Board of Neighborhood Commissioners
Los Angeles City Hall 20th Floor
200 North Spring Street, Suite 2005
Los Angeles, California 90012

November 16, 2020

Greetings Commissioners,

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared an Emergency in the state of California due to COVID-19. On March 17, the Governor signed Executive Order #N-29-20, which modified the "Brown Act" to permit local bodies to meet virtually. In the City of Los Angeles, this also applied to neighborhood councils.

On April 17, EmpowerLA released a Virtual Governance Plan for neighborhood councils and authorized them to meet via Zoom beginning May 1.

Since that time, the East Hollywood Neighborhood Council governing board and committees have been meeting virtually. Given that people no longer have to appear in person, we have noticed a great increase in the number of public commenters and general public participation. This has led to more robust meetings and deeper community engagement than previously possible. Additionally, virtual meetings ensure that even those working, at home with children, or otherwise unavailable to come in person to a EHNC meeting are still able to participate; it has strengthened and made our local democracy more equitable.

Therefore, we would like to ask EmpowerLA to:
- Make a digital public comment option a permanent feature for neighborhood councils.
- Study the feasibility of hybrid meetings which give both board members and members of the public in-person and digital options for participation.

We look forward to continuing to serve our communities in a way that is accessible, efficient, and safe as we continue to weather the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Sincerely,

Nina Suarez, President
East Hollywood Neighborhood Council