

"Together we have clout!"

★ **COMMUNITY MEETING AND CD4 DEBATE** ★

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 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 ADVOCATING FOR SHERMAN OAKS IN CITY HALL?

EITHER COULD WIN OUTRIGHT IN THE MARCH 5TH PRIMARY SO DON'T MISS THIS CRITICAL COUNCIL DEBATE!

Nithya Raman
THE INCUMBENT



Nithya Raman is our current councilmember, an immigrant to America, urban planner, and Harvard and MIT graduate. She has focused on homelessness, housing hundreds of people, and reducing unsheltered homelessness in the district. She voted for major legislation, including the largest expansion of tenant protections in 40 years. She is the mayor's appointee to the South Coast Air Quality Management District and LA County Affordable Housing Solutions Agency and serves as Chair of the Council's Housing and Homelessness Committee.

She is endorsed by the LA County Democratic Party, the progressive Democratic Socialists of America Los Angeles (DSA-LA), and many others.

THE ISSUES



- Homelessness
- Crime & Safety
- Affordable Housing
- Protecting Single-Family
- LAPD Funding
- Independent Redistricting



Ethan Weaver
THE CHALLENGER



Ethan Weaver is a Deputy LA City Attorney and UCLA Law graduate. He used his pragmatic, level-headed approach to work with community groups, businesses, and city agencies on problems including homeless encampments, street assaults, illegal dumping, graffiti, and life-threatening drugs like fentanyl. He helped spearhead Project LEAD, a groundbreaking program that diverts homeless substance abusers from the criminal justice system into drug treatment, mental health, job training, and placement programs.

He is endorsed by the LA Police Protective League, United Firefighters Union, Service Employees International Union, and many others.

Email questions for the candidates to SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com by Tuesday January 16th. Streaming works great now and starts at 7:15. The Zoom ID is 816 6990 1926 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".

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

WAITING AND WAITING FOR NEW HOUSING MAPS

by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair

Here's what you need to know about the city's rezoning plans – because it can greatly impact Sherman Oaks in 2024 and many years to come.

As we have reported in the past, the LA Planning Department's "Housing Element" is one mechanism by which the city will rezone our communities to allow for more housing. We have been working for the past year with our councilmember, senior planning department staff, and the mayor's office showing them that in Sherman Oaks and much of LA, there are more than enough building opportunities on commercial corridors to add all needed housing mandated by the state. At the same time, we showed them that this new housing can become a real asset to the community and that we can still protect single-family and sensitive multi-family neighborhoods from unnecessary higher density. This is not NIMBYism – it's just common sense. The Planning Department's current maps show many of our single-family neighborhoods rezoned for apartments. The city had planned to issue revised Housing Element maps based on broad public input by late Summer. In early Fall the Planning Department announced that the revised Housing Element and new maps were delayed but informed us that single-family neighborhoods throughout the city would not be further densified.

We are still waiting for the Planning Department to release the revised Housing Element and maps. These are the only way we can verify that our neighborhoods are truly being left alone. The originally promised late-Summer release became late Fall, then became early December, and is now late January 2024. What this means is that the public comment period on the new maps is getting shorter – in fact there may be no comment period – because the final submission date to the state is set for February 2025. Once the Housing Element and maps are released to the public, they will need to go immediately into the Environmental Review process and then through review by all city agencies that need to approve them – the Planning Commission, City Council PLUM Committee, City Council, City Attorney, and back to City Council – before being submitted to the state. All this is quite disheartening because every delay gives the public less time to fight if the "promised" changes have not been made. The mayor always says communities need to have "skin in the game" when determining where new housing should appear in neighborhoods. Yet, all her new directives and the Planning Department's Housing Element keep trimming or cutting out public comment time.

We were recently invited to again present our community maps in late January 2024 to senior Planning Department staff and the Deputy Mayor of Economic Development. We will attend and present at that meeting but find this a bit disingenuous since the time to discuss better alternatives and changes to the city's plans will be long since passed.

We ask all of you to stay with us as we continue to fight for smart planning in our community and across the city. Remember, we need to add affordable housing, but the real issue is where and how to add it. We'll update you as soon as we see the new Housing Element and maps. We may quickly need you to submit comments. Fighting for good planning in Sherman Oaks is easier if we have an advocate in City Hall. Be sure to attend our January debate with Council District 4 candidates so you can decide who will be the best advocate for us. Believe me, it has always mattered – but matters even more now!

THE RIGHT MAYOR, IN THE RIGHT TIME, WITH THE RIGHT FOCUS - WILL IT WORK?

by Larry Slade, Homelessness Committee Chair

Recently, I had the honor of being interviewed by both the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times in connection with the one-year anniversary of Mayor Karen Bass' inauguration. They wanted to talk about her anniversary but also specifically focus on how her efforts to date were helping to ameliorate the homeless problem in Los Angeles. I was anxious to provide them with my feedback.

I told them that I thought Mayor Bass was the right person for this job. She's experienced and hyper focused on the issue. She declared a state of emergency on day one and has remained focused on helping people off the streets. She has been proactive and has worked diligently bring all the resources that she can to bear on the problem. That is all good and I give her an A-minus for her prodigious efforts. Coupled with the significant support the problem is receiving from the state and Governor Newsom, our mayor is on the court and in the game.

We now know more about what causes homelessness and understand more deeply how to address it. We have elected officials sharply focused on fixing it. And, we have allocated more resources than ever before in history to pay for it. If we are ever going to be able to help fix the problem, now is the time it will happen. Now is the time we will see that change.

This mayor, at this time and place, harnessing and applying these resources, will either finally put a dent in the number of homeless on the streets or we will be left to wonder what, if anything, we can do to fix the problem. Like you, I am pulling for these efforts to bear fruit and for the reduction of homeless in our community to be palpable. Of course, we would all like a permanent fix to the problem. We dream of a day when no one must suffer by living on the streets. But is that even possible?

It is often said that homelessness is an ocean fed by many rivers. One of the strongest rivers feeding homelessness is mental illness. The mentally ill homeless (of which there are many) present a unique challenge. Our government agencies and non-profits do not have the tools that they need to force the mentally ill homeless, who are often dangerous, into treatment. The laws don't exist to permit it. The facilities to house them likewise don't exist.

I want to have an optimistic outlook for the future of homelessness in Los Angeles. I want to believe that with the right leadership, resources, and resolve, we can get people the help they need to get them off the streets. For now, I am seeing the glass as half full. Time will tell if my optimism is well founded or simply wishful thinking.

THE COUNCIL DISTRICT 4 ELECTION DILEMMA

by Tom Glick, Planning Committee Chair

If the 2020 election cycle taught us anything, those who are in power will do anything to stay in power and those who want to be in power will do the same to get it. The 2024 election is shaping up to be no different. Both nationally and locally, 2024 will bring us much discussion not about the issues but about one's ability to lead in these divided times. The 2024 election for the Council District 4 seat is already shaping up to be one of the hottest contests in the city's history and unfortunately will probably be determined not in the General Election in November 2024 but in the March 5th Primary Election. As such, SOHA is holding its CD 4 Debate on January 17th between the incumbent, Councilmember Nithya Raman, and her challenger, Deputy City Attorney Ethan Weaver. There is one other candidate in the election, but he has insufficient fundraising to participate in the debate. Both Nithya Raman and Ethan Weaver have similar views on most of the issues facing the city. Both are lifelong Democrats although Nithya Raman aligns herself with the progressive Democratic Socialists of America Los Angeles (DSA-LA) who were very active in getting her elected in 2020, and they are following a similar role in 2024. Ethan Weaver is an openly gay man who faced rejection from his parents and community when he came out and has used that experience to motivate him to fight for others. Both have pledged support of our single-family neighborhoods. Of course, Councilmember Raman's track record on supporting single-family neighborhoods over the past three years as our local elected representative has been inconsistent at best.

Nithya Raman has gotten several good endorsements including the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA-LA), Sierra Club, Westside Young Democrats, Abundant Housing LA, Jane Fonda Climate PAC, Planned Parenthood, and the LA County Democratic Party. But note that in early December 2023, Ethan Weaver had the endorsement of the nominating committee of the LA County Democratic Party until Councilmember Raman used a last-ditch effort by getting Mayor Bass to intercede to support her nomination with the full voting membership and as a result was able to get the endorsement of the full Democratic Party (which really should have been pro forma for any established Democrat to get). She has endorsements from several politicians including Mayor Bass, Congressman Brad Sherman, and fellow councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky.

Ethan Weaver has followed a traditional fundraising path and gotten his name out there before the voters. He has attended many community events over the past year, supported many communities against overdevelopment, and is gaining large and growing followings from his social media posts. Weaver has gotten several major endorsements too including the United Fire Fighters of Los Angeles City, Los Angeles Police Protective League, LAAPOA (Airport Police), SEIU (Nurses), LGBTQ+ Victory Fund, Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, and many local construction unions including the United Steelworkers 675, Plumbers and Steamfitters 761, and Laborers LiUNA 300. Ethan Weaver additionally has endorsement from several politicians including California State Treasurer Fiona Ma, State Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco, and former State Senator Bob Hertzberg.

Of course, council elections should be decided not by endorsements but on local issues like homelessness, crime, housing, transportation, and land use. In office for more than three years, Nithya Raman has a demonstrated record by which the voters can really judge her performance on homelessness, housing, land use, crime, consumer fraud, constituent

services, and other important issues. She has been a leader in tenant reforms which, especially during Covid, has helped bolster tenant rights and protections.

Ethan Weaver has been a Deputy City Attorney with the Neighborhood Prosecutor Hollywood Division of the LA City Attorney's office for almost seven years. That position within the city gives him a good understanding of the issues and how to work within the city's system to create some real changes. He has campaigned on the central fact that he will be better positioned as a City Attorney who has been on the front lines to combat the homelessness crisis. He promises to continue to fight for all communities and neighborhoods and will put the needs of District 4 constituents first.

In the end, this election will probably be decided in the March 5th Primary Election, so it's very important to get the vote out. The future of our established neighborhoods depends upon who leads Council District 4 for the next four years.



Coley's Authentic Jamaican Food has been enchanting taste buds across LA for four decades. Imagine the flavors swirling through the bustling streets of Leimert Park in 1982, taking a joyous detour to the lively corners of Inglewood, and making a bold move to the vibrant landscape of North Hollywood. But wait, the saga doesn't end there! About six months ago, in a twist that's both spicy and sweet, Chef Don Coley's daughter and her partner have brought the magic to Sherman Oaks on Burbank Blvd near Hazeltine.

Picture this – 14056 Burbank Blvd where the tantalizing aroma of authenticity beckons you into Coley's. It's not just a restaurant; it's a journey through time and taste, a feast for the senses that promises to transport you straight to the heart of Jamaica. From the succulent chicken curry that dances with spices to the fiery jerk chicken that's a flavor explosion, every dish at Coley's is a passport to culinary bliss. But let's not forget the unsung heroes – the plantains, golden and caramelized, and the rice, a fluffy cloud of perfection. The menu is a love letter to Jamaica, and every bite is a celebration.

Why settle for the ordinary when you can embark on a flavor-filled adventure right here in Sherman Oaks? The anticipation is palpable, the cravings insatiable – mark your calendars for the grand tasting at our January 17th SOHA meeting. Come hungry, leave enchanted! We thank Coley's for their community support and are looking forward to enjoying their delicious food during our Social Hour beginning at 6:15.



VAN NUYS AIRPORT UPDATE

by Jay Weitzler, Airport Committee Chair

We have some potentially good news regarding the latest Van Nuys Airport (VNY) shenanigans. Last week Motion 23-1339 was presented to the City Council that could lead to a specific Airport Plan at Van Nuys and a moratorium on development until the plan is complete. Councilmember Padilla introduced the motion, seconded by Councilmember Raman. This is very important and necessary to end the continued expansion of the VNY Airport by stopping the recategorizing of non-aeronautical businesses into more jet and helicopter flights. If the motion is adopted by the council, it would also require modernization of operations and consider the need to reduce toxic emissions from allowed flights.

As you know, VNY has turned into a jet airport for the wealthy few at the expense of everyone else because of the lobbying and marketing efforts of business interests, including the Van Nuys Airport Association (VNAA) and its leadership. Without an existing Airport Specific Plan, LA World Airports and its VNY staff have been listening to VNY developers, charter companies, and fixed-base operators to expand the use of jets. This has resulted in massive, highly damaging air pollution and an increasing carbon footprint of the operations.

With this motion, we hope the LA City Council will begin to pay attention to the continued VNY Airport expansion, begin to halt the damage, and start reshaping the landscape into one that is compatible with its location in a very densely populated area surrounded on all sides by homes, schools, day care centers, parks, and small businesses.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, President

Wishing you all a joyful, healthy, and peaceful New Year!

As we step into 2024, the global landscape poses challenges with conflicts like the Israeli-Hamas war and the ongoing situation in Ukraine. However, amidst these concerns, positive signs emerge, with mortgage rates decreasing, a significant upswing in the stock market, and a vibrant economy. Hopeful for a year of prosperity, positive change, and above all, peace.

Exciting developments in the neighborhood include Arte Bottega, a new landscaping and pool business on the corner at 13336 Ventura Blvd, at the corner of Nagle. Set to offer high-end outdoor lighting, beautiful planters, furniture, plants, and pool-related services, it promises to be a go-to place for enhancing outdoor spaces.

Venturing into culinary delights, we explored Coley's Authentic Jamaican Cuisine in Sherman Oaks, a gem we discovered through a news segment. The dining experience was exceptional, with delectable seafood fritters, chicken curry, jerk chicken, and red snapper. Coley's, rooted in LA since 1982, continues its legacy in Sherman Oaks, and we're excited to feature them as our Restaurant of the Month in January. They are located at 14056 Burbank on the corner of Hazeltine and Burbank (www.TheOriginalcoleysllc.com).



On a different note, the former Hamburger Hamlet location, closed for a few years, seems poised for a new restaurant tenant. Anticipation builds for what's to come ... I'll keep you posted.

While strolling along Ventura Blvd between Greenbush and Sunnyslope, we marveled at the beautiful trees planted over two decades ago. However, dismay struck when we noticed a tree in front of NexGen Fitness had been significantly altered, presumably for better visibility of their signage. Unfortunately, this move garnered negative attention, as the community laments the loss of a once-majestic tree.

As we embrace the new year, let's hope for positive transformations and a flourishing community.

SOHA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

SOHA's Annual Membership Drive begins this January!



If you're already a SOHA member, you'll receive an email or mail notice if your membership needs renewing.



If you paid or renewed by credit card, you have a membership subscription that automatically renews each year - so you're all set.

If you're not already a SOHA member, please consider joining. It's only \$45 per year and members enjoy our monthly newsletters, community meetings, informative eblasts, and more.

Go to www.SOHA914.com and click on the "JOIN SOHA" button. Select your membership level and click on Pay via PayPal to use a credit card. Or you can mail a check to SOHA Membership, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.

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FACING SHERMAN OAKS FOR YEARS ◀

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