

# THE VALLEY VILLAGER

## VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



VOL. 29 NUMBER 1 January 2019 P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

## The State of the VVHA Board

*Among your new year's resolutions,  
could you add one more and promise to help VVHA?*

The Association is holding its bi-annual Board election this month and for the first time in a while, the Elections Committee had trouble finding members who were willing to run for office. We have had four Board members who chose not to run again for very understandable personal reasons – nothing based on any divisions within the Board – and that has left quite a gap in both personalities and expertise. So we are again putting the word out to any member who might consider joining the Board to nominate yourself at the General Meeting on January 16.

- In reviewing this last year, under Paul Hatfield's stalwart direction, the Board spoke up about issues that affect your homes. On his many flights to Sacramento Paul conferred with state senators re: SB 827, a bill titled The Transit Rich Housing Bonus. If passed, this bill would have undermined our VV Specific Plan by allowing much greater density and height within a quarter- to half-mile of the Orange Line. It went nowhere, but the author has introduced a new version of it and VVHA will be monitoring its progress.
- With the Board's support, Paul took the lead in representing Valley Villagers over the FAA's flight path changes out of Burbank Airport. Our neighboring communities complained bitterly about the unfairness that they now had airplane noise. Well, we in Valley Village have dealt with that for decades and suddenly our noise from above was reduced. We asked for equal distribution of the flight paths. Devoted to the issue, Paul met with government and neighborhood representatives and argued for quieter skies above Valley Village. Once again, your property value was foremost on the Board's mind.
- We vigilantly followed the growth of homeless communities within Valley Village and Paul met with journalists to discuss the many concerns that arise from these 'hot spots.'
- The Board supported the Laurel Grove Neighborhood Association's opposition to digital billboards facing out onto the 170 freeway at the NoHo West complex that is currently under construction. We are proud to say that working together, that neighborhood prevailed against the developers.
- When members were outraged about extraordinarily large homes being built across large lots, the Board wrote to Paul Krekorian, our City Councilmember, and argued for new regulations to prevent the construction of more such super-sized residences.
- The City is in the process of reviewing its zoning laws which could affect your property values, so the Board is closely following the proposed changes. A letter was sent to our membership asking you to attend and speak up; the Board was rewarded with an excellent representation of Valley Village.

These actions represent what the Board does. With a smaller Board, we may be less effective.

So many times, the Board receives praise from our members, encouraging us and thanking us for all we do to promote a close and caring community. *Our wish for the new year is that more of you will step up and volunteer.* Attend our general membership meetings and become more aware of the current issues. Another thing you can do to help is simple: Give us your real email address, not your junk mail address. We only email occasionally so you will not be overwhelmed with emails from VVHA, and receiving our correspondence in your primary mailboxes will keep you informed about what your Association is doing. Also, we always need help organizing the July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade and Light Up Valley Village.

Lastly, please consider nominating yourself to run for the Board of Directors at our General Membership/Election meeting on **Wednesday, January 16**, and make an effective commitment to help your Valley Village community.

Thanks for listening!

***"Communicate, Participate, Legislate"***

## **Rob's Beat**

Hello, Valley Village!

It has been a real pleasure getting to know the community and I look forward to maintaining a continued partnership with a goal of keeping Valley Village safe and free of crime. As a community, you have done a fantastic job of preventing crime in 2018.

As the year comes to an end you are looking very well crime-wise. We finished the year with a reduction of more than 8% in overall crime. Property crime was down 10% with a large decrease in residential burglary of 34%. We had close to 40 fewer burglaries than in 2017 and robberies were down by almost 10%. Personal thefts and car break-ins were also down. Stolen vehicles were up by only one vehicle by the end of the year.

An area of concern, however, is the increase in aggravated assaults we saw in 2018. An increase of 15 crimes in this area puts us at a total of 38 crimes (up 38%). This is the only area in which we saw an increase in this particular crime, and with the number of the transient population going up we are seeing an increase in transient on transient aggravated assault. The LAPD is laser-focused on the homeless issue. We will continue to identify homeless encampments, offer outreach (i.e., shelter/housing, mental health, substance abuse, etc.) and conduct enforcement. This will be a priority for 2019.

I am excited to be working with the community of Valley Village and wish all of you a very Happy New Year!

Rob Benavidez  
LAPD Senior Lead Officer

### **EDITORIAL STAFF**

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## **A Letter from the President**

Dear Neighbors,

It is with reluctance that I will step down as president of the Association. My business travel schedule has grown considerably since I was elected four years ago. It is to the point where I cannot attend half the meetings (I won't even be present for the upcoming January general meeting when the members elect a new board).

It is important that the president be on the ground and available. There are too many issues heading our way, including SB50 – the latest attempt to greatly increase density without the infrastructure to support the population increase it will bring.

There are vocal opponents in Studio City to the FAA's proposed flight path changes known as Nextgen. The changes shift a portion of the flights to the north of us. We still will bear measureable noise, but hopefully somewhat less. Organized groups, especially Studio City for Quiet Skies, want the bulk of the flights to stay over communities around the 101 – which includes Valley Village. They do not wish to share the noise, believing that their quality of life north of Moorpark and Ventura Boulevard is more important than others. See the previous issue of the Villager for more details.

Of course, there is the pervasive problem of homelessness, which brings with it threats to health from garbage, defecation and discarded needles. We need to pressure the city to use sound judgment, with guidance from neighborhoods, when spending additional revenue from voter-approved taxes designed to house and service those living on the streets.

VVHA can write letters, send e-mails and call elected officials on all of these and other issues, but without direct involvement by our residents, our influence is limited. When we ask you to call or write our representatives, please take a couple of minutes and do just that. Numbers count! Complacency is our worst enemy.

Although I will not run for president, I will offer myself as a candidate for another board position, where I can still serve Valley Village.

On behalf of VVHA, I wish all of you a happy and productive New Year!

Paul Hatfield  
President

***Board Election - January 16, 2019  
See Pages 5 and 6 for Candidate Statements***

## Projects in the Works

Development projects during the past six months:

1. *NoHo West*. Construction is well underway for this major redevelopment of the Laurel Plaza Shopping Center, previous home to a Macy's department store. The project consists of 642 apartment units on its east side and an open air, town center-style shopping center on the west side with 383,000 square feet of retail space. The former Macy's building is to be converted into office space.
2. *11700 Magnolia Boulevard*. The first floor concrete parking structure and the wood framing for the upper three stories are in place for this project to redevelop the former auto repair shop at the southwest corner of Magnolia and Colfax. It will house 19 residential units and 1,510 square feet of retail space. While the applicant's representative stated that their desire is to create a quality design that will improve the neighborhood and be eco-friendly, the modernist design, similar to the look of the Beverly Center, has been criticized for being incompatible with the more traditional architectural styles of the surrounding area, particularly North Hollywood High School across the street.
3. *5133 Whitsett Avenue*. Construction is more than halfway done on this six-unit small-lot subdivision on the site of a former single-family home. The project is on the west side of Whitsett, immediately south of the retail stores on Magnolia Boulevard. It has been modified to respond to concerns that its three-story, 33-foot tall homes will look down on and diminish the privacy of the single-family home neighborhood to the west.
4. *Galaxy Car Wash site*. The site has been cleared for this mixed use, density bonus project at the southeast corner of Chandler Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue. Seventy apartment units are planned, along with 1,750 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 80 parking spaces for the project. Because it is a density bonus project, its height of five stories and 56 feet is allowed to exceed the limit of 45 feet established by the commercial zoning for the project site. In exchange for the additional height permitted by the density bonus, nine of the 70 units will be set aside for renters with low and moderate incomes.
5. *5110 Whitsett Avenue*. The site has been cleared for this 15-unit condominium project on the northeast corner of Whitsett Avenue and Otsego Street. This will be a three-story building with a height of 36 feet and landscaped front setbacks. Thirty-eight parking spaces with 20 tandem spaces will be provided at a rate of 2 ½ spaces per unit. Nine 36-foot box trees will be planted in the rear setback areas. The project has drawn strong opposition from neighbors to the east of Whitsett Avenue due to its three-story height looming over the neighborhood. Also, the box trees are not considered tall enough to screen the east side of the building (the parking entrance is on Otsego rather than on Whitsett), the traffic and parking impacts on Otsego Street are seen as a problem, and, most of all, its boxy, modernist design makes it look more like an office building than a residential structure, particularly when viewed from the east. The austere design clashes with the mostly traditional-looking structures surrounding it and is not consistent with the traditional, Cape Cod-styled condominiums across the street at 5101 Whitsett Avenue.
6. *5303 Hermitage Avenue*. The site is mostly cleared for this 26-unit small-lot subdivision along both sides of a short section of Weddington Street west of Hermitage. An area with two mature Camphor trees at the northwest corner of Weddington and Hermitage will be preserved as open space. The project has a Cape Cod architectural style that is seen as compatible with other buildings in the neighborhood.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Helicopter Noise

A proper site to complain about helicopters at 2am!

<http://heli-noise-la.com/>

You can investigate and report a disturbance by clicking on the "Investigate with WebTrak" tab in the navigation bar. This website can also be accessed on mobile devices. WebTrak allows the user to research which helicopter has caused the disturbance and submit a specific complaint. Once you have launched WebTrak, the steps under the "Investigate" tab will walk you through researching and reporting a disturbance. If you find the helicopter flight track associated with your disturbance, you can submit a complaint for that specific operation by clicking on the helicopter icon, and then selecting the symbol at the lower left corner of the box that will appear. If you do not identify the flight, you can still file a complaint by clicking on the "Show Complaint Form" button.

## BOARD NOTES

October 29, 2018 - The Board reviewed the situation re the FAA's decision to redirect planes taking off from Burbank Airport and agreed to attend upcoming meetings for clarification and discussion; agreed that the Association needs to broaden its outreach via the website and social media; agreed to research and report on the drastically increased permit costs for modest upgrades to single-family residences; agreed to have a VVHA table at the Light Up Valley Village event at the Magnolia/Whitsett location; agreed to consider a different venue for our General Membership meetings (the January meeting will be held at Faith Presbyterian Church); plans were started for the nomination of new Board members and their election on January 16, 2019.

## **Costly Fees for Home Additions**

In most communities in Los Angeles additions to houses require only the payment of building permit fees to the City's Building & Safety Department. But because Valley Village has its own Specific Plan, since 2016 homeowners have been required to pay an extra fee of \$4,652 for additions of less than 200 sq. ft., and \$7,995 for additions of more than 200 sq. ft.

It wasn't always this way. Prior to 2016, the Specific Plan was interpreted by the Planning Department as not requiring a project permit; in fact, additions to single-family homes were simply approved by a building permit sign-off with no fee at all. Then in 2016, the definition of a project was interpreted as including additions in Section 4 of the Specific Plan, which led to the change in fee structure.

In response to protests from homeowners who had to pay the high project permit fees, on February 4, 2018, Councilmember Krekorian introduced a motion (CF-13-1324-S2) to amend the Specific Plan so that additions to single-family homes could be approved by an "administrative sign-off in lieu of a project permit...". The motion was approved by the City Council on May 2, 2018.

However, a complication has arisen that is slowing the implementation of the amendment. Sections of Valley Village have single-family homes designated as having potential historic significance by Survey LA. If projects are to be approved only by sign-offs rather than by project permits, there will no longer be a requirement that an environmental clearance be prepared for the addition along with the project permit, and the impact of the addition on the historic character of the single-family home will no longer be analyzed. It is uncertain how long this situation will continue, and homeowners who want to add to their homes may have to continue to pay the project permit fees until it is resolved.

## **Pay To Play Scandal May Finally Force Reform**

The specter of pay-to-play politics in City Hall has long been rumored and suspected. With the FBI raid of a councilmember's home and office in November, however, the ante has been upped for a deeper investigation into just how much influence real estate developers (and others with business designs on the City) have on which projects are approved, and for whose real benefit.

Until his removal in the wake of the FBI's raid, Councilmember Jose Huizar was the chairman of the City's powerful Planning and Land Use Committee – the committee which is responsible for some of the most important real estate policy and development decisions. The FBI will not say what it is investigating, but there are allegations relating to donations made by developers, engineering firms, and others to a private school for which Huizar's wife was fundraising; the councilmember never filed a report required on the monies realized.

Currently, it is not illegal for elected officials to ask for companies having business with the City to donate to a favorite charity. These officials insist that they are not influenced by these contributions. Nonetheless, the fact that money is solicited (and paid) certainly casts a shadow of corruption over the landscape.

Two years ago, a proposal to ban campaign contributions from real estate developers seeking approval for their projects was proffered by several councilmembers; the Ethics Commission has been slow to work through the details. Maybe the Huizar scandal will spur it into action.

## **Wings Trimmed On Short-Term Rentals**

After watching the rise and popularity of AirBnB and other short-term rental sites in Los Angeles for several years and noting the drawbacks (such as potentially limiting long-term rental space) and benefits (a substantial windfall for the state's coffers – since early 2017, home-sharing sites have been collecting a 14% transient occupancy tax), the City Council, on December 11, voted unanimously to both legalize short-term rentals and set certain standards to go into effect in July of this year. Here are some of the new rules:

- ◆ The unit to be rented out must be the homeowner's primary residence, or a part thereof.
- ◆ Those Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or "granny flats," that were created after legislation passed in January 2017, may not be used as short-term rentals.
- ◆ The rental unit may not be under rent control.
- ◆ The total number of days that a house or room may be rented out is capped at 120 per year, though an "extended home-sharing" option is available for certain long-term, citation-free hosts for an additional fee.

A registration fee of \$89 per year, payable to the City, is now in effect. Hefty fines could be levied for non-compliance with any of these new regulations.

# Valley Village Homeowners Association

## Board of Directors Election

Term: January 2018 – December 2020

Election Date: January 16, 2019

## Candidate Statements

### Officers (One for each office)

#### President

##### **No Candidate Running:**

Do you want to run?

#### Vice President

##### **No Candidate Running:**

Do you want to run?

#### Secretary

**Gil Shorr:** I have lived in Valley Village as a renter and homeowner for the past 30+ years and have watched the Village grow and change. I have volunteered most of my adult life for causes and organizations to which I feel I can make a contribution, and joining the board of the Valley Village Homeowners Association four years ago was a perfect move. If re-elected, I will continue to use my past working experience as an administrator, collaborator, writer and copy editor to the position of Member at Large. And as editor of *The Valley Villager*, I will do what I can to join with others to design creative ways to boost the outreach of the Association and awareness of life in our very special Valley Village.

#### Treasurer

**Ellen Wilhelm:** Valley Village has been my home for 32 years and I have cherished our tree-lined streets and our strong sense of community. Most of all, I enjoy my neighbors. For the last six years serving as Secretary of the Association, I have acted as the President's right arm. For a change of pace, I am running for the position of Treasurer. In this capacity I hope to develop and monitor a budget and ensure that your dues money continues to be spent wisely. The major expenses are insurances, the parade, newsletter printing and postage, room rentals and food for general membership meetings. Other expenses periodically appear such as stationery printing and website costs. I believe you will find me responsible and vigilant. It is an honor to serve on the VVHA Board of Directors. Thank you.

### Boardmembers at Large (Six seats available)

**Dorothy Apple:** I grew up in Toluca Lake and attended our local public schools. I am a resident of Valley Village and work in the community. I have been a board member of the Valley Village Homeowners Association since 2012 and the VVHA July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade chair for the last six years. I have served on the NCVV board since 2007, and was secretary for eight years; I serve on the City Services and Planning & Land Use committees. I am involved in the Valley Village Neighborhood Watch Program and Community Emergency Response Team, and work closely with our local LAPD and LAFD officials. I believe smart development, safer streets, good schools and sound infrastructure are key to keeping the integrity of our community intact. I believe that developers should abide by the Valley Village Specific Plan (now being updated as the Community Plan) and rarely an exception should be made. I look forward to being an advocate for homeowners and stakeholders in Valley Village, to ensure that our neighborhood remains one of the most desirable in the city of Los Angeles.

Continued on Page 6

*"Communicate, Participate, Legislate"*

## Boardmembers at Large (Six seats available)

**Glenn Block:** My wife, Nickie, and I have been homeowners in Valley Village for more than 12 years. Our children, Maddy (15) and Beckett (10), have attended local schools – Colfax Elementary and Walter Reed Middle School. I've served on the Neighborhood Council Valley Village Board since 2016. Now, I'd like to contribute my knowledge and experience with planning and land use issues as a member of the VVHA Board. My goal is to ensure that the neighborhood character of Valley Village is preserved and protected from out-of-scale development. I hope to have the opportunity to serve on the VVHA Board on your behalf.

**Beth Fulton:** Hello Valley Village Neighbors, I am running for the Board of the Valley Village Homeowners Association in hopes of continuing the work of this wonderful community organization. In the past, I have worked on the Neighborhood Council Valley Village Planning and Land Use committee and hope that experience will help me to assist the VVHA to keep the neighborhood in line with the Specific Plan. I also believe that the beautiful mature trees in our neighborhood are an integral part of the beauty of this area and hope to work on finding a way to protect as many as possible. Additionally I look forward to planting many new trees.

**Paul Hatfield:** I have lived in Valley Village since 1986. For ten of those years, I served the community as the Treasurer and At-Large member of the Neighborhood Council. It became apparent to me that the city's bureaucracy was an obstacle to sustaining our quality of life. The most effective way to be heard and respected in our city is through organization and participation. If re-elected, increasing our membership and expanding communication will remain priorities for the board. The more members we have, the more likely it is our elected officials will listen to us. This is more important today than ever before because the challenges facing us have increased and the City wants to increase density in a manner that will add to already growing congestion.

**Sandy Hubbard:** I have been a homeowner/resident in Valley Village since 2000, during which time my son attended Walter Reed MS and North Hollywood HS and I was elected to serve on the Neighborhood Council Valley Village, chairing the Valley Village Vision Committee and serving on the City Services Committee. Prior to moving to Valley Village, I served as President of the Lake View Terrace Improvement Association, working successfully on several major community projects, including the closure of Lopez Canyon Landfill, opening of Hansen Dam Lake, helped lay the groundwork for the Lake View Terrace Library, and worked through to completion the Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace Community Plan, garnering valuable experience to use in Valley Village. With the growth of the North Hollywood/Valley Glen/Studio City/Sherman Oaks communities and both existing and new transportation corridors that surround Valley Village, I am interested in ensuring the fundamental cohesiveness of the NoHo Community Plan and Valley Village Specific Plan's abilities to retain and safeguard our unique community characteristics, and would look forward to serving with other board members to achieve that goal. I would appreciate your vote to serve another term on the VVHA Board and would serve the community to the best of my ability to do so.

**Morgan Loy:** Morgan Loy has enjoyed living in Valley Village for over 3 years as a first-time homeowner. The character of the homes and neighborhood feel, drew him and his family to the area. If Morgan were elected, he would bring unique experience to the board. He is an Oklahoma native, who has also lived in Nashville and New York. He's currently a Regional Property Manager at a premier international real estate firm. That experience brings a thorough understanding of project management, construction and development. Morgan would like to use this knowledge to help preserve the beauty of Valley Village, while also contributing to exciting neighborhood-focused projects. He enjoys spending time with his family, playing music, basketball, and international travel. Morgan is excited about the opportunity to be a Board Member of the Valley Village Homeowners Association!

**Jimmy Martinez:** I would like to be a part of the VVHA Board because I value a safe, clean, quiet, and peaceful community where my family and I can have a wonderful life. My vision for Valley Village is to keep it low density, sweet, charming, and special. A small town within a city. A place where residents can feel like they are out of the frenetic and crazy city. It should be a place where families, children and the elderly are deeply valued, protected and respected. Where tradition and warmth and respect and good old-fashioned courtesy are commonplace. It's not a popular opinion but if there are too many people and businesses, it gets too crowded. Valley Village should be all about elbow room. A place where a kid can ride their bike. A place where a mother can walk her child to school and not be in fear or have to worry. If people want hustle and bustle and a party scene, they can go to Hollywood. Valley Village is the place where people want to raise a family, feel safe, and have some peace and quiet.

**Marc Woerschling:** I am running for re-election to the Board of Directors in order to continue efforts to improve the quality of planning and development in Valley Village. I am an urban planner with the City of Los Angeles. Prior to being on the Board, I served with the Board as a consultant, working on projects to remove the unsightly billboards from the Chandler Boulevard median, curb mansions in Valley Village and propose amendments to the Specific Plan. Since 2008 I have also been serving as the Association's representative on Neighborhood Council Valley Village – since 2001 on its Planning Committee and since 2011 on its Vision Committee. Working with the chair of the Vision Committee, we prepared an architectural design manual to encourage the construction of buildings in Valley Village that have architectural quality. In 2016, I became the chair of the Vision Committee. Currently I am a member of a special committee to monitor and make recommendations for the restudy of the North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan.

## LIGHT UP VALLEY VILLAGE



This annual event, organized by Neighborhood Council Valley Village, saw hundreds turn out to celebrate the holiday season and engage with local businesses on Saturday, December 8. VVHA also had a festive presence to promote the association and discuss current Village issues with passers-by. The big draw is always the holiday trolleys, decked out with lights and garlands, which ferries participants to the four venues: Marie et Cie, Carter Sexton/Art Parlor, Val Surf, and of course, the merchants lining Magnolia Boulevard from Whitsett to Wilkinson. There was really something for everyone to enjoy, with live music at Marie et Cie – student bands and performers – and a jazz ensemble at Magnolia and Whitsett; food from various Valley Village restaurants; art exhibits, and of course, the guest of honor... Santa Claus. It was a time to celebrate community – our community of Valley Village-- and to appreciate what it means to live here.

## QUINTESSENTIALLY VALLEY VILLAGE



This month's charmer was built in 1941 for a PGA golfer's mother. She lived there a short time before selling the home to "Wilda," an apparently delightfully eccentric Southern lady who, swathed in lavender and blue, walked the length and breadth of her community with her beloved poodle, Gigi – the two of them became neighborhood fixtures! When she passed, the two-bedroom, one-bath home lay empty for ten years, until it was purchased by its current owner. The house also has a mud room, and fireplaces in the living room and den, with hardwood flooring throughout. The bathroom and kitchen have been thoughtfully remodeled, honoring the charm and aesthetic of the property's original design. And every year, the front yard hosts the resurrection of Wilda's irises....

## WHERE AM I IN ALLEY VILLAGE?

Do you know where in Valley Village these photos were taken? If you think you do, send the address (they're both at the same location) [www.valleyvillageha.com/whereami](http://www.valleyvillageha.com/whereami), and if you're right, we will recognize your sharp eyes in the next issue of the Villager.



# Homeowners Association Membership Meeting

*Wednesday, January 16, 2019 – 6:30pm refreshments – 7:00pm*  
**PLEASE NOTE MEETING VENUE: Faith Presbyterian Church**  
*5000 Colfax Avenue (across the street from Colfax Charter School)*

## Officers & Board Election

Election to begin at 7pm

Also at the meeting:  
Senior Lead Officer Rob Benavidez (LAPD-NH Division)

**Mark Your  
Calendar:**

*2019 Membership Meetings will be on Wednesdays*  
*\* January 16 \* April 17 \* July 17 \* October 16 \**  
*2019 Board of Directors Meetings will be on Mondays*  
*\* Jan 28 \* Mar 18 \* Aug 5 \* Oct 21 \* Nov 5 \* Dec 2 \**

## VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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