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COUNCILWOMAN GREUEL TO REQUIRE DISCLOSURES TO CREATE MORE TRANSPARENCY IN CITY GOVERNMENT

Greuel to regulate ex parte communication with City Commissioners

LOS ANGELES – Continuing her efforts to ensure honesty and transparency in City elections, Councilwoman Wendy Greuel introduced a motion today asking the City Ethics Commission to expand the City’s ethics code to ex parte communication with City Commissioners.

“We must ensure that all City Commissions are operating in an open, ethical, and transparent manner,” said Councilwoman Greuel. “Angelenos have the right to know that decisions by their City government are being made on behalf of the people not the powerful.”

Ex parte communications are contacts made by an interested party – such as a lobbyist with a decision maker – such as a City Commissioner - outside the presence of other interested parties. The City Ethics Commission does not currently have a citywide ex parte communications program for City Commissioners and parties conducting business with a Commission. Ex parte communications by parties involved with business before a Commission could potentially be seen as a violation of ethical standards.

"Serving as a City Commissioner is an honor and a privilege, and it is imperative that all aspects of our decision making process are in full view of the public," said City Planning Commission President Jane Usher. "I applaud Councilwoman Greuel for her leadership in helping to restore faith in City government with this motion."

City Commissioners have an obligation to ensure due process on all matters before them, particularly in the case of quasi-judicial matters,” said Councilwoman Greuel. “The citizens of Los Angeles have a right to impartial decision makers and full disclosure of the evidence used to reach a decision.

Various cities and agencies across the State of California have implemented ex parte communications restrictions, including, the City of San Diego, the City of Santa Monica Planning Commission, and the California Coastal Commission. Substantial research into this matter as it regards commissioners in the State has been conducted.

This is the latest effort by Councilwoman Greuel to clean up Los Angeles City government. In 2005, she led the effort to ban City Commissioners from fundraising or from participating in contracting. She also led the effort to institute a “Clean Money” system for City elections, which would remove the influence of special interests in these elections, and she helped to create the Waste, Fraud and Abuse Investigation Unit in the City Controller’s office.

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