



Los Angeles County  
Children's Planning Council  
*Improving Children's Lives*

## **Children's Planning Council Meeting**

**May 21, 2008**

**9:30 a.m.**

Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California

Present:

- Chair Don Knabe
- Victoria Lewis Adams, representing Steve Cooley
- Bettye Anderson
- Lauraine Barber
- Karen Bernstein, representing Bruce Chernof
- Angela Carter, representing Trish Ploehn
- Samuel Q. Chan, representing Marv Southard
- Paul Chung
- Micah R. Cohen
- Deborah Davies
- Lupe Delgado, representing Darline Robles
- Jeff Farber
- Dorothy Fleisher
- Felicia Lynn Ford
- Larry Lue
- Penny Markey, representing Margaret Donnellan Todd
- Jacquelyn McCroskey
- Elton Naswood
- José Ramos
- Lisa Cleri Reale
- Bruce Saltzer
- Wendy Schiffer, representing Jonathan Fielding
- Clarence Shaw
- Nina Sorkin
- Anita Spenser, representing Philip Browning
- Beatriz Olvera Stotzer
- Mary Helen Vasquez
- Anita Vigil, representing Robert Taylor
- Sharon G. Watson
- Phillip L. Williams
- Mika Yamamoto, representing Russ Guiney

Chair Don Knabe brought the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m., thanking the Executive Committee and Children's Planning Council staff for their work since April in pulling together feedback on the various governance issues. The governance recommendations present significant opportunities for the Council, and Knabe welcomed today's discussion.

**Approval of the Minutes of April 17, 2008**

**Phillip L. Williams moved that the minutes of April 17, 2008, be approved as mailed. Lauraine Barber seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Foundation Board Report: Phillip L. Williams**

The search committee is currently finalizing the job description for the chief executive officer position, which will be shared with Children's Planning Council members once it is ready. Maxene Johnston of Johnston and Company, who provided executive search services when founding executive director Sharon G. Watson stepped down, has again been selected to help with recruitment. Search committee membership is specified in the Council's sustainability plan, and members are:

- Phillip L. Williams (co-chair), representing the board of The Children's Planning Council Foundation, Inc.
- Lisa Cleri Reale (co-chair), representing the Executive Committee
- Chris Floyd, representing the Executive Committee
- Jeff Farber, representing the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee
- Colleen Mooney, representing the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee
- Samuel Q. Chan, representing the public sector
- David Fleming, ex officio legal advisor
- Duane Dennis
- Jacquelyn McCroskey
- Danny Ramos
- Beatriz Olvera Stotzer
- Sharon G. Watson

**Acting Chief Executive Officer's Report: Cheryl Mendoza, Ph.D.**

The Children's Planning Council's ordinance sunsets on June 30, 2008, and two proposals will soon go to the Board of Supervisors regarding extending both the ordinance and county funding for core support, certain projects, and the SPA/AIC Councils. (Both proposals were included in member packets.) The Board letters have been reviewed with Chair Don Knabe's office, the county's Chief Executive Office, the Foundation Board, and the Council's Executive Committee. If the Children's Planning Council approves them today, they will then go to the Deputy Chief Executive Officers at the next cluster meeting.

**Beatriz Olvera Stotzer moved that the Board letters extending the Children's Planning Council ordinance and funding provisions be approved in concept, with staff being given the authority to revise them, if necessary, in accordance with actions taken at today's meeting. Sharon G. Watson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

**Executive Committee Report: Lisa Cleri Reale**

The special meeting held on April 17 prompted much feedback on the governance recommendations, which the Executive Committee incorporated into the document presented today. Discussions will center on those proposals for which consensus has not already been

reached. Attendees were reminded that only Children's Planning Council members and their designated alternates (specifically appointed by the Board of Supervisors to attend in lieu of county department heads) were eligible to vote.

➤ **Recommendation 1**

**Begin to streamline the composition of the CPC** to reduce its size and to better reflect the evolution of various CPC partnerships and the way in which the county and other public systems now function, in addition to providing a place where county managers sit with community leaders to identify and solve problems in order to remove barriers to services. **The total number of voting CPC members should not exceed 45**, and would include both ex-officio members (there by virtue of their office or position) and representatives nominated by the entities they represent.

- Chair pro tem of the Board of Supervisors as chair
- CPC Foundation Board chair
- Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court
- Five representatives, one from each of the county's supervisorial districts
- Two youth (from a SPA/AIC youth network or non-traditional youth group, using criteria that ensures diversity)
- Two parents (from a SPA/AIC parent network, using criteria that ensures diversity)
- City of Los Angeles Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families
- Policy Roundtable for Child Care
- Education Coordinating Council, which will rotate its selected representative every two years among the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the six school districts that are part of its membership
- Inter-Agency Council for Child Abuse and Neglect
- Association of Community Human Service Agencies
- Southern California Grantmakers
- First 5 LA
- Board of Directors of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles
- League of California Cities
- Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Faith-based collaborative focused on children and families
- Two emeritus founding members (*non-voting*)
- Chief Executive Officer
- District Attorney
- Director, Department of Children and Family Services
- Director, Department of Health Services
- Director, Department of Public Health
- Director, Department of Mental Health
- Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Director, County of Los Angeles Library
- Director, Department of Public Social Services

(cont'd.)

- Chief Probation Officer
- Superintendent, Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Director, Child Support Services
- Nine SPA/AIC Council conveners

With the new proposed wording (“begin to streamline”), Executive Committee members acknowledged that reducing the number of Children’s Planning Council members is a critical concept, Cleri Reale explained, but they feel that it cannot be done overnight. The new roster—which reinstates the 12 department heads and the nine SPA/AIC Council conveners, eliminating the four ethnic community representatives, the foster parent/caregiver, and the university researcher—reduces Council membership to 45 seats from its current level of 51.

Chair Knabe remains adamant about the 12 department heads remaining on the Council, since he sees them as the “ultimate implementers.” If departments are made non-voting, he said, “they will also tend to be non-showing, and the input from other members is what they need to hear.”

In response to Clarence Shaw’s question about the ethnic community representatives, Sharon Watson, a Governance Workgroup member, responded that the elimination of those seats should be seen as a positive reflection of how far the Council has come in terms of diversity. “When we were instituted in the early 1990s,” Watson said, “most people around the table were white, and most county department heads were white and male. Member organizations were choosing their own representatives, and the Council had no control over those selections. The point of creating the ethnic community seats was to be sure that we had a voice from those four communities. Over time, though, we’ve moved beyond that. The world looks different now, and in a very natural way, we are integrated throughout the Council, the SPA/AIC Councils, the committee structures—even the department heads.”

Larry Lue cautioned against confusing ethnic representation with diversity. “If you’re a department head, for instance,” he said, “you’re not *allowed* to speak for the community.” As the Asian/Pacific Islander community representative, Lue acknowledged the difficulties of one individual representing large and diverse populations, and he wants a better mechanism to give voice to those concerns. He is particularly interested in seeing how the Children’s Planning Council might focus on and empower communities that are linguistically isolated. “If you go past Spanish-speaking,” he said, “that’s absent from most of our conversations.”

Latino community representative Beatriz Olvera Stotzer echoed Lue’s concerns, saying that she had supported the original Governance Workgroup recommendation to reduce the number of Council members because of the additional proposal (Recommendation 14) to create a broad Community Table where the needs of parents and children of various populations could be directly raised. Nothing in the changed recommendations gives her the assurance that the Latino community will have that representative voice, and she views that as a serious concern.

“The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee and local councils were places that we felt could have much more diversity,” Governance Workgroup member Dorothy Fleisher said, “but we didn’t want to say you *must* have A or B—that’s why we included language about networks and being inclusive. The Children’s Planning Council as a whole, along with the SCCC, would hold the SPA/AIC Councils accountable for the kind of representation that we want.” Another

concept to be considered is that individuals and organizations need not necessarily be voting members on the Council to be resources to its work. Fleisher offered Southern California Grantmakers, her own organization, as an example, and Cleri Reale also mentioned United Way.

Olvera Stotzer recommended that the Council hold a further discussion of the composition issue, facilitated by consultant John Ott, to decide the best membership design given the Council's strategic plan and incoming chief executive officer. "We need to be all in the same room at the same time," she said, "to discuss the reasons why given representatives are right for the Children's Planning Council's future." Lisa Cleri Reale commented that many people have already made eloquent speeches to Chair Knabe and the group about why they should remain at the table, but Felicia Lynn Ford agreed with Olvera Stotzer about the necessity of a facilitated discussion, suggesting that it be followed by a work group to clarify ambiguous language. Bettye Anderson concurred about further discussion, wanting to make sure that the Council roster reflects everyone who should be involved. Form needs to follow function, Lupe Delgado said, and the remainder of the recommendations should help determine the roles and function of the Council and what membership can best fulfill them.

The intent of the Governance Workgroup, Fleisher said, was not that this process should go on forever. Convening yet another meeting around this topic and getting full participation will be difficult. Could not the Council adopt the streamlining of its composition as a goal and revisit the question next year when a new workplan is in place? Bruce Saltzer, while strongly endorsing a streamlined Children's Planning Council, stated that he believes more discussion would be a waste of time. "It reminds me of Marv Southard's comment a couple of meetings ago," Saltzer said. "*Everyone wants a small table—that they're on.* Moving from 51 to 45 won't make much of a difference." Fleisher agreed, suggesting that the Council composition be kept as is with streamlining made as an annual goal.

**Bruce Saltzer moved to retain the current composition of the Children's Planning Council, with no change to its 51 members, and to adopt the goal of streamlining Council membership, reviewing it annually in accordance with where the organization is going. Jacquelyn McCroskey seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 2**

**Significantly change the nature of CPC meetings** so they fully engage CPC members. Focus meeting agendas on policy discussions and decisions that support progress toward the five outcomes.

➤ **Recommendation 3**

**Strengthen CPC's policy role.** Public policy is a cross-cutting function of CPC that is anchored in the Council itself; therefore, policy considerations should not be relegated to a standing committee. Advancing policy work should be the responsibility of staff and CPC as a whole.

➤ **Recommendation 4**

**Continue to streamline committee structures.** Keep the number of standing CPC committees small to encourage CPC members to work as a group. Especially with cross-cutting policy issues identified by the organization, use small ad hoc work groups that report directly to the CPC.

➤ **Recommendation 5**

**Modify the Personnel Committee and clarify its role.** Add at least one but no more than two CPC members to the Foundation Board personnel committee, and significantly expand the oversight role of the joint body.

**Larry Lue moved that Recommendations 2, 3, 4, and 5 be adopted; Elton Naswood seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 6**

**Evaluate the workforce in light of CPC priorities and available resources.** Affirm that the level of staffing and the staffing structure should be determined by the CPC chief executive officer based on resources available and the priorities and scope of work of the organization, while ensuring a level of fiscal responsibility.

The new wording of Recommendation 6 renders it redundant, Watson said, since this is how things are done now. **Sharon Watson moved that Recommendation 6 be eliminated; Dorothy Fleisher seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 7**

**Strengthen CPC's data function.** Reconvene the Data Partnership committee and strengthen staffing to provide data, information, training, and technical assistance to planning efforts across the county and in communities, to measure and track progress on the five outcome areas for child well-being.

➤ **Recommendation 8**

**Strengthen volunteer relationships.** Enhance volunteer relationships through staff training, implementing a Volunteer Development Program, and developing role descriptions for key volunteer leadership positions.

➤ **Recommendation 9**

**Develop a clear policy on partnerships.** A detailed policy on partnerships—including a definition of their different types—should be developed by staff in consultation with the Foundation Board and representatives of the CPC and the community and brought to the CPC.

In answer to a question from Olvera Stotzer on Recommendation 9, Cleri Reale explained that the relationship and authority of the Foundation Board and the Council remains unchanged. The Foundation acts as the fiduciary arm, while the Council itself deals with policy and other issues.

**Sharon Watson moved that Recommendations 7, 8, and 9 be adopted; Felicia Lynn Ford seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 10**

**Restate the function, leadership, and composition of the SPA/AIC Councils.** The SPA/AIC Council serves as the community collaborative in the SPA or American Indian community and should represent that population and institutional infrastructure. It should have a small steering or operations committee that serves as the principal driver of its work.

Staff should work with the current Strengthening Community Capacity Committee to update the SPA/AIC Council guidelines to include these structural elements. SPA/AIC Councils should:

- Meet at least quarterly
- Be composed of individuals and networks of groups—members can be individuals of the community and individuals representing identifiable constituencies, networks, or organizations in the SPA or American Indian community
- Have a balance of professional and community involvement
- Have representation from subregions to ensure that all communities have access to the council
- Select at least two volunteer leaders—with whatever title is appropriate—for two-year terms
- Determine the number of officers needed and whether the leader/chair of the council will also serve as leader/chair of the steering/operations committee, or if those positions should be held by two different individuals

County departmental representatives shall continue to be members of the SPA/AIC Councils, and their participation shall be mandatory.

This recommendation's new wording, Olvera Stotzer said, does nothing to address the serious issues of accountability that have occurred in the past when entrenched SPA/AIC Council leadership may have resisted representation from the community at large, including ethnic representation—a situation that in one case led to the decertification of a SPA Council. Olvera Stotzer wants to see more language about accountability and tying back outcomes in the service planning areas, which are geographically based, and the American Indian community—the American Indian Children's Council is countywide—to indicators on the Children's ScoreCard.

Colleen Mooney, a co-chair of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee and a co-convenor for the SPA 8 Council, said that the composition of the SPA/AIC Councils is currently diverse, with every council having made a concerted effort to reach out to residents of many different types. Councils have established neighborhood groups and are trying to expand those, but a major challenge to that goal is limited resources. "We've struggled with this issue,"

Mooney said. "In the articles of certification that were used to develop the SPA/AIC Councils, there was an emphasis on professional groups, community-based organizations, cities, and institutional partners. The SCCC has moved from that place to a clear understanding that the SPA/AIC Councils need to be embedded in resident groups, and that our power lies in empowered residents. It's not a perfect structure, but it's one we're committed to." Bettye Anderson, however, expressed concerns about Strengthening Community Capacity Committee representation. "So many SPA/AIC Councils have only one representative come to meetings," she said, "and we never see anyone else. Each should have an established representative according to the guidelines, and they need to be accountable." (Felicia Lynn Ford also asked about checks and balances for the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, which are not dealt with in this recommendation.)

With regard to the recommendation's fourth bullet, ensuring access to the councils for all communities, Larry Lue asked again about translations for linguistically isolated populations. "I've been on the SCCC, even chairing it at one time," he said. "I've offered, but very few conversations about this have ensued. Accountability [for this issue] has to be built in. Studies have identified linguistic populations and where they are—that information is available. How is the outreach being done?"

Lue raises a valid concern, said Jeff Farber, a co-chair of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, that ties into the Council's strategic plan to engage communities. But the common elements of the charter each SPA/AIC Council has with the Children's Planning Council are only summarized by this recommendation. "These issues are addressed in each charter," Farber said, "and we're happy to provide a sample. But if we include all the steps having to do with outreach in this recommendation, we'd have to attach another 50 pages of documentation." Lue maintained that the issue should be addressed in the Children's Planning Council's overall workplan, along with how the SPA/AIC Councils are held accountable for fulfilling their charters. Lupe Delgado encouraged an agreed-upon standard for representation and access in all SPA/AIC Councils, based on demographic data. "It's a great way to measure how they're doing," she said.

The recommendations as presented by the Executive Committee lack the language included in the Governance Workgroup's report, Dorothy Fleisher said. Issues remain to be addressed as part of the Children's Planning Council's overall workplan, certainly, but the governance recommendations are meant to fix implementation issues—"to free us to move ahead as a functional group," said Fleisher. The SPA/AIC Councils are not cookie-cutter bodies, Sharon Watson added. How the Antelope Valley defines its subregions may be very different from how the San Gabriel Valley does, or East Los Angeles; the Governance Workgroup struggled with the 'standard' issue. "The SPA/AIC Councils must have the freedom to function within their unique areas," Watson said, "but this serves a template for them."

From the audience, Debra Reid asked how a SPA/AIC Council determines *not* to allow a group to participate in council meetings. Bettye Anderson explained the membership process used by the SPA 6 Council, but not all councils have the same procedures. At the SPA 8 Council, Reid said that she understood, "If volunteers don't agree with their vision, the council doesn't want them. I was told I could not participate." Chair Knabe suggested that someone from SPA 8 meet with Reid today and clarify this issue.

To make the language more specific, Knabe suggested that the third bullet be changed to require SPA/AIC Councils to "Have a balance of professional, community, **and ethnic involvement/membership.**" To ensure that the linguistic issue is addressed, he suggested that the language of the recommendation's second sentence be changed to read: "The SPA/AIC Council serves as the community collaborative in the SPA or American Indian community and should represent that population (**both ethnic and linguistic**) and institutional infrastructure." From the audience, Valerie Coachman-Moore asked if "ethnic" included "racial," and Chair Knabe responded in the affirmative.

**Sharon Watson moved that Recommendation 10 be adopted with Chair Knabe's amendments. Bettye Anderson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 11**

**Affirm the SPA/AIC Councils' community organizing role.** CPC should affirm that community building work and strengthening the capacity of communities to act on their own behalf are necessary to achieve the five outcomes of child well-being, which is the primary function of the SPA/AIC Councils. Relationship-based organizing is a pivotal strategy that the SPA/AIC Councils will utilize in the work of community building, and it should be supported by the CPC. Councils should partner with other organizations and groups to engage in institutional organizing as well as to help build parent, youth, and resident networks.

The following distinctions in terminology are made:

- "Strengthening the capacity of communities" refers to any activity that supports parents, residents, youth, and other partners in their efforts to be positive social agents and advocates for children, families, and communities.
- **"Community building" is the process of building trusting relationships between families, service providers, public entities, business, and philanthropy, thus increasing the capacity of residents to be in relationships that lead to change.** The SPA/AIC Councils should be the bridge for these entities to connect and work together to achieve community, systems, and/or policy changes that will contribute to better outcomes for children and families.

Engaging residents is difficult and labor-intensive work that requires dedicated effort and resources over a long period of time. Although CPC and the SPA/AIC Councils face very real resource limitations in the future, the organization believes community building is the core strategy necessary to achieving better outcomes for children and families. CPC will invest in sustaining networks that are critical to community building.

The community building strategies selected should build upon each SPA/AIC Council's current work, take into account a council's capacity to carry them out, and allow for innovation where successful practices exist or do not exist.

The various wording changes made to this recommendation were introduced by the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, Lisa Cleri Reale said, and feedback was provided by Chair Knabe, Olvera Stotzer, Lue, and the city of Los Angeles. Given the current budget crisis, Olvera Stotzer's only continuing concern is the Council's commitment to "invest in sustaining networks" specified at the end of the second-to-last paragraph. "There's always a budget crisis," Chair Knabe said, and Cleri Reale reminded members that investment doesn't refer only to money and financial layout.

**Deborah Davies moved that Recommendation 11 be adopted; Jeff Farber seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 12**

**Revise the SPA/AIC Councils' funding formula and reframe their staffing function.** Rather than distributing funds equally to all SPA/AIC Councils, CPC should apply a "fairness formula" that would guarantee a base amount for core activities, reward good work, and reframe the two staff positions for each council.

- In concept, the fairness formula to be developed would include:
  - ✓ A guaranteed base amount for every council for core activities
  - ✓ An allocations process that is inclusive and cohesive, that seeks to build capacity while supporting the SPA/AIC Council workplans, and that does not put the Councils in a position of competing with each other for resources
  - ✓ An additional distribution available to support innovation and special projects toward outcomes (criteria to be developed), for which councils would apply
- Operational and budgetary issues will be addressed by the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee—in partnership with the CPC chief executive officer—as the self-governance system for the system of SPA/AIC Councils. The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee will approve SPA/AIC Council budgets and determine staffing patterns in coordination with the CPC chief executive officer.

Olvera Stotzer asked why the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee is called the "self-governance system" for the SPA/AIC Councils when it is a committee of the Children's Planning Council. Cleri Reale suggested eliminating that phrase in the last bullet.

Paul Chung raised the competition implicit in any system of differential funding allocations, asking how that could be avoided. Part of the work of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, Jeff Farber said, is to bring the SPA/AIC Councils together to share their efforts, so that people across the county are acting on issues in partnership. "The council workplans are not just focused on the separate SPAs," Farber said, "but are looking at commonalities and at what's effective, so that resources can be shared across the board. It's about working together, instead of in silos." A certain amount of natural competition may exist, Knabe acknowledged, but the Council should be explicit about not creating a system that encourages direct competition.

Sam Chan sees the revised recommendation's call for the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee to approve SPA/AIC Council budgets as the core issue of the entire governance discussion. "Throughout the history of the Children's Planning Council," he said, "we've had a balancing act between a volunteer organization, which has grown in power and authority, and the business end of the organization, with paid staff and a chief executive officer. How does a functional notion of power-sharing translate? Do the SPA/AIC Councils approve and determine staffing patterns? Do they have the legal authority to hire and fire staff? Or are those CPC central staff functions, with the chief executive officer the designated authority to do that? Today we're finally meeting at that bridge we've not wanted to cross," Chan continued, "addressing questions around power-sharing and genuine authority. Historically, we've put it on the backs of staff to report to multiple entities, and that's a very tough situation."

Liz Díaz sees a conflict of interest in the SPA/AIC Councils' approving their own budgets, saying, "There's no objectivity in that process." She believes that striking the entire last bullet of the recommendation should be strongly considered.

Colleen Mooney finds an inherent irony in the observation that SPA/AIC Council conveners are volunteers, since everyone at the Children's Planning Council table is also a volunteer, yet is empowered to make policy decisions for the Council as a whole and for the SPA/AIC Councils. "I don't understand the differentiation between this table [the Children's Planning Council] and the conveners," Mooney said. "One of the most dysfunctional things that happened to the SPA/AIC Councils is the discrepancy between staffing patterns and resources. We are charged to do a particular kind of work, but we don't have the flexibility to have the staffing patterns that would allow us to do that work. It's not that we want to hire and fire, but we want to have a conversation in partnership with the chief executive officer about what kind of staffing we need."

"At times we faced challenges as members of the Foundation Board precisely because of the confusion over this dynamic," said Sara Jiménez-McSweyn, a former Foundation Board member who served on the Governance Workgroup, and who has also been a convener for the SPA 4 Council. "Many staff talked to the Governance Workgroup about how difficult it is to negotiate. 'We don't know who our boss is,' they said, or whose instructions to follow." She agreed with Díaz that it is problematic to include the last bullet in Recommendation 12. "More than once," Jiménez-McSweyn continued, "issues have occurred at the community level that don't get resolved at the SPA/AIC Council or the SCCC level, and land in the lap of the chief executive officer and the Foundation Board. We need to hold on to talented people and listen to them. If we keep this bullet, we won't resolve this." Bettye Anderson concurred, saying the issue was a deep one that hinders members from carrying out goals in the SPA/AIC Councils.

The reason for the bullet, Jeff Farber said, is accountability. Workplans are developed in the SPA/AIC Councils based on community needs, but they are not tied to any funding support from the Children's Planning Council. "This would bring the dollars and the work together," Farber said. "Right now we create our workplans and bring them to the SCCC, but there's no connection to what funding exists for CPC. The SPA Council can say that it wants to do work related to specific issues because that's what the community is telling us, but if the funding isn't there to support it, that work doesn't happen. We need to have a governance and accountability system that manages that. The volunteer leadership doesn't run the show—everything's done in partnership with the chief executive officer and designated staff. Other systems have this model."

Cleri Reale agreed, saying that a committee she chairs at United Way discusses budgetary issues and staffing structures in communities. "That doesn't mean we can overrule the chief executive officer," she said. "We work in partnership. In this case, the Executive Committee was adamant that collaboration and partnership be included in the language so the chief executive officer is not left out." The United Way model, Olvera Stotzer countered, is based on volunteers from organizations that raise funds for United Way, and is very different from community residents being asked to be accountable for employment and fiscal issues. She understands Mooney's and Farber's need for input into the budgeting process, "but there's a difference between knowing what your outcomes should be," she said, "and making a body legally accountable."

From the audience, Iliana Abreu, SPA 5 Council coordinator, voiced her concern that the recommendation speaks about partnerships, but the partnership policy called for in Recommendation 9 is yet to be fleshed out. She is also disconcerted by the legal issues being raised and by the idea that the chief executive officer would be left out when that position is so legally liable. "From the staff perspective," she said, "we are liable. We have to comply with the bottom line. I want to see this issue either tabled for more discussion or stricken." Abreu also expressed concern that references to the Children's Planning Council's chief executive officer were not capitalized. (Note from recorder: The lower-case designation is used throughout the recommendations simply to visually differentiate the Council position from the county's Chief Executive Officer, who is also mentioned in numerous places. The lack of capitalization is not meant to convey any lack of respect for the CPC position.)

**Sharon Watson moved that the last bullet in Recommendation 12 be struck out. Beatriz Olvera Stotzer seconded the motion,** and discussion continued.

SPA 2 Council convener Deborah Davies does not think the paragraph should be removed, but encouraged finding language revisions everyone can agree on that address the spirit of including the SPA/AIC Councils in budget deliberations. "With what we're asked to do [in the community], accountability takes money," she said. "We need to be in that conversation."

From the audience, Mark Masaoka stated that he has been the director of strategic initiatives at the Children's Planning Council since January, and served as staff to the councils in SPAs 3 and 4 prior to that. He gave an appreciative nod to the Governance Workgroup, whose report contained valuable assessments of the Children's Planning Council, he believes, as well as some pointed guidance. "There's merit in what Deborah said," Masaoka stated. "We want to be clear on where the authority lies. The group has eliminated Recommendation 6, which clearly indicated that staffing is under the leadership of the chief executive officer. Here the language suggests that SPA/AIC Council staffing is in the hands of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, and that needs further deliberation. Historically, SCCC leadership hasn't been incorporated into the decision-making process as well as it should have been. Three SCCC members serve on the Council's Executive Committee, and that's intended to be the vehicle for leadership to be part of decisions. The reality is, however, that the Executive Committee has a lot of other concerns and that method doesn't work. We can't dilute the critical authority of the chief executive officer with regard to budgets and staffing. That's who the Council will be holding accountable for decisions."

Anthony Marsh, a policy analyst for the Children's Planning Council, sees this issue having caused an impasse for the organization. "The Governance Workgroup did a good job," he said. "The front line does have concerns about budgetary issues. It's incumbent upon all of us to think about ways to resolve this for the long term, because it's something that could derail us." Policy director Lilian Coral asked how decisions made today will go back to the SPA/AIC Councils, saying that if staff are to carry out these recommendations, they need clarification.

Operations manager Ernesto De Guzman, who has been at the Children's Planning Council for the past seven years, brought up the topic of liability, which Jiménez-McSweyn also addressed. "We often face issues of liability with the field staff," he said, "when the SPA/AIC Council coordinator is not getting along with a convener, for instance. I'm not sure if the SCCC will be there to discuss that liability in a legal way." With regard to fundraising and how monies are spent, De Guzman doesn't see the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee and the SPA/AIC Councils having conversations about how to raise funds for the organization as a whole, and how to report back to the foundations that give the Council money. He also suggested that the word *collaboration* causes confusion. "The chief executive officer is one person. There are nine SPA/AIC Council members on the SCCC, and the chief executive officer often gets pressured by different conveners," he said. "We all want to move forward in the work, but all the administrative and procedural things hinder us from that. Historically, the SCCC has wanted to guide the workplans and leave the administrative work to us [in the central office], but now they're saying they want to be part of those administrative tasks."

Currently, Jeff Farber explained, the SPA/AIC Councils put together their workplans every year based on what their communities believe is essential, without having any idea of the funding amounts available. Rather than striking the language completely, Farber proposed alternate language for the final bullet of Recommendation 12: "[first sentence deleted] The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee will approve SPA/AIC Council workplans and establish resource needs, with the CPC chief executive officer having final authority." In other words, Farber said, the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee, which already approves SPA/AIC Council workplans, will now also make resource recommendations to the chief executive officer. The authority for accepting or rejecting workplans would lie jointly with the committee and the chief executive officer, but the chief executive officer would retain ultimate responsibility for all staffing and budgetary decisions and recommendations to the Children's Planning Council.

As the governing body, the Children's Planning Council approves the overall organizational budget annually, Dorothy Fleisher said, which makes the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee a recommending body, not a decision-making body. Is that what committee members want to change? Any decision process, Chair Knabe's deputy Nick Ippolito maintained, should emanate from the Children's Planning Council budget. "If you've only got twenty bucks to run the councils, then your decisions will be informed by that," he said. "In the past, it seems as if we've put the cart before the horse."

"Why is the Children's Planning Council approving the budgets but not the workplans?" Bruce Saltzer asked. "We used to approve the workplans. If the SCCC approves them and then they go to the Council, then the committee is making a recommendation, and ultimate decisions about the workplans reside in the Children's Planning Council. That's not clear at all [in Farber's

proposed language].” Olvera Stotzer believes Council members do not disagree that the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee and the SPA/AIC Councils need to know what resources are available for their workplans. “If we clarify that the SCCC is a recommending body, not a decision-making body,” she said, “and that the CPC is fiscally responsible for implementation decisions—if we’re all in agreement with that, there is no issue.”

SPA 2 Council coordinator Michelle Almanza spoke from the audience, reminding attendees again of the partnering policy to be developed under Recommendation 9, and saying that council agreements, which hold conveners and the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee accountable for results, have expired. “As a staff member,” she said, “I’m accountable for every dollar spent. The role of staff should be incorporated here, and the SCCC needs to be heard and supported.”

Although SPA/AIC Council workplans are supposed to emanate from the residents, Iliana Abreu commented, they have also become about compliance with funders. “My role as a coordinator—I understand that SPA 8 doesn’t have a coordinator—is to facilitate appropriate activities that are in compliance with funding requirements. Sometimes they’re approved and sometimes they’re not. What’s important is leveraging partnerships—building relationships so that if we can’t support a certain group, a key partner can. As staff members, we have to be creative and use our skills. The community needs a voice, and if the SCCC is making recommendations, that’s an integration of that voice.”

Colleen Mooney and Jeff Farber withdrew Farber’s proposed language changes to Recommendation 12, but Olvera Stotzer continued to inquire about underlying concerns. The real issue, Mooney replied, is not the content of the conversation. “What’s missing is the recognition that workplans emanate from the residents,” she said. “The SCCC does know more about the value of the workplans than the Children’s Planning Council does. The SCCC is connected to the resident base. That’s where the work is occurring. The notion being presented is that we’re not at any level talking about power-sharing, but the line of authority—the real connection that the CPC has to neighborhoods—that comes from the SPA/AIC Councils and the SCCC. This conversation isn’t about collaboration. We are looking at a stratified bureaucratic structure with approval by people who don’t know community. I don’t understand why people feel threatened by a collaborative structure that is connected to the voices of residents. We have twenty-five hundred people in the neighborhood action councils in SPA 8, and we have that connection. We don’t want a forum where everything my residents want to do can be disapproved by the folks sitting in this room. The SCCC can approve, but we can come here and be disapproved, or the chief executive officer can disapprove. What kind of model for partnership is that?”

This is not an area for joint decisions. Someone must ultimately make the final determination, Bruce Saltzer said, especially when areas of disagreement exist, resources are limited, or other issues must be worked out. If recommendations coming from the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee are based on the needs of the community, Fleisher asked, why does it feel to committee members as though the Children’s Planning Council as a body will disregard those recommendations? “We may not immediately understand them,” she said, “or we may not have the resources to do them, but those are other issues. Why would we negate that kind of work? I can’t imagine having that structure and not validating it. This process has taught us the

importance of the connection to community. Why would we disregard that? What makes you feel you couldn't trust the process?"

"That might be the theoretical construct," Mooney said, "but that hasn't been our experience. The management of resources, budgets, and workplans has been haphazard at best. For the first half of this fiscal year, the SPA/AIC Councils didn't know what their budgets were. They all had workplans, but they didn't get the numbers until the second half of the fiscal year. Then we were told that we had less [funding] than we expected. All of us did the work to find outside resources because we had made commitments to our resident partners. It's not okay to just say, 'Sorry—go home.' We're trying to get in the door with this money issue because it is tied to the work. It's not partnership when you're told you have less money than you thought you did." Farber added that conveners, along with staff, are liable for ensuring that workplans goals are accomplished. "We're committing to do the work," he said, "but we have no control over the resources."

Saltzer admitted that Mooney's summary was an accurate assessment of the last six months. "But that's the difference between what the practice has been and what the process *should* be," he said. "Years ago, workplans and budgets were developed, vetted, and shared in discussions at the Children's Planning Council, which then endorsed them. That's the way to solidify the partnership. If there are multiple communities and only a certain number of dollars, who decides? The way things have been done in the last six months is not the way they should be done. We need to go back to a rational, thoughtful process in which everyone's points of view are considered and consensus is reached on what should be done, how it should be done, and how much money is needed for it."

Since she became a convener, Bettye Anderson said, budgets, rules, guidelines, and leadership have all needed clarification. In her first year, a certain amount of money was set aside for her council's budget, but in the ninth month she found that funds were not available for a planned community event. In the second year, a \$145,000 budget was generated that was then considerably reduced. "How can we carry out the needs of the community based on that?" she asked.

After opening the discussion and listening carefully to the intense conversation that has ensued, Sam Chan said, "What I've heard with my heart is that one of our core dynamics is beginning to be framed in a different light. Who does the work of the Children's Planning Council? Who has that 'sweat equity'? Who's engaging the volunteers? What credibility do they have? Staff are also doing their work despite incredible frustration and difficulties. Yes, we're all volunteers here at this table, but some of us are on paid time. Some of us spend three hours at a meeting and walk away. Some of us do more. I don't know how to deal with that dynamic. It's a messy situation, far less about ethnic parity and diversity than about the real needs of those who are truly invested, and who is empowered to act on behalf of a constituency."

Valerie Coachman-Moore, a past consultant to the Children's Planning Council who has recently been brought back on board, was encouraged by hearing issues being given voice. "It all gets back to the notion of the Children's Planning Council as a great experiment," she said. "This is not easy. This is Los Angeles County! Given that, whether or not this recommendation is adopted today, it's worth pushing through to understand the people who are responsible for the work and all its legal ramifications."

Clarence Shaw also appreciated hearing from “the worker bees,” as he put it. “But I’m saddened that I sit on this Council and there seems to be no process. We need to sit down and talk about issues, processes, instructions, and relationships. I want to put together an ad hoc committee to meet with the ‘worker bees.’ I want to be part of this solution and resolve this. A lot of good can come out of this. It’s coming to a head, and we need to do something about it.”

Others have mentioned John Ott’s name as a possible facilitator for further discussions, and Farber reminded attendees that a year ago, Ott did facilitate a similar conversation. “He said at the time that it would take us twelve months to resolve this, and if we wouldn’t commit to that, it wouldn’t work,” Farber remembered. “I commend the Governance Workgroup, which was an attempt to do it in less than twelve months. But if we’re going to call a facilitator now for this core discussion, we need to commit to the real time and the real process it will take to resolve it. As a member of the CPC, doing it as a volunteer and very involved with the work, I believe this is a core issue. If we can’t resolve it, then the Children’s Planning Council isn’t what it says it is. If we commit to facilitation, it’s not about one meeting—it’s about getting this issue resolved and establishing what CPC is. John Ott was clear about that a year ago.”

“The Governance Workgroup gave us an opportunity to resolve some issues and move forward,” Lisa Cleri Reale said, “but the reality is that this process has gone on since last September. It has drained many people in this room, and it has severely affected the ability of the organization to move forward day to day, and to continue fundraising in the face of fiscal challenges from the county. We need to face those realities. If we commit to more discussion, we need to understand how it has already affected the organization.” With 100 different communities being represented, Bruce Saltzer said, it will be almost impossible to get consensus or agreement. “No one answer is going to make everybody happy. At some point, the decision must be made and we have to focus on getting things done. We can’t do another year. If all we’re doing is rehashing and there’s no product, what good is it?”

Since Farber withdrew his proposed alternate language for the final bullet of Recommendation 12, the question was called on Sharon Watson’s motion to strike the bullet as it stands. **The motion was defeated by a vote of 13 ayes to 15 noes.**

Several Council members suggested capturing today’s discussion with language confirming that final approval of workplans and budgets lies with the Children’s Planning Council as a whole, on the recommendation of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee. **Lupe Delgado moved to approve Recommendation 12 with a modified second bullet:**

- **[original first sentence deleted] The Strengthening Community Capacity Committee will approve SPA/AIC Council workplans and establish resource needs in consultation with the CPC chief executive officer, with the Children’s Planning Council having final approval.**

**Beatriz Olvera Stotzer seconded the motion, and it was carried by a vote of 17 ayes, 8 noes, and 2 abstentions.**

➤ **Recommendation 13**

**Create a smaller Executive Committee**, with the new body serving as a resource for staff, with the authority to act between CPC meetings on issues delegated to it.

**Bruce Saltzer moved to approve Recommendation 13 with the additional phrase "... on issues delegated to it by the CPC." Sharon Watson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

➤ **Recommendation 14**

**Broaden the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee** to become a community collaborative or "table" created by the SPA/AIC Councils, to function as a committee of the CPC with an agenda driven by the communities it represents.

Cleri Reale explained that the Executive Committee's revisions to the Governance Workgroup's original recommendation eliminate the concept of a separate Community Table, instead assigning that role to the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee. Watson asked if the Executive Committee's intent had been for the revamped committee to include all the members originally envisioned for the Community Table, such as parents and youth from the neighborhood networks, more than just a single convener from each of the SPA/AIC Councils, and the university researcher, for example. Colleen Mooney said that the composition had not yet been defined.

Dorothy Fleisher believes that for the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee to function as it should, it would be helpful to include other kinds of representatives to resolve issues that could be handled without going to the larger Children's Planning Council. "The conversation [at the Executive Committee] was about creating the SCCC as a broader problem-solving table, focused not on operations but on the substance of the work," Fleisher said. "We took the spirit of the Community Table to re-envision the committee in both function and composition, but we didn't prescribe." It will take time, Mooney added, to figure out who should be there.

Considering each of the Governance Workgroup's recommendations separately instead of as an integrated whole presents some problems, Watson said. The original Recommendation 1, for instance, reduced the roster of the Children's Planning Council with the idea that those constituencies would become part of the Community Table. Making the community voice equal to the 'system' voice is very important, she said.

**Phillip Williams moved that Recommendation 14 be approved, and Dorothy Fleisher seconded the motion. The motion was defeated by a vote of 5 ayes, 11 noes, and 11 abstentions.**

Acting chief executive officer Cheryl Mendoza thanked everyone for participating in the discussion of the recommendations and praised the courage of those who spoke their conscience.

**Public Comment**

Debra Reid, founder of the Jonathan Reid Family Rights Coalition, related her difficulties in obtaining documents about the SPA 8 component of the county's Prevention Initiative

Demonstration Project being spearheaded by the Department of Children and Family Services. South Bay Center for Counseling is SPA 8's lead agency, and Reid has received no cooperation from that organization, she said, in getting copies of the memoranda of understanding for the project's subcontracts in that area. "I talked to Colleen Mooney [South Bay's director], and she said she didn't work for me," Reid stated. "I'm just trying to track down the information. I have what's been proposed, but some people who are listed have no knowledge of their names being on this report. We should know how they are collaborating." Nick Ippolito suggested that Reid talk to DCFS's Angela Carter following the meeting, and reiterated Chair Knabe's request for Mooney to speak with Reid as well. Multiple conversations have occurred on this issue, Mooney said, including those with the regional administrator in the DCFS Torrance office.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Children's Planning Council is scheduled for:

**Wednesday, July 16, 2008**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.