

## Motor Avenue Improvement Association

### Palms Neighborhood Council Candidate Questionnaire April 2016

Dear Candidate:

The **Motor Avenue Improvement Association** is pleased to consider your candidacy for our endorsement in the election for member of the Palms Neighborhood Council. As you know, the **Motor Avenue Improvement Association** seeks to identify and endorse those candidates who demonstrate a strong understanding of and a commitment to Motor Avenue, communal development and environment, including issues pertaining to quality of life and health. This questionnaire is designed to provide you with an opportunity to both explore your own knowledge, understanding and feelings about Palms as well as articulate your vision about them to us.

You are receiving an electronic version of this questionnaire *only*. Please note that we will only accept your responses electronically in PDF format, Microsoft Word or some other universally accepted word processing program. Answers should be presented in the same order in which they appear on this questionnaire. Answers should be brief and limited to no more than two paragraphs. The deadline for this information is **Friday, April 22 at 5pm**. *Answer carefully: Many of the questions have multiple parts. **Be sure to answer all of them**. Unanswered questions could result in an incomplete questionnaire that will not be considered for endorsement.*

PLEASE READ THIS QUESTIONNAIRE THOROUGHLY BEFORE ANSWERING AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS. We suggest that you save the questionnaire to your computer so that you can type in your responses (This document is in Microsoft Word).

Candidate Name Nick Greif Address [REDACTED]  
Phone Number [REDACTED] Position Name (if applicable) President  
Email [REDACTED] Website www.nickgreif.com

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

#### Introductory Questions

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running to be the Palms Neighborhood Council President because I have the experience, vision, and team-building skills that can revive the Council and deliver lasting neighborhood infrastructure improvements to Palms. Palms can be the best affordable neighborhood in Los Angeles, but we are not there yet. Crime, parking, homelessness, and infrastructure are all issues that require more effective leadership – leadership I can provide. As treasurer of the Palms NC, I've done my best to move forward this agenda, but as president, I can do much more.

That's why I'm running for Palms NC president: my experience, training, and city connections make me uniquely positioned to address these concerns.

I also know how to work with the City to get things done. Currently, I work in City Hall as Policy Director for LA City Councilman David Ryu, and I worked on economic strategy for Mayor Garcetti (when I led our policy campaigns to raise the minimum wage and reform the business tax).

All of this makes me best suited to lead our Neighborhood Council.

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.

We have a lot of pressing issues: crime, parking, homelessness, infrastructure, etc. However, none of these can be tackled if we do not get the neighborhood involved through effective outreach and by creating a strong council. I plan to empower our neighborhood council board and committees to work on our pressing issues and connect them to the people in the City who can address our issues. For Motor Avenue, like many of our commercial streets, I believe the most pressing issue is the uptick in crime we are seeing in Palms. The two first things I would like to do to address that issues is: (1) split the “Transportation & Safety” committee, which is too unwieldy, into two separate committees: “Transportation & Parking” and “Public Safety” which would cover crime, emergency preparedness, and resiliency and (2) push a call for volunteers to reinvigorate our “Neighborhood Watch” which has fallen by the wayside in recent years.

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

*Within my first 100 days I have promised to do the following:*

1. Homelessness Committee: Establish committee to handle homeless issues in Palms.
2. Repair Lists: Submit priority repair lists for potholes, stop signs, street lights, and sidewalks.
3. Community Volunteer Program: Launch Community Volunteer Team program.
4. Bylaws Committee: Create a Bylaws Committee to fix the NC’s bylaw issues.
5. New Public Art: Find space for a new mural or other public art in Palms and plan for more.
6. Parking - Red Curbs: Assess red curbs in Palms we can get rid of to create more parking.
7. Parking - Street Cleaning: Work to push back street cleaning hours for areas that start too early.
8. Business Growth: Create committee to focus on activating our commercial corridors.

*More detail on what I see as a vision for Palms can be found here: [www.nickgreif.com/policy](http://www.nickgreif.com/policy)*

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

Director of Policy and Legislation for LA City Councilmember David Ryu. Yes.

5. Please provide a copy of your resume.

Attached.

### Topic-Specific Questions

6. What do you expect the PNC to accomplish?

There is huge potential for the PNC over the next two years. I have detailed this out in full on my policy page and that vision can be found there: [www.nickgreif.com/policy](http://www.nickgreif.com/policy)

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

Palms is a vibrant, culturally diverse, and primarily working class neighborhood. Stitching this neighborhood together are a few commercial streets, Venice, Overland, National, Palms (a bit), and Motor. Motor has historically been the best cared for of our commercial streets and has seen substantial improvement over the last year with the addition of new retail, additional green space, and a community garden. To improve Palms we need to keep moving forward with *lasting neighborhood infrastructure improvements*. Improving our parking situation, adding vibrant public art, taking advantage of the new sidewalk and homelessness dollars coming into the City, and bringing our community together will lead to a more involved, safer, cleaner, and more commercially vibrant neighborhood.

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

Completing the Green Certification program the Green Committee started this year would be a good first step. There are many more businesses in Palms that could be helped in being more green and earning the PNC's certification. Another issue that comes up a lot is the availability of doggy bags to pick up pet waste. This was something we incorporated in our Guidelines for Neighborhood Appropriate Developments (see question 17) but increasing the availability of waste bags and trash/recycling bins along our main corridors to throw things away in would help.

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

This is a **top priority** for me as President. We said this would be our #1 focus two years ago and we have not seen the results. We are only as strong as the people who take time out of their day to come make their opinions heard to the PNC and help us push projects forward. I have already taken steps on this by making the legislative motion on the Neighborhood Council to increase our elections budget four-fold from \$2,250 to over \$10,000. This led to us attracting 3x more candidates than two years ago and should help us shatter previous voting records for Palms. As President, I would revise our meetings to ensure we always had interesting topics on the agenda and would put those first. We would also develop a NationBuilder presence to improve our outreach and revamp our website and newsletter outreach to attract new constituents to the meetings.

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

First off, there isn't much of a park system in Palms so it definitely needs improvement. Woodbine Park as our newest pocket park was a huge win for the community but we need to increase green space and likely in creative ways as there isn't much vacant land. One way to do that is something MAIA has spearheaded: the parklets along Motor, and we should try and get more of those. Another avenue I'd like to explore is that if the County Parks ballot measure passes in November, we need to be ready with a project in mind for a new park in our area and we should work with our City Councilmember to identify if there is any government owned space left in our community that we can earmark for that.

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

There is a lot we can do to make Palms more bike friendly, including pushing Metro to fix the baffling gap in the bike path along the Expo line. Beyond that we should be looking to increase the amount of bike corrals on our commercial streets. In particular, I've always really liked creative bike corrals you sometimes see that both help with bike infrastructure but also serve as public art (like this one: <http://centuryvillages.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Bike-Fish.jpg>).

12. What measures would you propose to make the Motor Avenue Farmers Market more successful?

Having a local farmer's market is a huge asset for Palms. I think the biggest thing the PNC could do to support the Farmer's Market is to have materials and/or an outreach table located there. The other big need people have asked me about is how we could attract more vendors to the market which I think is a good goal to provide even more options to our neighbors.

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

Speaking with constituents in Palms, it is clear that the Motor Ave Association has done a lot for our community. Between the new parklets, new community garden, the weekly Farmer's Market, and the new underpass improvements, just in the last year the association has provided a lot of benefit. I hope the PNC can serve as a better partner to all of our neighborhood groups, including Motor Ave, to work jointly on projects that will move Palms forward.

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

I support any ballot options that make it easier for people to get involved and vote in our elections. I personally pushed, and succeeded, in having Palms opt-in to online voting this year as one of the ~30 councils that did so. I think this will increase turnout and thus increase participation after the election. I wish we could also have vote by mail paper ballots, but those would have cost \$5,000 for only about 250 of them and as Treasurer, I did not recommend paying for that as I believe it would have been fiscally irresponsible to pay \$20 per ballot, even if it would have been great to have that option.

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

The PNC unfortunately is not functioning well and is not *designed* to function well. We have a very strange set of bylaws that make it hard for the Council to handle its business effectively. At my first meeting as Council President I would create a new Bylaws Committee to review best practices of bylaws and fix our issues. The most important of which is reducing the power of the President role (yes, I am promising to reduce my own power if I win). The President should be a Chairperson instead and help facilitate a functioning council and empower board members and committees to move projects forward. We need bylaws reform to get to this point.

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

There is a lot in flux right now. Our 2016-2018 PNC board is going to have to pay a lot of attention to the effects of the Palms Expo Line station opening May 20<sup>th</sup>. This is obviously a big asset to our community, but as a neighborhood station there is no parking at the stop so we have to monitor whether people are parking in our neighborhood to take the train and thus depriving residents of parking (which we obviously don't have enough of).

17. How many programs have you initiated, developed and implemented in Palms? Please list. (Please be as specific as possible)

**Annual Treasurer Spending Review Reports** – Completed for FY13-14 and FY14-15 to review the prior years spending and make recommendations on how we can improve our budgeting process for the next year.

**Palms Guidelines for Neighborhood Appropriate Developments** – Proposed and led the development of our Council's approved guidelines for developers looking to develop in our community: <http://palmsla.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Guidelines-for-Neighborhood-Appropriate-Developments.pdf>

**Overland Ave (re)visioning** – Helped develop a visioning document for the revitalization of Overland Avenue which has additional commercial potential but needs some help from the PNC and others to support it.

[https://issuu.com/melodybwu/docs/revisioning\\_overland\\_web\\_quality](https://issuu.com/melodybwu/docs/revisioning_overland_web_quality)

**2016 LAHSA Palms Homeless Count** – PNC representative for our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual homeless count in charge of making sure we had enough volunteers to have a strong count. Ended up oversubscribed!

18. How familiar are you with other community groups, city hall, city agencies and city departments?

Extremely familiar. As the Policy Director for a City Councilmember I know how to get things done at the City. I know where the money is, I know who is able to actually green light our projects, and I've also spent the last two years getting to know our local community groups and religious organizations.

Campaign Activities and Structure

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

My platform is publicly available at [nickgreif.com/policy](http://nickgreif.com/policy) and I believe shows a vision for Palms that is inclusive and positive for Motor Ave and our other commercial streets.

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.)

Outreach goal is to distribute thousands of flyers, send thousands of e-mails, and call hundreds of voters.

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

MAIA is one of the most effective organizations in Palms and has the ear of a lot of people and has a name that lends credibility. I hope MAIA will be able to advocate effectively and bring at least a hundred votes to my candidacy.

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

**Current and former board members:** Wayne Byrd, Trevor Mulligan, Marquis Olison, Paulina Quaranta, Cat Stevens, Eli Lipmen, Dee Olomajeye, Loren Scott, Neal Andenberg, Jennifer Tobkin. More to come!

**Businesses:** Overland Café, Pro Video, John Riordan Plumbing, others soon to be announced.

Endorsement page to launch soon on my campaign website: [www.nickgreif.com](http://www.nickgreif.com)

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)*



Nick Greif

4/22/17

Candidate Signature

Candidate Name (printed)

Date