

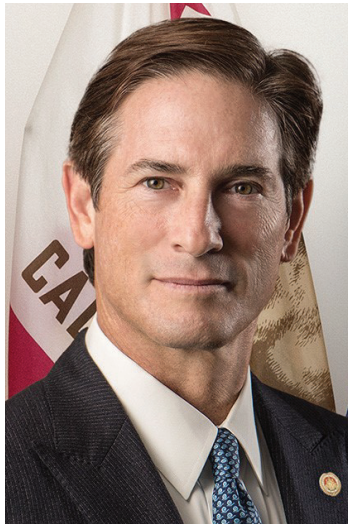
"Together  
we have  
clout!"

## ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025 - 7:15 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

# NATHAN HOCHMAN IS ANGELENOS' HOPE FOR A SAFER CITY



Hear his plans for:

- Restoring Trust in the DA's Office
- Making LA Safe Again
- And much more...

On Dec. 3, 2024, Nathan Hochman was sworn in as the 44th Los Angeles County District Attorney, defeating the incumbent DA by getting almost 60% of the vote. Nathan vows to improve public safety by pursuing appropriate sentences for violent and serious offenders, while offering counseling and rehabilitation to those whose crimes were motivated by addiction or mental illness.

A lifelong Angeleno, DA Hochman served as Assistant US Attorney General for the Tax Division of the Department of Justice in 2008. Prior to that, he was an Assistant US Attorney for the Central District of California from 1990 to 1997, serving in the Criminal Division. He has had an extensive career in the private sector, as a partner of several nationwide law firms and as a leading expert in tax law, criminal defense, and environmental law. Nate previously served as President of the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission. He graduated magna cum laude from Brown University and earned his law degree from Stanford Law School.

Don't miss our live meeting and the opportunity to ask your questions directly to our new DA. Or you can email your questions to [SOHAZoomMitg@gmail.com](mailto:SOHAZoomMitg@gmail.com) no later than noon Tuesday January 14th. Streaming starts at 7:15 pm. Zoom ID is 875 8468 3250 with passcode SOHA914. Zoom link is on [SOHA914.com](http://SOHA914.com). The meeting video is available a day after the meeting – search [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) for "SOHA Community Meeting".

## HELP MAKE SHERMAN OAKS A CLEANER PLACE

*by Howard Jaffe, Sherman Oaks Cleanup Committee*

The Volunteers Cleaning Communities Sherman Oaks Group makes our community a cleaner place. The group's volunteer cleanups are held on the first and third Saturday every month, usually from 8:30 to 10:30 am. The group provides the cleanup equipment and cleanup plan. All they need are volunteers to help them. For more information, meet-up locations, cleanup times, and volunteering to help, please contact Howard Jaffe at [h.jaffe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:h.jaffe@sbcglobal.net).



**RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - THE VALLEY INN**  
**FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 4 - SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM**

## **THE THREAT TO THE “DANGEROUSLY HOMELESS”**

*by Larry Slade, Homelessness Committee Chair*

Unless you have been living in a cave, you have heard about the trial of Daniel Perry in NYC. Perry was a passenger on a subway train on May 1, 2023. While riding the subway, Perry witnessed Daniel Nealy, a homeless man, behaving in a threatening and unstable manner. The other passengers on the train appeared afraid and intimidated by this man, and Perry, a former Marine, took matters into his own hands and restrained Nealy in a chokehold to protect the other passengers. Unfortunately, Perry restrained Nealy to the point where he cut off Nealy's oxygen supply until he died. It was an unfortunate outcome all around – but most of all for Nealy.

Here, we have a situation where a homeless and deeply disturbed man was permitted to wander the streets and pose a risk to passengers on a subway. Nealy clearly presented a danger to himself and others, but the system let him wander and threaten freely – and this resulted in his death. Did Perry “kill” Nealy? According to a NYC jury, the answer is a resounding “no”. The jury even found Perry “not guilty” of a lesser charge of “criminally negligent homicide”. In the end, a jury of Perry's peers found him guilty of nothing and let him walk out of the court the applause of the onlookers in the court.

Indeed, people across the country cheered for Perry's acquittal – although not everyone was celebrating. To my mind, Perry was not found to be guilty because people are sick of living in fear of the “Nealys” of the world. People no longer want to elevate the rights of the “dangerously homeless” above those of everyday citizens. Being homeless might not be a crime, but posing a very real danger to others remains criminal.

The justice system failed. It failed Nealy and rewarded Perry when the jury told him “It's unfortunate that Nealy died, but we understand why you did what you did, and we will not punish you for it”. I must admit I understand the verdict in this case and take it as a sign that our government, including the City of Los Angeles, is out of touch with the frustration level of our citizens. We are tired of subordinating our rights as members of this community to the untreated mental health of any given homeless person. We want to be safe in our community. I certainly do not condone vigilantism. But I must admit to understanding how a jury can refuse to convict a person who was trying to protect the public at the expense of an untreated, unhoused, and dangerously mentally ill person.

It seems clear that the system failed Nealy, resulting in his death. Sure, Perry held the grip around Nealy's neck, but the noose around Nealy's neck was already there. This event presents a sad state of affairs. Until LA decides to forcibly remove and treat the dangerously homeless, this will no doubt happen again. It's just a matter of time. I pray that I am wrong.

## **EVERYONE WINS WITH THE NEW HOUSING ELEMENT**

*by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair*

Good news – LA's Housing Element, the Planning Dept's blueprint for rezoning the city, was approved by the City Council without rezoning of our single-family neighborhoods. This Housing Element will create new affordable housing incentives for developers while protecting single-family, historic-district, and environmentally sensitive areas from higher density.

As logical and straightforward as this Housing Element is and how much density it will add to the city, getting the draft approved was not easy. Land speculators want to build apartments in single-family neighborhoods. They have convinced the media, educational institutions, and politicians that unless all neighborhoods are rezoned to allow apartments, we will be unable to build the housing the state mandates.

The Vision Committee of the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council and our United Neighbors groups have worked with the Planning Department, City Council offices, and the mayor's office showing them that there is plenty of zoning capacity to build all needed housing along our commercial corridors that run through communities. We can create more affordable housing in mixed-income developments on these corridors because they offer developers favorable economy of scale.

After much outreach by all our groups, the Planning Department finally presented the draft Housing Element. This draft found enough zoning capacity to meet the state's housing mandate while affirmatively furthering fair housing without the need to end single-family neighborhoods. Planning's focus centered on commercial corridors.

As the Housing Element progressed through the city approval process, our United Neighbors groups were there supporting the Planning Department's draft. With much protesting from pro-development groups and media outlets, the Housing Element still passed all city agency hearings without single-family neighborhoods being rezoned for multi-family.

The last hurdle for final approval was the December 10th City Council meeting. At that meeting, our own Councilmember Raman introduced a last-minute amendment that would needlessly rezone parts of single-family neighborhoods. She delivered a speech about homelessness and the inability for the city to meet housing goals set by the state if single-family areas were not included. Perhaps unknown to the councilmember, the state had already sent a letter of support to the Planning Dept for their draft. The state's approval is mandatory and is not easily received, so this letter was a big deal.

At this hearing, Councilmembers debated the issue about including single-family neighborhoods. Some explained to Councilmember Raman that zoning had nothing to do with the slowdown in getting more housing built in LA. They stated that large housing projects, even on commercial corridors, were not moving forward because banks were not approving loans and the barriers caused by the high cost of borrowing money. Most economist agree that slow housing production is not a zoning issue but an economic issue. Rezoning single-family neighborhoods is not going to solve that problem.

Councilmember Raman said she supports "gentle density" in our single-family neighborhoods. State law allows up to four housing units on every single-family lot. Any rezoning that allows just five units of housing (as proposed by Councilmember Raman's motion) would automatically make that property "multi-family" which grants a developer the right by state law to build a six-story apartment next door to single-family homes – and no one could stop this, not even the councilwoman. That is not gentle density.

Hooray! The full City Council voted to approve the Planning Department's Housing Element without the rezoning of single-family neighborhoods. We need affordable single-family homes just as much as we need affordable apartments. We are currently working with the Planning Department on ideas to add more single-family homes that could be affordable. The fight for single-family zones is not over. We must stay vigilant. We need to keep working together to create a beautiful and inclusive Sherman Oaks.

What lobbyists and some politicians may not know – or want to acknowledge – is that developing our commercial corridors could create new vibrant neighborhoods without displacing anyone. It could create plazas for residents to gather and could revitalize our businesses with added foot traffic.

Thank you all that helped support our efforts.

## **- VAN NUYS AIRPORT - DOES THE CITY COUNCIL REALLY PROTECT US?**

*by Jay Weitzler, Airport Committee Chair*

Once again, the hot mess masquerading as our City Council voted to protect the business interests of Van Nuys Airport (VNY) tenants at the expense of the health of surrounding residents in Van Nuys and Sherman Oaks. In this instance, it seems they were not properly prepared, or didn't care enough to prepare, to make an informed decision on whether to allow possible expansion of the airport, resulting in increased noise and pollution for neighbors.

The issue was whether to allow a helicopter business, Bonseph-Helinet, to sign a lease for up to 25 more years or deny the lease in support of the many residents and the Council's own denial of the lease earlier this year. The residents and their Councilmember, Imelda Padilla, contended that the lease did not protect against expanded jet or helicopter use and did not contain proper measures to restrict noise and environmental impacts.

Bonseph has operated a helicopter charter business at VNY for 35 years, supplying aircraft to the entertainment industry and fire departments, and transporting medical patients to hospitals in Southern California. These are fine, even commendable, operations – but the new lease does not appear to have protections limiting Bonseph to those activities. Considering their plans to build new ground facilities, offices, and hangars – and spend \$26 million to do so – we reasonably expect they will expand their business and increase the number of flights. The result will make VNY, already the largest general aviation airport in the country, even more of an environmental disaster.

When the City Council denied the lease in March, they were apparently unprepared to make a final decision and remained so until the last minute when the issue came up again – after Bonseph appealed. Suddenly, the DAY BEFORE THE VOTE, it was brought to their attention that the FAA had come to a preliminary decision that the Council had violated

certain Federal rules against limiting aeronautical activities in the lease denial. The LA City Attorney's office and Mayor Bass then warned the Council that the FAA could now withhold hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to both VNY and LAX if this lease was not allowed. In view of this news, the Council reversed course and granted Bonseph their lease as well as agreeing to settle the lawsuit Bonseph had filed in the interim.

Why, we ask, didn't the City Council properly explore the possible denial of funds in advance of the vote? There does not seem to be any contact by councilmembers directly with the FAA to work around the theoretical denial of grant money or even any inquiry as to how much would be at stake. It seems the Council did nothing to learn if a denial of funds could be avoided. Might our City Council, representing about four million people, have attempted to negotiate the denial of money with the FAA directly? Since the FAA decision was "preliminary" and no amount was even discussed, did the Council reach an informed decision based on knowledge, or did they just guess? While a denial of a substantial grant is certainly a factor in deciding the issue, how much are we really talking about in view of a city budget of almost \$13 billion? Is guesswork the way our city is governed? We ask and hope for a lot more than that when our health and safety is at risk.

## SOHA HOLIDAY DRIVE DONATES \$40,000+ OF TOYS

SOHA's 26th Annual Toy Drive was wildly successful. Thank you to everyone who donated toys that the LA County Department of Children and Family Services (LADCFS) distributed to needy children.

Attendance was wonderful, including many elected officials who donated their personal time to participate in this event and talk with their constituents – LA Mayor Karen Bass, LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Assemblymember Nick Schultz, Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, LAPD Captain Christopher Zine, former Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, former City Councilmember and Controller Wendy Gruel, LADCFS Regional Administrator Muzeyyen Balaban, and representatives from many elected offices. We also want to thank Gelsons for donating their parking lot and providing wonderful food.



RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

THE VALLEY INN

By Jane Kaplan, Restaurant Chair – We're thrilled to announce that The Valley Inn Restaurant will take center stage as January's Restaurant of the Month! This legendary establishment, with its vintage charm and irresistible menu, continues to remind us why it has remained a beloved institution for generations. They will treat SOHA to a special showcase of their celebrated fare. Whether you're a regular or a first-timer, this is a chance to experience the flavors that have made The Valley Inn a cornerstone of our community. This isn't just about savoring steaks and burgers – it's about celebrating a restaurant that has been there for us through thick and thin, a place where memories are made and traditions are kept alive.

Step back in time and savor the taste of tradition at Sherman Oaks' oldest culinary gem – The Valley Inn Restaurant. Celebrating 77 years of culinary excellence has never tasted so good! Since opening its doors in 1947, this cherished local treasure has stood as a testament to timeless flavors, warm hospitality, and a deep connection to our community. It has been the go-to spot for comfort food that feels like home, whether you're stopping in for a hearty lunch or an elegant dinner. From classic sandwiches and fresh salads to juicy steaks and gourmet burgers, the menu offers something to delight every palate. It's not just food; it's a slice of history served with a smile.



Why You Should Be Excited! The Valley Inn is more than a restaurant – it’s a story of resilience, excellence, and community spirit. It’s where families have celebrated milestones, friends have toasted to good times, and locals have found comfort in its timeless ambiance. If you haven’t yet experienced the magic of The Valley Inn, now is the time to do so. Join us on January 15th to honor this iconic Sherman Oaks landmark, indulge in its incredible cuisine, and connect with neighbors who, like you, appreciate the unique legacy of this treasured restaurant.

## NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, President

### **What a Year This Has Been – Rebuilding, Reflecting, and Reaching for Solutions**

As 2024 comes to a close, it’s incredible to reflect on how far our communities have come since the shadow of COVID-19 loomed large over our lives. The streets of Sherman Oaks, once eerily quiet, are now bustling with energy again. Vibrant new restaurants and stores have opened their doors, filling the neighborhood with the hum of possibility and the aroma of freshly baked goods. Life, it seems, has finally returned to something resembling normal.

Yet, as we savor this rebound, we are reminded that challenges persist. A lot of the businesses in the area are having a difficult time making ends meet. Homelessness remains a visible and pressing issue on our streets – a stark reminder of work still to be done. These individuals – mothers, fathers, veterans, and youth – are not just statistics. They are part of the fabric of our community, and finding compassionate, sustainable ways to address their needs is a challenge we must rise to meet.



In tandem with these concerns, a subtle but undeniable rise in crime has prompted many to reflect on how we can better protect ourselves and each other. But here’s the thing: protection isn’t just about locking doors or installing cameras. It’s about building bridges, not walls, within our communities. It’s about leaning into the connections we’ve made, reigniting a spirit of solidarity, and fostering a neighborhood culture where looking out for one another is second nature.

### **A Call to Action – Start a Neighborhood Watch**

If your neighborhood doesn’t already have a watch program, now is the time to start one. Imagine a network of neighbors who know each other by name, who check in regularly, and who take collective responsibility for their shared space. Neighborhood watches aren’t just about safety – they’re about community. They’re about turning strangers into allies and allies into friends. Starting one is simpler than you think.

1. Gather Interest – Begin with a small group of neighbors who share your concerns.
2. Organize Meetings – Discuss common goals and identify areas of concern.
3. Work with Local Authorities – Partner with our amazing senior lead police officers for guidance and resources.
4. Stay Active and Informed – Use social media groups/apps to communicate, share updates, and stay connected.

This year has reminded us that progress isn’t just about returning to what we had before – it’s about creating something even better. By addressing the challenges of homelessness, crime, and community building with empathy and action, we have the chance to make Sherman Oaks not just a place where life feels normal again, but a place where it truly thrives. So, let’s start the new year on a high note – supporting one another, solving problems together, and stepping into 2025 with hope, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to our shared home.



## **SOHA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UNDERWAY IF YOU’RE NOT YET A MEMBER – PLEASE JOIN!**



SOHA’s Annual membership drive starts this month. Subscribing members who paid last year by credit card are all set – you will automatically renew for 2025. We will send members who paid by check emailed renewal reminders or mailed renewal envelopes.

SOHA membership is only \$45 per year and includes our monthly newsletter, community meetings, special notices, and much more. Go to [www.SOHA914.com](http://www.SOHA914.com) and click “JOIN OR RENEW SOHA” to pay by credit card subscription. Or you can mail a check with your name, address, and email to: SOHA Membership, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.

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**Hear new LA DA Nathan Hochman's plans to**  
**restore trust in the DA's Office and make LA safe again.** ◀

▶ **Find out about the threat to the "dangerously homeless",**  
**a big win with the new Housing Element, and a big**  
**question about the Van Nuys Airport and the City Council.** ◀