

"Together we have clout!"

★ ★ **COMMUNITY MEETING AND DEBATE** ★ ★

— WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024 - 7:15 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM —

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

## WHICH CANDIDATE DO YOU WANT AS OUR NEXT LAUSD SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER?

### THE FUTURE OF LA SCHOOLS IS AT STAKE

**Dan Chang**  
**THE CHALLENGER**



Dan Chang is an LAUSD math teacher and education leader with a 20-year track record of improving LA schools. From teaching pre-algebra to leading ambitious district improvement efforts, Dan is dedicated to seeing students, families, teachers and schools succeed. He's a 20-year Valley resident and teaches math at James Madison Middle School in North Hollywood. Teaching math at a public school was always his dream job.

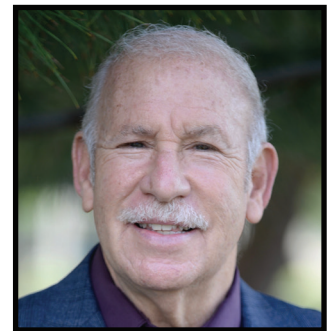
Before teaching, Dan led improvement efforts within LAUSD. In 2012, he cofounded the LA Fund for Public Education, which rallied local artists to support arts education through its Arts Matter campaign. Dan first taught at Green Dot Public Schools where he led the opening of 17 high-performing LA charter high schools. In 2008, he led the turnaround of LAUSD's most troubled Locke High School in Watts. Dan attended UC Berkeley and is Board Chairman of Valley Charter Schools.

Phil Shuman of Fox 11 News will moderate our debate. Email your questions to SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com no later than noon Tuesday August 20th. Streaming starts at 7:15. The Zoom ID is 825 2374 5635 with passcode SOHA914. You can find the Zoom link on SOHA914.com, and we email it to members a day before the meeting. The meeting video will be available about a day after the meeting – search YouTube.com for "SOHA Community Meeting".

#### THE ISSUES

- Wisely Spending the Budget
- Fixing the Bureaucracy
- Improving Test Scores
- Ensuring Student Well-Being
- Updating Charter School Policies
- Getting Fair Share for Valley Schools

**Scott Schmerelson**  
**THE INCUMBENT**



Scott Schmerelson spent almost four decades in the classroom, school counseling, and administration before being elected as an LAUSD District 3 Board Member in 2015. He is a 46-year LA resident and was principal of Johnnie L. Cochran Middle School in South LA where he improved test scores, upgraded the deteriorated school, and improved student, teacher, and parent morale. In high school, he knew he wanted to be a teacher.

Scott has been a proud member of the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles, United Teachers Los Angeles, and Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) where he was ACSA Region 16 President for two years. He served as the treasurer of the Middle Schools Principals' Association and is currently treasurer of the Cuban American Teachers' Association. Scott graduated from Temple University with a BA in Foreign Language Education.



**RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - MARIA'S - SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM**

## **NO RIGHT TO LIVE ON THE STREET**

*by Larry Slade, Homelessness Committee Chair*

On June 28, 2024, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its decision in the City of Grants Pass case wherein it found that it does not violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against "Cruel and Unusual Punishment" for local governments to impose criminal penalties on the homeless for sleeping in public, even if there is no shelter available. Put simply: it is now the law of the land that the homeless cannot live on the street without breaking the law thereby empowering municipalities to forcibly remove them.

In balancing the tension between the rights of the homeless against the rights of the community, the Supremes sided with communities and against the homeless. Sorry, but you do not have a constitutional right to live on the street.

Now what? What does this mean for Los Angeles and its 2nd worst in the nation homeless problem now that the police are empowered to break up the encampments and make the homeless move?

In response to the Grant's Pass ruling, Governor Newsom has issued an executive order directing state agencies to "move urgently to address dangerous encampments while supporting and assisting the individuals living in them." In other words, "move 'em outta there and try to help them ... but move them no matter what."

Of course, the Governor cannot force California municipalities to remove encampments so that will be up to each city. How will LA respond? Will the Mayor order the forcible removal of encampments? Well ... she has done a lot of that already (thankfully) but ultimately, the Mayor and I am sure our councilmember, do not see the ruling or executive order from the Governor as a "fix" to the problem (it's not) and they are unlikely to change their focus on building housing as the best solution to the homeless problem (which it is). It's important to note that both the Mayor and our councilmember disagree with the ruling.

Since SOHA's focus has been largely on the "dangerous homeless" and how to get them off our streets, the Grants Pass case gives hope to those of us who hold two truths to be self-evident: 1) the mentally ill and homeless need help and they should get it; and 2) by virtue of their dual status as both "homeless" and "mentally ill" the US Constitution does not render them to be magically immune from following the basic rules of civic decency and adhering to all of the public safety laws.

The question now becomes, how will the City of Los Angeles make use of the newly defined confines our US Constitution when it applies to the Homeless – especially to when it comes to the "dangerously homeless." What will our local representatives do now? Will anything actually change?

## **HERE WE GO AGAIN!**

*by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair*

Every bit of good news seems to be followed by some bad news. That seems to be true with anything involving the city. Especially when it comes to rezoning LA.

Last year Draft #1 of the Housing Element was released and showed huge areas of single-family neighborhoods being targeted for more density (allowing apartments). We fought that plan because based on the city's own data, there was plenty of new housing capacity to meet the state mandate by allowing more density on commercial corridors and large boulevards in each of our high-resource areas (the city identifies Sherman Oaks as a high-resource area). We organized many other high-resources communities and 185-pages worth of maps later we were able to show the city there was plenty of capacity citywide to reach the state housing mandate.

In June 2024, a revised Draft #2 was released, all the overlays were removed, and single-family, historic districts, and rent-stabilized units were all protected as the city moved forward with their densification plans.

We sent out letters of support for Draft #2 and asked all of you, through our email blasts, to do the same. We also sought support from our citywide partners. The response was massive.

But pro-development groups that don't care how much we build on our corridors, objected to the removal of single-family neighborhoods from being densified. They asked their followers to demand that the Planning Department not protect single-family neighborhoods, historic districts, and the coastal zone. They stated homeowners are all elitist that wield too much influence and refuse to promote social justice in their community by protecting their single-family neighborhoods. They managed to get enough people to call into a public meeting demanding these neighborhoods not be exempt, that the Planning Department is asking for more public input before finalizing their draft and deciding whether to exempt single-family neighborhoods.

We are more than disappointed because Draft #2 offered good incentives for more housing while respecting existing neighborhoods. This now becomes a situation of which side screams the loudest rather than what works best for all the residents of the city. We hope you have sent in your comments regarding Draft #2 as per our email blast request. We must speak up now or we will never be able to protect our neighborhoods from large apartments. We need you and your friends to send in comments of support for Draft #2 that protects our neighborhoods to: [housingelement@lacity.org](mailto:housingelement@lacity.org) by August 25th. Please be sure to reference file number CPC-2023-7068-CA.

## METRO MUST ELIMINATE SEPULVEDA PASS ALTERNATIVE 4

*by Bob Anderson, Transportation Committee Chair*

We ask your help to demand that Metro eliminate the unfair Alternative 4 from further consideration for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project. Alternative 4 is an elevated train in the Valley and a subway on the Westside. It is a very noisy train operating 20 to 40 feet above Sepulveda Blvd and passing by homes, condos, and apartments for five miles in only the Valley. Alternative 4 has support columns that eliminate traffic lanes on high-traffic, congested Sepulveda Boulevard. Our community has been fighting this alternative for years – but Metro refuses to listen. How can they disrespect the Valley so much to propose Alternative 4 – the only high-speed elevated heavy rail trains Metro is considering in all LA County?

The Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association and Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council are working together to eliminate Alternative 4 from further Metro consideration. This still leaves two monorail Alternatives (1 and 3) and two Subway Alternatives (5 and 6) for Metro to choose from.

Please send an email to Metro Board Chair Janice Hahn at [fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov) and tell her:

**Dear Metro Board Chair Janice Hahn and entire Metro Board,**

**Please immediately eliminate Alternative 4 of the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project from further consideration as a possible Locally Preferred Alternative. It is completely unfair to the San Fernando Valley.**

Add your name and community, plus anything else you might like to tell her. Thank You for Protecting Our Communities.



**Alternative 4 Elevated Trains Demolish Hillside, Residences, and Businesses**

## ✓ TAKE THE CD4 SHERMAN OAKS PARK SURVEY ✓

We have a great park in our community called the Van Nuys Sherman Oaks Park. Council District 4 is conducting an "Activities Poll" to better understand our community's preferences for the park. Please go to [www.bit.ly/vnsosurvey](http://www.bit.ly/vnsosurvey) to give your opinions. It only takes a few minutes and will help make our community a better place.

# WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

by Jay Weitzler, Airport Committee Chair

In all our battles with the various agencies that oversee the issues confronting our neighborhood and our city, sometimes we feel that the battle isn't worth it or that we won't really make a difference because we're only a small cog in the giant wheel of bureaucracy that just grinds us down and doesn't listen.

So, we sometimes ask ourselves "Is It Worth Fighting City Hall"?

Well, Peacock aired an episode on one of the real estate sales shows that illustrates exactly why SOHA fights to keep our neighborhood free from excessive airport noise and those tall apartment houses overlooking your back yard. The episode focused on a young couple who bought their first home in Studio City without proper awareness of the aircraft noise and without an appreciation of the loss of privacy and visual impairment that a several-story apartment overlooking their yard would present. Although sales listings must disclose flight paths affecting the property, they – like many excited buyers – did not give it much thought. Unfortunately, after living in their very beautiful home for only a little more than a year the couple decided the airport noise impacted their work-at-home business to such an extent they had to sell and move to a quieter area. When the home was listed for sale, potential buyers were aware of the airport noise and of course noticed the intrusive apartment looking into their yard. As a result, the value of the house was dramatically reduced, and the young couple were forced to sell at a loss of well over \$175,000. That might give us some idea of how these intrusions affect our property values.

Were the unsophisticated young buyers partially to blame for the loss because they didn't do due diligence before they purchased the home? Perhaps, but many of us have lived in our homes for far longer than the noise from our two neighboring airports became a problem. And we now face the prospect of the state and the city mandating construction of tall apartment buildings on our residential streets, many without adequate tenant parking. Unless Maria Kalban, her committee, and others are successful in stopping laws allowing such construction, that is our future fate. And our property values will reflect these intrusions along with the quality of our lives.

That is why we in SOHA work so hard to advocate for our interests and that is why we care. That is why we do what we do.

## RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

### MARIA'S ITALIAN KITCHEN

By Jane Kaplan, Restaurant Chair – Maria's Italian Kitchen started in Hoboken, New Jersey, where Maria Alfano honed her skills in traditional Neapolitan cuisine. In 1968, the Alfano family relocated to Los Angeles, initially opening a small grocery store before transforming their garage into the first Maria's Italian Kitchen. Today, this family-run chain boasts eight locations across Los Angeles, with Maria's daughter Madelyn continuing her mother's legacy by overseeing operations. Renowned for their authentic Italian dishes, Maria's remains a beloved establishment in Sherman Oaks at 13353 Ventura Blvd ([www.mariasitaliankitchen.com](http://www.mariasitaliankitchen.com)). We are excited to announce Maria's as our restaurant of the month for August 21st, celebrating their delicious pastas, chicken dishes, and salads. Please join us for our Social Hour beginning at 6:15.



## NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, President

For the last 30 years, whenever my family craved Chinese food for dinner, there was only one choice for us: Bamboo at 14010 Ventura Blvd. We've loved the food for more than three decades and became personal friends with Joseph, the owner. He maintained a beautiful restaurant filled with art and warmth. Like many restaurateurs in California, owning and operating a restaurant can be extremely challenging. The cost of goods and the continually rising minimum wage make it a daunting experience. After many years, Joseph has sold his restaurant! It is now in new hands and will remain a Chinese restaurant. I look forward to meeting the new owner and trying the food. I wish Joseph great joy in this new chapter of his life and wish the new owner good luck with his restaurant!

While there's change at Bamboo, The GameChanger Brewhouse will officially open on August 17th! They've had a soft opening for a few weeks, but the grand opening is on the 17th. The GameChanger is a family-friendly sports bar with a lunch and dinner menu, as well as a brunch menu on weekends. They're open from 4 PM to 10 PM on weeknights and from 11 AM to 11 PM on weekends. It's a great place to watch basketball, football, and baseball games with your kids. With other families bringing their children, it could also be a fun place for younger sports fans to connect. Including the entire family in a fun way to watch the games and have a meal seems like a great idea! 13730 Ventura Blvd, [www.GameChargerBrewhouse.com](http://www.GameChargerBrewhouse.com).



Pret a Manger opened their first shop in London in 1986, and now they're open at 12184 Ventura Blvd in Studio City. Their mission has always been to serve freshly made food and good organic coffee. Their food is made fresh every day, and whatever doesn't sell is donated to their food rescue partners. The founders of Pret set up a global charity in 1995 to help break the cycle of homelessness by donating their unsold food to local rescue organizations. They offer great sandwiches and fresh salad bowls with protein.

It's all quick and ready to go – just walk in and choose which bowl or sandwich appeals to you. There are 62 Pret locations in the United States, 498 in England, and 291 in London alone, with 58 on the East Coast, 2 in Chicago, and now 2 in Los Angeles. They must be doing something right. I look forward to trying it because I love great ready-to-go food! 12184 Ventura Blvd, [www.Pret.com](http://www.Pret.com).

Just the other day, I needed two light bulbs for the lights in my kitchen, so I went to Lightbulbs Unlimited on Ventura Blvd near Van Nuys. I was disappointed to see that they've closed their Sherman Oaks store after nearly 20 years. They are now only located in Santa Monica and West Hollywood. It was so nice having them in our neighborhood. Like many others, I took the convenience of having a store like that for granted. Now, we'll have to go online to find those more uncommon light bulbs. Darn! Another one bites the dust.

## ▶ IF YOU'RE NOT YET A SOHA MEMBER, PLEASE JOIN! ◀



It's only \$45 per year and members enjoy our monthly newsletters, community meetings, social hours, informative eblasts, and more.



- ▶ Go to [www.SOHA914.com](http://www.SOHA914.com) and click the "JOIN OR RENEW SOHA" button. Select your membership level, enter your name and email, and click on the "Subscribe" button to pay by credit card subscription.
- ▶ You can also mail a check with your name, address, and email to: SOHA Membership, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.
- ▶ IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT US AT [JoinSOHA@gmail.com](mailto:JoinSOHA@gmail.com) or leave us a voicemail at (818) 377-4590.

Do you receive our email updates?

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community organization  
dedicated to preserving and protecting  
the quality of life here in Sherman Oaks.

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# soha

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## IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

▶ **- DON'T MISS OUR COMMUNITY MEETING AND DEBATE -**  
**THE INCUMBENT VS THE CHALLENGER** ◀  
**- THE FUTURE OF VALLEY SCHOOLS IS AT STAKE -**

▶ **Find out about the right to live on the street, a new front on**  
**the battle to save single-family neighborhoods, elevated** ◀  
**trains in your backyard, and a new community park survey.**