

Lynn Lorenz

This is not the first time that I have contemplated the strengths and weaknesses of the government in Newport Beach and the changes that would make it more responsive to its citizens.

Surely this proposal (to elect our mayor) to put so much power in the hands of one person is the opposite direction to move with that goal in mind.

I might ironically call it the “Lone Ranger” phenomenon, because it would greatly enhance the power of the Mayor and reduce the number and power of the Council members. And certainly we, the citizens and the rest of Council, are not “country bumpkins” looking for the man/ woman on the white horse to rescue us from anything. That none of the other members of Council has spoken out on this issue might be construed as their lack of support or interest in electing the mayor.

Those citizens who have attempted to get a Council person’s ear, can testify to the almost impossible endeavor of getting three Council people to bring forth an issue and then vote on it accordingly. Yet that is the number of Council members who would have to support a position to put it on the agenda according to this new plan being introduced.

And to expect the Mayor to favor an issue enough from one district to put it on the agenda is close to an “impossible dream.”

As another writer put it this week, the new proposal being suggested by Council member Will O’Neill, which will allow for uninterrupted leadership for 16 years “smacks of authoritarianism” and one-man rule.

But I would not be so quick to jump to the conclusion that it would be one man rule, because that one person who is elected will undoubtedly need backers and influencers who will take even more power away from the citizens than they do now.

But to citizens and even some fellow Council members, these people will remain faceless and nameless.

We have been hearing about and dealing with these power brokers for as long as I can remember, and their influence will undoubtedly increase with an elected mayor who has political debts.

I am not by nature a gamblin’ woman but in response to Council member Will O’ Neill’s remark that he is not sure as to whether he would run, let me say, “I’ll take that bet.”

Lynn Lorenz / Newport Beach