

A HISTORY OF PLAZA DEL REY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

For people who are joining us for the first time.

I want to take a few minutes to tell you the story of PDRra. It all began 22 months ago – before Carlyle bought the park. There were rumors of the Engdol’s selling.

Michael saw a need and took it upon himself to publicize and fund a first meeting of residents to discuss our future and our rights as homeowners in Plaza Del Rey. He brought snacks, he bought prizes, he printed the flyers – all at his own expense – and got us together.

For my part, this, for the first time in my 13 years at PDR, sounded like what I thought we NEEDED. We, as owners of homes on rented spaces, needed a “place at the table” to discuss everything related to life in this park. We are a partner with park ownership and park management.

Michael came with big ideas. He wanted us to: 1) be there to help each other in need; 2) organize to represent ourselves; 3) even the crazy notion to “try to buy the park and run it as a co-op”;

There was a big crowd, and there was interest. He asked for volunteers to join him in this effort. Five ladies stepped forward. There were no others. Those five were presented and elected to be the first Board. Together, they enlisted one man from the East Park – making the seven board members. The Board “organized” and assumed positions on a volunteer basis. We felt Michael should be our first president, since it was his efforts that got it started. Others volunteered into their positions, and we were off and running.

We wrote a Constitution and By-Laws and brought them to a general meeting, where they were approved. We continue to make our Policies and Procedures – the routines that are

established by the board and can be changed and revised by the board (when we meet, etc.).

We were just getting up to speed when the sale to Carlyle occurred, and the realizations of that began to impact us all. As changes and events occurred, we pushed for representation in all these processes. We sought increased membership. We got sit-downs with Management, our first in February of 2016, where we brought your concerns. Jeff Fannon said he was the final word, but he came back with all “no’s” to your survey wants in anything financial or that would help our plight over the rent increases.

We learned that Management could only address the workings of the park. We pushed for sit-downs with the new owners – which did not happen. But, we negotiated management issues in the park: towing, no parking signs, loss of services, security.

The shock of the increase in rent hit us, and we began our efforts with the city of Sunnyvale and the Council. The Rent Stabilization Committee was formed, and research and work was done to bring our issues to the council. That was a team effort by all on the Board and more concerned residents who got involved through the committee.

Judy was the researcher and, wanting to broaden our reach, she formed the Sunnyvale Mobile Home Park Alliance to increase our efforts. Allies from other parks joined the effort. That gave us a two-pronged attack force.

Our pleas at Council seemed to fall on deaf ears, but they were aware of a problem, and Carlyle became aware that their name was being received badly at city level. To avoid all that, the council pushed Sentinel (their contracted mediators) to GET TO CARLYLE AND GET THEM TO THE TABLE.

That all happened because this organization was formed, and people began to work for all of us, to aggressively seek

fairness and recognition as an invested partner in decisions made for Plaza Del Rey.

Yes, there were differences of opinion. Yes, we disagreed on some issues. But, overall, we are all here to do what is best for all of us.

It saddens me that we have become so divisive through all this work and effort.

Stop and think. We could all be sitting in our homes bemoaning what is happening with Carlyle raising our rent and making this a place many of us can no longer live. Instead, we have had people “putting themselves out there” fighting for our rights.

Many good things have happened:

We have rent for 2017 at 4% instead of 7½%.

We are the ONLY PARK THAT HAS A SAFETY NET PROGRAM FOR OUR SENIORS and very low income. Many residents are grateful for its existence – and they are able to continue to live in the homes they want to be in.

We have affected changes they have tried to make or have influenced changes in considerations. We’ve made them aware of reduced services. They are learning we WILL BE HEARD.

Certainly, not everything is as we want it, but we are not stopping. As new things come to our attention, we will question and continue to negotiate – again, for ALL OF US.

We are the legal organization that is recognized by Carlyle and by COS. Because we have organized, Carlyle MUST notify us if they intend to sell, by MRL rules. If we had existed before the sale, we would have had to be notified.

So many ramifications have come out of all that we have learned.

Yes, there is a learning curve.

Yes, we have had difficulties with communication.

Yes, these things are slow, laborious and taxes one's patience. But, the work is worth it.

Interestingly, all of this got a lot more of you out and involved. I see that as a good thing. NOW, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF ALL OF US.

The ground work has been done. We need to meet our goal of having THE MAJORITY OF THE RESIDENTS AS MEMBERS AND OUR VOICE WILL BE HEARD AND BE EFFECTIVE!

There is much more work to be done. We are mid-process, and we have lots to do.

We will have many challenges in the future, but we have an organization building that can take on all of those obstacles and meet them with the strength of all of us.

Lois Shouse, Secretary, pdrRA