

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

Laurel Canyon Car Wash Approval Appealed

A car wash has been proposed on the vacant lot, formerly a gas station, at 4647 Laurel Canyon Boulevard north of 101 freeway. The property owner applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). In August 2003 the LA City Planning Department recommended that the CUP not be approved because it does not comply with the Valley Village Specific Plan. The Plan development guidelines prohibits new projects that create problems with traffic flow and circulation, and a car wash is a specifically prohibited land use.

The CUP applicant appealed to the South Valley Area Planning Commission (SVAPC), a citizen zoning review committee appointed by the Mayor. At a November 2003 public hearing before SVAPC, the applicant stated that this project is not prohibited under the Valley Village Specific Plan. Further, the applicant claimed the City Planning Department originally did approve the project and later reversed itself and ordered a stop to the planned construction. In spite of overwhelming neighbor opposition and the City Planning Department's recommendation to deny the CUP, the SVAPC approved the project.

On February 10, 2004, the Valley Village Homeowners Association (VVHA) and an adjacent neighbor appealed the decision to the City Council, requesting the SVAPC approval be overturned and the project rejected. Our appeal alleges abuse of administrative discretion and abuse of due process by the City by the manner in which it handled and processed the application, and abuse of administrative discretion on the part of the SVAPC by the manner in which they approved the project. During the course of our examination of the facts surrounding this project application, serious questions arose about the city's handling of the project application. We are asking Councilmember Wendy Greuel to request an investigation.

We are hopeful we will prevail in our appeal before City Council since Councilmember Wendy Greuel, in whose district this project is located, is also opposed to the project.



Neighborhood Council Up and Running

On January 28th Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) held its monthly meeting. The board heard several presentations as well as conducted routine business.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Devon Brown discussed the Chandler Busway construction. Ms. Brown also answered questions about the project and heard public comments.

An attorney representing the owner of the proposed car wash did a presentation and requested the board's support of the project. The board postponed any recommendation pending further review of the project and the Valley Village Specific Plan. More discussion about the carwash is expected at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held at Colfax Elementary School Auditorium on February 25th at 6:30pm. Also on the agenda is the sound-wall construction on the 170 freeway, Department of Public Works regarding valley water projects and the opportunity for the public to voice other concerns.

Chandler Busway

Over two years ago the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) staff presented a landscaping plan for the Chandler Boulevard median in Valley Village for public comment. The plan consisting of drought resistant plantings and no irrigation was contrary to the wishes of the surrounding community.

President Lori Dinkin and Marc Woerschling, the Association representatives on the landscape advisory committee, have recommended a more park-like plan which would include lawn or green groundcover along the outer edges with drought resistant shrubs in the center to screen the asphalt roadway. The MTA landscape architects are revising their plans in response to the committee's recommendations and will present their new plans at the next scheduled meeting.

At the Neighborhood Council meeting in January, the MTA indicated that a permanent irrigation system will be installed on the median. This is what the Association has been urging for over two years. Much thanks is due Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky for his support of the Association's position.

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From The President

Congratulations on the formation of Neighborhood Council Valley Village. We are looking forward to working together.

We are very fortunate that the main speaker at our next meeting on February 26th will be Assemblyman Paul Koretz who has represented the 42nd Assembly District since November 2000. We hope that he will give us an "inside" look at the actions and policies of our newly elected Governor. We will bring to his attention the sound-wall issue on the west side of the 170 Freeway from Burbank Blvd. to Riverside in hopes that he will be able to speed up the process.

The letter below from Mayor Jim Hahn was in response to our strong complaint regarding the hearing before the South Valley Area Planning Commission (see Car Wash article on page one). The hearing was called for 4:30pm and our issue came up at approximately 10:00pm. Not knowing what time we would get to speak, we were not able to leave the room and at no time did the SVAPC announce a break. We did not leave this meeting until close to midnight.

Dear Lori,

I was sorry to hear about your experience at the Area Planning Committee hearing. It sounds like you and your neighbors were forced to endure an extraordinarily long meeting under less than comfortable circumstances.

As you know, I strongly believe that neighborhood input is an invaluable part of our community planning process. We should do our best to accommodate the concerned residents that take the time to share their concerns with us.

Please be assured that I will discuss this matter with Con Howe, General Manager of the City Planning Department and Michael Mahdesian, President of the South Valley Area Planning Commission. I am sure that the staff and commissioners do not like to sit through 7 hour meetings either.

Thanks for letting me know about your experience and for your suggestions on how to improve our services. Please feel free to contact my new South Valley Area Director, John Bwarie at ..., if you have any other concerns.

Very truly yours, James K. Hahn, Mayor

We appreciate the Mayor's concern. We will follow up on his promise and hopefully this shabby treatment by the Commissioners will be improved upon.

See you at the February 26th Meeting, Lori

Valley Village Is Now A Development Hotspot

Nine Unit Apartment Project at 4904 Laurel Canyon: VVHA is investigating the approval for a nine unit apartment on the site of a recently demolished single family home in an R-3 zone. We understand the project had Specific Plan approval a number of years ago but the City cannot provide documentation. The City recently reduced the square foot definition for R-3 zoning to 300 sq. ft. from the prior 800 sq. ft. The zoning square footage standard is divided into the square footage of the lot to determine the maximum number of units permitted. The new standard increases density (more units) on a lot. We are in the process of determining which square footage standard was used in determining that nine units could be built and what size project was exempted from Specific Plan review.

Five-Unit Condo at 11847 Riverside: Neighbors, the developer and VVHA representatives met recently with Councilmember Greuel's Planning Deputy to request a determination from the City that a City easement for a "paper alley" (only shows on maps), running from Morella to Ben should be abandoned and not be subject to a costly, lengthy and complex process of vacating a City alley.

After it is determined that the City has no legal alley easement, or abandons the easement, the next issue to be resolved is who owns the underlying land under the paper alleys. There is dispute among the adjacent single family owners abutting the condo project, and that issue must be resolved in order for the condo project to move forward.

The developer has proposed to use all 20 feet of the paper alley to meet the Specific Plan requirements for rear landscaping of the project. Usually under city rights of way vacations, the underlying land is split 50/50 between adjacent owners. Neighbors have done title searches that tend to indicate the underlying alley land belongs to them. That issue will probably end up in court because at \$60 to \$80 per square foot of land value, there is increased property values at stake.

Vacant Lots: We are checking on vacant sites at Huston and Laurel Canyon, a proposed town house project at Colfax and Hesby, the vacated former Shell station at Burbank and Laurel Canyon and a now vacant lot on Chandler Boulevard.

Auto Repair to Food Mart, Kling at Laurel Canyon: Partial conversion of the Union 76 gas station at Kling and Laurel Canyon, eliminating auto repair areas and converting to a food mart is under way. The city claims the conversion is not subject to Specific Plan review because it is a conversion of an existing use that does not increase floor area. Usually a change in use to a 24-hour food mart operation requires a public hearing and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approval, unless the hours of operation are restricted. In this case, the building permit prohibits hours of operation between 11:00pm and 7:00am, thereby avoiding a CUP hearing. We've asked the City how they intend to enforce the hours of operation.

This change of use issue has identified the need for an amendment to the Specific Plan to include *change of use* in the Plan definition of project. Since *change of use* is not included in the Plan definition of project, the change of use can be approved without the requirement of a Specific Plan review. We are asking Councilmember Greuel to request such a Plan amendment.

Transit Development Zoning Changes: We have to be vigilant about future redevelopment of existing multi-zoned land along and adjacent to the Chandler Orange Line busway. The City recently created transit development zoning changes, that by definition appear to include the Chandler corridor, that would permit and encourage denser redevelopment of existing multi-family housing. The City needs to act to protect and encourage improvement of existing affordable rental housing along the Chandler corridor, not demolition and replacement with more dense development.

Colfax Elementary School

An Outstanding Community Asset

The parents and staff of Colfax Elementary School would like to thank the Valley Village Homeowners Association for their generous donation. It was earmarked for this year's capital project, new playground equipment.

The school is currently requesting donations of gift certificates for goods or services to be sold at a silent auction at the May 22nd Spring Fair.

There are many interesting and rewarding volunteer opportunities at the school; for instance, The After School Homework Club from 2:30pm to 5:00pm Monday through Thursday or Fun Physical Fridays, 10:00am to 11:00am and 12:00pm to 1:00pm. There is also the "Wonder of Reading" mentoring program. Please call the school at 761-5115 for more information.

Friends, neighbors and parents of prospective students are welcome to join the Open House guided tour of the school on Friday, March 12th at 8:15am.

Keep an eye on the marquee at the corner of Addison Street and Colfax Avenue for activities and special events.

Time Flies and We Walk

In less than five months we will have our annual VVHA Fourth of July Parade. This year our theme is "Village Adventures." Each year we have had increased participation in neighborhood float decoration. It will become even more competitive since the Otsego Bleacher Bums will be announcing participants as they pass the reviewing stand and judging originality and quality of floats. Awards will be given to the winners.

Will your street be represented? It is not too early to organize your neighbors and plan your entry. Pasadena may have the Rose Parade but Valley Village has firecracker hot floats. Join in making this the most exuberant parade we have ever enjoyed. See you there.

Library Program

Coming to America

Coming To America Transformations is coming to Amelia Earhart North Hollywood Library Community Room Sunday, March 7, 2004 at 2:00pm

This wonderful one-woman drama depicts a gallery of women whose lives have been transformed, first by extraordinary events in their country of birth, and then by their response to America. These dynamic women from Armenia, El Salvador, India, Afghanistan, Russia and Cambodia willingly shared their stories.

Written and performed by Stephanie Satie and directed by Anita Khanzadian, each character is portrayed with insight and grace. This is a memorable theatre experience. Friends of the Library is proud to present this special performance to honor Women's History Month as part of our on-going series Sunday At The Library.

Help Wanted

Correspondence Secretary needed for Valley Village Homeowners Association. No professional experience required.



Job description: Write an occasional letter; attend one board meeting about every 6 weeks. You don't even have to be able to spell if you have a dictionary.

Compensation: The satisfaction of helping this fine community organization.

Perks: Working with a great group of dedicated neighbors.

Call Lori Dinkin at 818-506-5158.

A Note From The Publisher

Dear Former Member:

I am sending you the February 2004 edition of The Valley Villager. As a former member of the Valley Village Homeowners Association you are familiar with what a wonderful publication our volunteers put together.

Also, I hope that it will remind you of the great work the volunteers of the Association do and that you will decide to rejoin the Association. Your support is vital.

Standing united is important both nationally and locally. Many of the improvements in this community are directly related to the unceasing efforts of the Valley Village Homeowners Association. Name recognition for the community, graffiti control and area beautification, zoning compliance, safety, a positive relationship with the Police Department and the attention to our needs by our political representatives are all issues Valley Village Homeowners Association has successfully tackled.

Rejoin now and your membership status will be reactivated. The larger our membership the greater our influence on government agencies and businesses who make decisions that affect our community. And, you will not miss a future issue of The Valley Villager!

Stand united, support your Valley Village Homeowners Association, support your community!

Sincerely,

Peter Sanchez
Publisher, The Valley Villager

Cut out and mail with your check made payable to Valley Village Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 4916 Valley Village CA 91617

MEMBERSHIP

Valley Village Homeowners Association urges you to stand united and continue your support. We have had notable success, and if we are going to be influential in important issues, it is essential that we present a united, active and determined membership. Send in your dues now.

Annual dues per household: Basic Dues **\$18.00** Donor Dues: **\$25.00** Patron Dues: **\$50.00**

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

The Association welcomes any comments, questions, suggestions
or offers to volunteer, just include them in the same envelope.

fm2/2004

If you need membership information to give to others, call the Association (818-506-5158)
or include a request in with your membership renewal.

Homeowners Association Meeting

Thursday, February 26, 2004 - 7:30pm
Colfax Elementary School, 11724 Addison Street
Valley Village, CA 91607

Valley Village Homeowners Association continues to bring important and influential speakers to Association meetings.

Featured this month is our California State Assemblyman **Paul Koretz**. Mr. Koretz was elected to represent the 42nd Assembly District in November 2000. He began his political career working to incorporate the City of West Hollywood where he served as mayor and city councilman for 12 years before his election to the State Assembly.

He has been a champion of issues such as strengthening labor, improving public health and reducing gun violence. Mr. Koretz has also established himself as a leader in developing environmental and animal legislation. Paul Koretz, a life long democrat, grew up in West Hollywood. He continues to live there with his wife Gail, daughter Rachel and their two cats. Paul loves baseball, spending time with his family and enjoying LA's rich diverse cultural life.

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