outside the City.

We need to establish and enforce performance benchmarks and accountability to ensure that the City does not need to go back to the residents to add to these bonds due to inefficiencies. It is essential the City develops solid and sustainable ways to increase income generation consistent with population growth and stakeholder demands.

**Personnel and Hiring**

The Department of Personnel, like most other departments, suffers from being underfunded and understaffed in the aftermath of the 2008 recession. A concern of many departments is the need to retain institutional memory by hiring qualified staff now to be trained before experienced personnel retire. The Personnel Department faces a number of regulations that hinder the employment of suitable candidates, do not allow the flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing world, and do not allow the City to hire personnel for which funding has already been approved.

The City needs ways to attract engaged and innovative staff for all Departments, retaining them with exciting challenges, appropriate training and employee recognition programs to increase morale.

Due to disproportionate cuts dating back to the 2008 economic crisis, the current budgetary request from the Personnel Department barely serves to allow the Department to meet current mandates and, as job classifications change, their obligations in the short term increase, leaving them less likely to effectively catch up, let alone incorporate training and anticipate future needs.

The Budget Advocates recommend:

- The City include in its upcoming budget up to $5 million to engage outside contractors as necessary to process the entire backlog of testing and hiring of applicants within twelve months including bringing all job descriptions up-to-date.
- All emergency appointments be extended by up to one year or until every Department’s backlog is cleared.
- The City fund general metric analysts plus clerical support for the Personnel Department to proactively plan for the next 5 years of staffing, including, but not limited to, the projected 25% to 40% retirement of current staff.
- The City authorize the development and long-term funding of an automated payroll system with HR modules to consolidate and modernize City payroll for all Departments and the Council.
- The City fund and the Department of Personnel implement: 1) Expanded in-house and new hire training; 2) Cross-training to ensure flexible staffing during economic fluctuations as well as provide additional short term support for Departments experiencing unexpected staffing demands; 3) An apprenticeship program in conjunction with colleges and vocational schools so people can learn skills on the job.
and be promoted; 4) Increased summer and first-job youth employment programs with existing federal and state grants; and 5) A streamlined hiring process, proactively anticipating departmental requirements and avoiding delays to fill positions on a timely basis.

Part of the City’s current problems stem from insufficient staffing due to the 2008 economic downturn coupled with a projected rate of retirement which could reach 40% over the next five years. A major concern of many Departments is to retain institutional memory by bringing on qualified hires to be trained before the exit of those with the most experience.

The City should take aggressive steps to improve morale of its employees who provide the services which make the City function and are the face of the City to residents, business people, and visitors.

Historically, municipal employment has provided enhanced job, health, and retirement security, but the City now needs to work with the unions to ensure workers’ rights and interests are protected while allowing the flexibility for the City to provide efficient and economical services to its stakeholders.

Ongoing evaluation of staffing and compensation is needed to accommodate the changing nature of employment in the 21st century, allowing for increased job mobility, both within and between the City and private enterprise, so employees may evolve and grow as the City does.

**Revenue and the Function of the Inspector General**

As Inspector General, Fernando Campos has begun to bring order to the collections process for the City. When he started, he was faced with forty Departments and thirty-three billing systems working in isolation. Now thirteen are integrated, billing collections have been expedited and consolidated and he is working to concurrently increase transparency across the board and phase in the remaining Departments.

He has identified $75 million in collectibles from rebilling, grants and disaster assistance including $30 million still owed from the Northridge earthquake alone. Of 550 recommendations made so far, many by the Budget Advocates, 45% have been implemented and 30% are in process.

The Budget Advocates recommend:

- The City make the position of Inspector General permanent
- The City fund the Inspector General’s suggestions when the return will exceed the cost including: 1) Centralization of all City collections; 2) Direct assessment and systemic code enforcement of costs and fees be integrated and expanded; 3) An improved collection of parking fees, specifically from garages and rental car companies be developed and implemented; and 4) $300 thousand be allocated for his Department to pursue the $3 million owed by the top 25% of scofflaws
- The City encourage the DWP to replicate the Inspector General model if their collection efforts continue to be ineffective
• The appropriate departments evaluate what is driving lawsuits against the City and accelerate regulations to limit the City’s exposure in regards to infrastructure and environmental hazards, vehicle liability, police misconduct and personnel cases

• The City expand Deputy Mayor Rick Cole’s mandate to incentivize the development of new income sources and reward innovation by encouraging more citizen participation

The economy has and will always ebb and flow. The City needs to plan for the inevitable economic downturns. Every Department should immediately develop realistic plans to be updated regularly including how to control costs and income during such periods, and the City should adjust its reserves accordingly.

**A World Class City**
Los Angeles needs to use California’s reputation for leading edge environmental legislation as well as our City’s well-deserved reputation for innovation and productivity to attract new green, high-tech and creative enterprises in addition to problem-solving think tanks and boutique businesses across the job spectrum. With our current drought, the City should reach out for companies offering ways to mitigate the impact of global warming and improve the City’s resilience across the board. Los Angeles could become the new epicenter for innovative application of green energy and sustainable solutions and a leader for government action across the country.

We need to link cause and effect for each Department and work back from the effect desired to the actions that will achieve what’s needed based on workload, delivery of services, cost-benefit analysis and the effort involved.

All of this must be addressed at every level of City services and it must be done as a City working together, not as individual Departments, with the following questions in mind:

• How to assess where the City stands?
• What are the **real** costs if intangibles, quality of life, training, infrastructure upgrades, education and road impact are included?
• How can the City hold development and businesses accountable for their actions when they break regulations, dodge taxes and abuse incentive programs?
• What taxation systems could be implemented that are truly fair and progressive?
• How can increasing workers’ wages to allow them to stay in their neighborhoods be used to increase City income?
• What other resources exist? And how do we measure success?

In conjunction with the foregoing, and especially with regards to efficiency and transparency for both cost-cutting and income generation, the City needs to establish a panel of Angelenos to provide a view from outside City Hall and to act on behalf of stakeholders to provide parameters, monitor compliance and track improvements year to year and help make Los Angeles the World Class City of the Mayor’s vision.
Respectfully submitted,

The 2014-2015 Budget Advocates

Jay Handal, West Los Angeles, Co-President
Terrence Gomes, South Robertson, Co-President
Danielle Lafayette, Empowerment Congress West, Co-Vice President
Linda Lee, Olympic Park, Co-Vice President
Howard M. Katchen, Sherman Oaks, Treasurer
Liz Amsden, Historic Highland Park, Secretary
Erick Morales, Mid-City, Assistant Secretary
Glenn Bailey, Northridge East, Parliamentarian
Elvina Beck, Central Hollywood, Web Master

Darlene Atkins, Voices of 90037
Scott Bytof, Downtown Los Angeles
Nelson Castillo, Westlake South
Krystee Clark, Sunland-Tujunga
Kevin Davis, Foothill Trails District
Vera del Pozo, Boyle Heights
Macky Fortu, Rampart Village
Punam Gohel, North Hills West
Harvey Goldberg, Tarzana
Sharron Haynes, Watts
Jeannette Hopp, Van Nuys
Jack Humphreville, Greater Wilshire
Joan Jacobs, Harbor Gateway North
Jon Liberman, South Robertson
Brandon Pender, Studio City
Margaret Peters, Empowerment Congress Southwest
Susan Reimers, Elysian Valley Riverside
Barbara Ringuette, Silver Lake
Marc Ruelas, Arleta
Erik Sanjurjo, Hollywood United
Ken Schwartz, Tarzana
Brett Shears, Empowerment Congress North
Krisna Velasco, Grenada Hills South
Joanne Yvanek-Garb, West Hills

plus non-Budget Advocate participants

Steve Quat, Studio City
Daniel Wiseman, M.D
George Wolfberg, Pacific Palisades