

## **Motor Avenue Improvement Association**

### **Palms Neighborhood Council Candidate Questionnaire April 2016**

**Submitted by Andy Cuervo,  
Palms Neighborhood Council Vice Presidential candidate**

Candidate Name: Andy Cuervo

Address: [REDACTED]

Phone Number: [REDACTED] Position Name: Vice President

Email: [REDACTED] Website: [www.andy4palms.com](http://www.andy4palms.com) (soon to be live)

Responses dealing with address, phone number, campaign strategy and finances will not be made public.

#### Introductory Questions

##### 1. Why are you running for office?

For the past four years, candidates running for the Palms Neighborhood Council have promised to address safety, homelessness, infrastructure improvements, beautification, and many other community issues through their campaigns. And while many of them took important first steps once elected, a majority of elected council members fail to meaningfully engage the community and advance policies or solutions on behalf of the Neighborhood Council. If in a democracy people receive the government they deserve, then it is time for Palms to count with a more well organized and policy action oriented neighborhood council. Putting on events is not enough. This is why I am running for office on a back to basics agenda. It is time to hold the Council accountable to the community, it is time to empower more community members through the Council's policy committees, it is time to foster greater community partnerships with organizations like the Motor Avenue Improvement District, it is time to tackle overdue street improvements, it is time to encourage homelessness relief to those in need, it is time to strategically develop our business corridors as a community. This is why I am running for Palms Neighborhood Council Vice President. It is time we work together across organizations and interests to advance solutions to our community's most pressing issues.

##### 2. What is the most pressing issue facing Palms and how will you deal with it? What is the most pressing need facing Motor and how would you deal with it.

Every voter in Palms at one point or another has heard the number one issue is safety, or economic development, or homelessness, or that there is a need for infrastructure improvements. I believe these are all important issues. But how can we begin to address them as a community when our Neighborhood Council is more focused on putting on events than empowering the community and pro-actively advancing solutions? If elected, I will work to hold the Council

more accountable to the community, empower more community members through the Council's policy committees, and coordinate new community based partnerships. Partnerships with organizations such as the Motor Avenue Improvement Association, which does so much to engage, beautify, and address community issues on Motor Avenue and Area C of Palms.

3. What are three to five specific tasks (e.g. specific legislation, policies, enforcement actions) you intend to accomplish if you are elected?

- 1) Organize a coordinated, strategic two year action agenda amongst elected members of the Palms Neighborhood Council
- 2) Strengthen the Neighborhood Council policy committee system by recruiting and training community members to participate, as well as reorganize committee focuses by pressing issues rather than broad policy areas so community members can advance solutions in a strategic and timely manner
- 3) Foster community engagement, dialogue, and empowerment by modernizing the Neighborhood Council's communication vehicles, building new community partnerships around pressing issues, and holding Sunday bike rides with members of the Neighborhood Council and members of the community to receive input and feedback

4. What is your profession or current place of employment? Do you have time for this position?

I currently serve as director of FuturizeX at UCLA, a campus-wide initiative in partnership with XPRIZE to showcase the new technologies and innovators that are transforming the future of Los Angeles in medicine, engineering, education, and beyond. I am also a 2016 Leadership L.A. Fellow and a 2016 Wally Marks Leadership Institute Commissions Program trainee at the Liberty Hill Foundation. If elected, I look forward to serving the community with the attention and time commitment it requires.

5. Please provide a copy of your resume.

Please see attached.

#### Topic-Specific Questions

6. What do you expect the PNC to accomplish?

To organize, listen, and empower the community to come together and address its most pressing issues.

7. Please describe Palms and specifically Motor Ave. What would you do to improve it?

There is no place in L.A. like Palms. We are one of the most affordable, diverse, and active communities to live, work, and play. As a resident of Area C in close proximity to Motor Avenue, there is room for improvement in areas of biking accessibility, safety, beautification, street pot holes, and parking. The Motor Avenue Improvement Association has accomplished a great deal

in these areas, and I look forward to supporting their efforts and helping to bring these solutions to other areas of Palms if elected.

8. What steps would you take to increase the sustainability of Palms? Do you think there are environmental issues?

- 1) Inform and connect apartment complexes lacking recycling services to recycling companies, programs, and resources
- 2) Connect neighborhood apartment complexes to solar and electric charging services, companies, programs, and resources
- 3) Encourage walkability and bike friendly streets in the community by developing a neighborhood strategic street improvements plan, and building on the research initiated by current PNC treasurer Nick Greif
- 4) Advocating inside City Hall to make sure our side walks and bike lanes are adequately serviced and maintained

9. What steps would you take to increase public participation in Palms?

Strengthening the Neighborhood Council policy committee system by recruiting and training community members to participate and then in turn having these community leaders engage their stakeholders. In addition, upgrading the Neighborhood Council communication vehicles and rethinking of them as a one-stop shop for neighborhood news and services.

10. Please describe the Park system in Palms. Does it need improvement? If so, what would you do to make those improvements?

The park system is in need of a reassessment of community needs and priorities. We count with too few parks, too few play structures, and too few safety measures. The Council should work to research areas for new parks and work with community members to address the recent spike in crime.

11. Do you support making Palms more bicycle friendly? If so, how?

Absolutely. Some areas of Palms are very bike friendly, and some are not. The Neighborhood Council must develop a neighborhood strategic street improvement plan, and build on the research initiated by current PNC treasurer Nick Greif. From there, we must work with the City and apply for community grants to expand more bike lanes and improve existing ones.

12. What measures would you propose to make the Motor Avenue Farmers Market more successful? The Motor Avenue Farmers Market is one of the neighborhood's best kept secret. More vendors, improving parking, and increasing outreach will make a difference.

13. Do you support the activities of the Motor Ave Association? If so which ones and how?

The Association's award winning, solution based work to address the issues around Motor Avenue and Area C of Palms are great, and a role model for the Neighborhood Council to support and encourage in other areas of the neighborhood. Kudos on efforts to bring parklets, your Urban Garden Network, and the continued work you do to improve the community.

14. Do you support mail-in and electronic election ballots? Why and what if elected will you do to support your position?

The Palms Neighborhood Council approved electronic election ballots. While there are pros and cons, I believe for a community as young and diverse as Palms, it will serve it well. Voter turn out is key, and whatever we can do encourage greater participation while preventing voter fraud is important.

15. How do you feel the PNC currently functions? If elected what would you do differently?

This is one of the main issues facing the ability of Palms to rise and work together as a community. Please see questions 1 and 2 on this topic.

16. What do you think about the state of transportation in Palms? On Motor Avenue?

It is congested. It is car-centric. We must work together as a community to address parking, increase bike lanes, and ensure our sidewalks are walkable. We must also look into the future and see how Palms can become one of the first neighborhoods in Los Angeles to test and welcome autonomous vehicle ride sharing programs.

17. How many programs have you initiated, developed and implemented in Palms? Please list. (Please be as specific as possible) I have nearly half a decade of initiating, developing, and implementing programs throughout my career. All of them have been outside of Palms, but this will change if elected.

18. How familiar are you with other community groups, city hall, city agencies and city departments? Very much so and I look forward to working if elected with my fellow Council members to foster greater communication and advocacy at City Hall, and more partnerships with our local community groups.

Campaign Activities and Structure

19. Explain your plans to incorporate a Motor Ave agenda into your campaign.

The interests of Motor Avenue are the interests of Palms as a neighborhood, and the interests of Palms as a neighborhood are those of Motor Avenue as well. They are not exclusive to one another. Better sidewalks, more parklets, greater community engagement, a strong Farmers Market - these are public goods the Council should support and I will help nurture and support if elected. My campaign will highlight this in its agenda and communications.

20. What is your campaign outreach goal? As of the date of this questionnaire, how much have you raised? What is your plan for raising awareness of your candidacy? (Please be as specific as possible.) I'm self funding the campaign. My interest is voter registration. That's a priority. We have a website, we have flyers, and we are encouraging volunteer participation. I will go door to door.

21. Why do you want our endorsement? How you will use it in your campaign?

I'm not running for office for my own sake, but for that of the community and the voices that help it be a better place. If elected Vice President, I would like to work closely with the Motor Avenue Improvement Association to engage the community on the issues that matter and continue to bring about actionable community improvements.

22. Who in the community supports and endorses your candidacy?

I have not requested or been granted endorsements.

#### Completing This Questionnaire

Please provide the names, phone numbers and websites of your campaign if relevant.

Please list names, titles/affiliations/agencies and a current phone number for the person or people who helped you with this questionnaire, including staff and family members.

"I affirm that all the information I have provided in answering this questionnaire is true to the best of my ability and reflects my personal beliefs, ideas and plans. I understand that my answers will be available to the public on the Motor Avenue Improvement Association website." (Contact information, Campaign Strategy and Finance responses will not be published)

Candidate Signature

AC

Candidate Name (printed)

Andres "Andy" Cuervo

Date

04/25/16