

Budget Sparring Match Set to Resume

News that Was

By Sara Epstein Staff Writers

To paraphrase, CAO Karen Sisson came to Council expecting to play the budget game and a sparring match broke out. The Mayor, Jack Weiss and the LAPD were on one side and Bernie Parks and his Budget Committee were on the other.

Sisson was actually in Council for a mid-year status report on the budget. Park s budget committee had a laundry list of budget saving recommendations on the table including a request that Sisson and the LAPD generate a hiring plan that ensures that the net increase of officers not exceed 226.

The Mayor got upset, saying he would not stand for any reduction in the hiring plan. We mad a commitment to hire 780 officers every year, Villaraigosa said, and I m absolutely committed to keeping that promise.

Parks has an idea that the trash-fee-for-police-officers that the public approved last year was not earmarked and can be used, if needed, to fill holes in an ever more porous city budget.

Lots of dancing and positioning ensued and after an hour or so of back-and-forth, Councilwoman Wendy Greuel called a timeout and suggested the debate be continued to today (Friday).

Garcetti warned that there were numerous presentations scheduled and they would not likely get to city business until after 11 a.m. The folks around the horseshoe decided that they would take their chances and the matter was continued.

Thus, the sparring match is set to resume sometime during today s (Friday) City Council session.

Contentious Hospital Expansion Goes Forward

Here s some of the David Zahniser report in the Times.

A divided Los Angeles City Council voted Wednesday to approve a 101-bed hospital expansion project in the San Fernando Valley, rebuffing efforts by a union-backed coalition that had demanded a more thorough environmental review.

The council fell two votes shy of the 10 votes needed to require an environmental impact report on the four-story wing planned by Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Mission Hills. The vote occurred one day after a coalition of community groups wrote a letter warning that they probably would file a lawsuit if the project was approved.

Councilman Richard Alarcon seized on that letter, saying a costly legal battle would delay the project far longer than an expanded environmental review process. This project won't be resolved with this vote, said Alarcon, who favored an environmental impact report. I believe this project will be thrust into the courts.

Alarcon and seven other council members sided with a coalition composed of neighborhood councils, nonprofits, a powerful healthcare workers union and the labor-backed Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy -- all of which warned that the hospital expansion would create too much traffic and too few parking spaces. The coalition, Community Advocates for Responsible Expansion, said low-income neighborhoods had been shortchanged by the lack of extensive environmental reviews.

Alarcon, facing the prospect of a defeat, tried without success to persuade Providence to agree to a 45-day delay. But five council members -- Tony Cardenas, Wendy Greuel, Bernard C. Parks, Jan Perry and Greig Smith -- sided with the hospital, which had argued that the expansion is needed immediately in a county where 10 emergency rooms have closed since 2002.

The hospital also said its critics were part of a larger campaign by United Healthcare Workers West, which has pushed for years for new organizing rules at Providence hospitals. (Read complete report here.)

More Council-

The City Council also approved, this week, a motion urging the writers and producers to get back to the bargaining table and offered city office space as a neutral setting for the discussions.

And, a resolution supporting federal legislation that would end the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy for gays in the US military.

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