



February 18, 2020

ATTN: Collen Nicol, Riverside City Clerk
City of Riverside
3900 Main St.
Riverside, CA 92522

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I write to you today on behalf of Neighbors Better Together¹ (NBT), an association of representatives from many of Riverside's community groups, dedicated to creating networked conversations between residents and their local government with the goal of promoting fact-based decision-making on government policies affecting community issues that impact our shared vision for Riverside.

Our group voted unanimously on January 26th, to send this letter to you expressing our displeasure at the vote taken by the City Council on December 17th, 2019, to approve, "voluntary use by the Mayor or individual Members of the City Council of the union bug on official City of Riverside business cards or stationery²" (5-2 vote, Condor and Perry opposed).

NBT believes no third party group's insignia should be affixed to any City business cards or stationary, as City representatives should at all times strive to project an image of independence from influence by or endorsement of any special interest group.

Particularly troubling, we have learned this item was earmarked as an "urgent" matter for consideration by Councilmembers Plascencia and Fierro, and heard during an afternoon (i.e. not evening) session, thereby creating an appearance of an end-run of our Sunshine Ordinance and the opportunity for appropriate public input³. Further, the limited report accompanying the agenda item mentions nowhere the actual intent of the author(s), once again demonstrating a lack of transparency.

NBT has championed a community engagement policy that has been favorably received by city staff and the community at large. Clearly, these actions are not congruent with the spirit of engagement with the community. Attached is a copy of that policy previously reviewed by City staff.

We ask the City Council to reconsider this item at an evening session, allowing for the full public vetting process of twelve days, as prescribed by our Sunshine Ordinance. We request that the Council:
1) place language within the appropriate City policies expressly prohibiting any third party

¹ Disclaimer: NBT is an independent group consisting of members from local, community-minded organizations. Opinions expressed by NBT do not necessarily reflect the views or goals of those organizations.

² Riverside City Clerk's official minutes, 12/17/2019

³ We are cognizant that this practice in the recent Mill/Plascencia matter caused considerable, needless controversy within our community as well; and related amendments of our Sunshine Ordinances were proposed just last week by the City Council.



representation on City business cards or stationery going forward, and 2) order the destruction of existing business cards and stationery with the union bug.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you collaboratively in the future towards making Riverside the true gem of the Inland Empire.

Sincerely,

Jason Hunter

NBT Chairman

Jehunter51@msn.com

Cc: Mayor William “Rusty” Bailey
Councilmember Erin Edwards
Councilmember Andy Melendrez
Councilmember Ronaldo Fierro
Councilmember Chuck Conder
Councilmember Gabriela Plascencia
Councilmember Jim Perry
Councilmember Steve Hemenway