

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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MTA Proposes Inadequate Landscaping

On October 10, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) staff and their consultants presented, for public comment, a landscaping plan for the busway on the Chandler Boulevard median in Valley Village and eastern Sherman Oaks. Their plan consists entirely of drought resistant shrubs and has none of the grass or green ground cover shown in the color brochure distributed last year. The plan also lacks an irrigation system, which raises the question whether the shrubs, even if they are drought resistant, can survive the hot Valley summers. The lack of a park-like ambiance in the plan is at variance with the pretty picture on the brochure and also contrary to the wishes of the surrounding community.



Although the stated purpose of the meeting was to obtain public comment on the landscaping plan, the MTA staff left the clear impression that the plan was already essentially decided and that any substantial departures from it were out of the question. When asked whether at least a portion of it could be a grassy lawn, like the section of the median to the west in Sherman Oaks, Association members in attendance were told that the MTA does not want to pay the cost of maintaining a lawn area; nor do they want to pay for the installation of an irrigation system for the two miles involved.

In response to this inadequate proposal, the Association sent a letter to the MTA project manager with copies to our elected officials. The letter urged that a second public meeting be held and that at least four alternative landscaping schemes for the median be presented along with cost figures for each. The four alternatives proposed are: (1) the entire median being a grassy lawn, like the section to the west in Sherman Oaks, (2) half the median with drought resistant shrubs and the other half grassy lawn, (3) about half the median drought resistant shrubs and

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New Year Greeting from Lori

Dear Members,

Another year has gone by so quickly, it simply doesn't register with me that the year 2002 has started.

My hope for the New Year is that it will bring us a more peaceful time and I wish all of you a good year filled with happy moments and with good health, surrounded by loving family and friends.

Lori

New Senior Lead For Valley Village

Valley Village Homeowners Association is happy to welcome Senior Lead Officer Manuel Arreygue who takes over for Ed Brentlinger. Manny has been with the LAPD for over 10 years, eight of them with the North Hollywood Division. Some of his prior assignments were with the Bike Detail and the Gang Unit. Officer Brentlinger and Officer Mike Jensen have highly recommended Manny, so come to the March meeting and extend a warm welcome to him.

MTA

(Continued from Page 1)

the other half green ground cover; and (4) the entire median be drought resistant shrubs with irrigation.

In response to the letter and with support from Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky's office, the MTA staff agreed to prepare the four alternatives and analyze the cost of each. In early December President Lori Dinkin and Marc Woersching met with the MTA staff and their consultants to discuss the four alternatives. The four alternatives discussed at that meeting are responsive to the Association's request, and the MTA staff indicated that a second public meeting will be scheduled early in 2002.

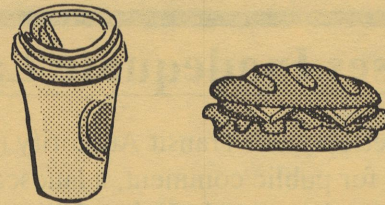
New Field Reporter Joins Villager Staff

The Villager is pleased to have Ken Jacobs join our staff of writers. If you have interest in contributing to the Villager please contact us. We welcome letters to the editor, which we will try to publish, or articles about neighborhood and community events on your street or block.

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Starbucks, Subway & AT&T

There are changes at the Laurel Canyon Plaza mall on the corner of Laurel Canyon and Riverside Drive. They include a small Subway sandwich shop which replaces the photo processing store. Also, an AT&T Wireless Phone store is going in where the pet store was.



The biggest news is the scheduled arrival of Starbucks coffee shop in the space recently vacated by Busy Body exercise equipment store. The space will be divided. Starbucks will occupy the front corner and there will be a new exercise equipment store in the half facing the parking area.

Additionally, plans are in motion for a Walgreens Pharmacy adjacent to Valley Village in the small strip mall on the east side of Coldwater Canyon just north of Magnolia and a relocation of the existing Pizza Hut to a Valley Village location at Magnolia Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue.

Are You a Stakeholder?

If you live, work, own property, run a business, go to school, attend a church, temple or just walk through Valley Village you are a stakeholder in the Neighborhood Council of Valley Village.

What is the Neighborhood Council? An entity mandated by the new Los Angeles City Charter. The rules are relatively simple. Each neighborhood council must represent an area of at least 20,000 people and become certified by the Los Angeles City Council. The Neighborhood Council should reflect the diversity of its constituency, with business people serving alongside homeowners, renters and representatives of churches, schools and social service agencies. The program is designed to give residents who feel disconnected from and underrepresented in their city government a new forum for input to the city on how they are governed.

Neighborhood Councils will weigh in on local planning cases, on how city funds are spent in their communities and how city service agencies are performing their jobs. Special projects, specific to the community, can be researched, planned and presented to the City Council for approval and funding.

The process of Certification is now underway. Learn how you can be a voice in your neighborhood on Tuesday, January 15, 2002 at 7:30pm First Presbyterian Church / Caldwell Hall 5000 Colfax Avenue, corner of Addison Street, Valley Village.

Neighborhood Council Outreach

Over the holidays the Outreach Committee of the Neighborhood Council of Valley Village was very busy. Committee Chair, Jody Hidey, along with members, Ginny Hatfield, Burt Stillar, and Marc Strassman worked through December designing, printing and distributing a new flyer announcing the next Neighborhood Council meeting to be held on January 15th. The flyer shows the boundaries of the proposed Neighborhood Council and it is printed in English and Spanish.

The flyer was mailed or hand delivered to residents, business owners, schools, churches, synagogues and service organizations within the area.

The Committee also enlisted the help of Senior Lead Officer Manny Arreygue of the North Hollywood Police Department to have the flyer mailed to Neighborhood Watch groups, East Valley PALS members and businesses in the Commercial Alert organization.

The main goal of the Committee is to get at least 200 signatures on the Neighborhood Council application so that Valley Village can be recognized as a certified Neighborhood Council by the City of Los Angeles.

The Committee will meet on January 7th to discuss a telephone campaign, other outreach possibilities and, if necessary, redesign the flyer to be used as a handout.

Ronit Weiss and June Perelson volunteered to help the Committee with labels, stuffing envelopes, etc. for which the Committee is grateful.

Other committees working towards certification are the By-laws Committee chaired by Stuart Simen and the Finance Committee chaired by Paul Hatfield.

If you have any questions about the Neighborhood Council of Valley Village, please call Peter Sanchez at 760-1243 or Breice Reiner at 766-2932.

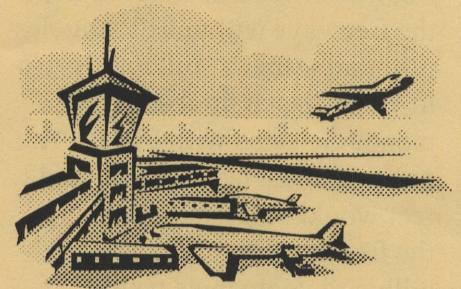
Improvements at Colfax Elementary

This neighborhood school is busy "sprucing up" with various improvements. Last spring, the school received a new kindergarten playground and a school marquee through grants. This past fall, the grounds were cleaned, hallways painted and new planting done in a cooperative effort between the school PTA and the members of Temple Beth Hillel. The Valley Village Homeowners Association has also donated money to support the school's efforts to improve its facility.

The school website address is: www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Colfax_EL/

New State Senator

State Senator Jack Scott (who will be our Senator once the redistricting is complete in April) met with Lori Dinkin to discuss matters of interest to our district and our position on limiting expansion of Burbank Airport.

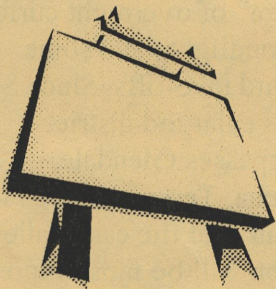


Senator Scott agreed to support our Valley Village Association "mantra" of overnight curfews, a cap on flights and some eastward take-offs. Since Senator Scott's enlarged district encompasses Glendale, Pasadena, Temple City as well as Burbank and the east Valley, his position will be most important and valuable to our community. He has asked to come to the next VVHA membership meeting on Wednesday, March 20th to discuss issues and concerns with the residents.

In addition to Senator Scott, Mayor Hahn's Valley deputy Jennifer Stein and representatives from Metropolitan Transit Authority will be on the program. Please, plan to attend this important meeting. To insure the support of our elected officials it is essential that Valley Village residents be seen as active and committed to their community.

More Billboard Blight Imminent

Last June the City Council proposed an ordinance to permit the relocation of billboards from the surface streets to industrial zoned lands along the freeways. The proposed ordinance would breach a 50 year old ban on freeway billboards that has kept the freeways within Los Angeles essentially free of billboards. Up to 70 V shaped double-faced monopole signs with 670 sq. ft. per side and a height of up to 42 feet would be permitted facing the freeways. In exchange, the billboard companies would remove up to 1,050 billboards from the surface streets.



Recently, the office of City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo proposed a mitigated negative declaration (MND) rather than requiring that an environmental impact report (EIR) be prepared prior to this ordinance being considered. The billboard companies are very anxious to have an MND issued rather than an EIR because it will speed up the approval process. Preparing an EIR would delay the approval process for a year.

The rationale behind the issuance of the MND is that even though the new billboards would result

in the industrial sections of the freeways becoming uglier, this impact is "mitigated" by the removal of some billboards on the surface streets. This analysis is flawed because it does not recognize that the addition of 70 large, tall, V shaped monopole billboards would create a major visual change for the worse in some sections of the freeways while only removing smaller signs from the streets. With an estimated 10,000 billboards along the streets of Los Angeles, this would result in only a modest improvement. The streetscape will look about as cluttered as it does now and the new ordinance would open the door to future proliferation of huge billboards on all the freeways.

The justification offered for issuing the MND is a one-sided advocacy for the ordinance and reads as if it were written by the billboard companies. The Association will be submitting a critique of this flawed proposal and will urge that a full EIR be prepared.

P.O.G.

Paint out graffiti. This year has seen an improvement in the control of the ubiquitous blight. Graffiti buster extraordinaire, Officer Ed Brentlinger and "Spider-man" Frank Bender have been a menace to the taggers. Thank you, gentlemen.

Illegal Signs



In Valley Village and every other neighborhood in Los Angeles County the continued proliferation of large, durable, weather resistant, and offensive, postings of "Work at Home" signs on utility poles, freeway off ramps, and other prominent locations continues. These postings, which represent part of the current vogue of "guerrilla" advertising, are illegal.

The city will remove the signs when complaints are made, but their resources for enforcement are limited. The resilience of those doing the continuous posting is not. On a recent day, Senior Lead Officer Manuel Arreygue was personally removing some of these postings in response to a recent complaint from a representative of the VVHA.

It is lawful for citizens to remove these offending postings themselves, as some of our residents are already doing. Until fines and enforcement intensify, rapid removal of postings may discourage the further proliferation of this new version of commercial graffiti.

Village People and Places

A new feature in the paper will be thumbnail sketches of Valley Village folks and facilities. We start with an unusual deli in the Laurel Canyon Plaza Mall.

Chenar European Deli
4818 Laurel Canyon Blvd

The proprietors, David and Eteny, offer delicacies from Russia, Armenia and other European countries. They are proud of their home-made specialties. Stuffed grape leaves and cabbage salad are house favorites. This food establishment primarily sells take-home foods but will prepare anything you see for on-premise eating at one of their two tables.

This is a touch of Eastern Europe in the Village adding to the diversity of our neighborhood.

Valley Torah High School update

The VTHS building on Ben Ave at Riverside Drive has been vacant since the summer when the boy's school relocated to its new facility on Chandler Boulevard west of Whitsett Avenue. There are plans for the girls school to occupy the existing building following a remodeling. No additional details or time frame are available at this writing.

Specific Plan Stalled

The Specific Plan is the best tool the Association has for control of undesirable development in our community. In an effort to stay abreast of changes in land use and zoning, Valley Village Homeowners Association prepared some amendments to the plan. These changes and additions have to be approved by the City Attorney's office and the City Planning Commission. For almost three years the paper work has languished in the office of Bob Sutton, Planning Director. This is unacceptable, and VVHA has alerted Mayor Hahn, Councilman Jack Weiss and County Supervisor Yaroslavsky that we are running out of patience.

Everybody Knows

It is pretty obvious Magnolia Boulevard is finally being widened, but only between the 170 Freeway and Colfax Avenue. For the moment, better find another way home.

Not Everybody Knows

But they should. The voter turnout at the special election to fill Joel Wachs' empty seat on the City Council amounted to 17%. The runoff election will be April 2nd between Wendy Greuel and Tony Cardenas. Be there!

Volunteer Meeting

All those interested in volunteer activities and committees of the Valley Village Homeowners Association should plan to attend a meeting on January 23rd at 7:30pm at First Presbyterian Church / Caldwell Hall 5000 Colfax Avenue, corner of Addison Street, Valley Village.

The most popular volunteer activity was tree planting at Valley Village Park. For those interested in tree planting, the meeting will focus on information about obtaining trees, equipment and instructions on proper planting. The City Forestry Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation and representatives from TreePeople will be on hand to assist and advise. Once organized, this should be a wonderful family event.

Holiday Decorations

At Halloween the usual festivities were somewhat subdued in Valley Village as anxiety and a somber climate prevailed post 9/11. However in December, Valley Village was replete with bountiful lighting and home decorations. Our neighborhood looked colorful and beautiful. It was refreshing to see Valley Village looking more festive for the holiday season.

A Message From Association President Lori Dinkin

There have been too many empty seats at the interesting and informative Association meetings. This is very discouraging to our speakers and to the Association board. We work hard to provide you the opportunity to meet with City of Los Angeles officials and service personnel. In the recent past, speakers have included candidates for City Council, newly elected Jack Weiss from the 5th District, Mayor Hahn's Valley representative, department heads from Street Maintenance, Building and Safety, Parks and Recreation and Officers from the Los Angeles Police Department. These people listened to complaints, answered questions and stayed after the meeting to speak to residents who had specific matters that needed attention. If you show up, you can make things happen in your community.

I know everyone is busy; it's easy to decide not to go out again after you get home from work. The membership meetings have been cut from six to only three a year due to poor attendance. Make an effort to attend these meetings where vital issues are being discussed.

The volunteer officers and board members of Valley Village Homeowners Association, elected by you, work hard to make Valley Village a wonderful place to live. Come to the meetings! The next meeting is March 20th, please plan to attend.

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