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SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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Homeless in L A: Who, Why and the Solution



COMMUNITY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, March 16, 2016 - 7:15 PM
NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL
RIVERSIDE & WOODMAN, SHERMAN OAKS

Our March Meeting will focus on the homeless problem in Sherman Oaks and the City. It is estimated that there are 26,000 homeless in the City.

Our panel of experts include Tamar Galatzan, Deputy Los Angeles City Attorney; John Horn, Co-Chair of the San Fernando Valley Homeless Coalition; Alisa Orduna, Homelessness Analyst for Mayor Eric Garcetti's Office; and Molly Rysman, Housing and Homelessness Deputy for Los Angeles County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

The City spends approximately \$100 million a year on the homeless including policing. The County spends \$965 million including jail costs.

Why are there now so many more homeless? Do they want services and places to live? Are the police prohibited from taking action? Is the solution more money? Is it a City or County responsibility? Is it a good idea for the public to give homeless people money? Should taxes be increased to solve the problem?

Attend the March Meeting to have your questions answered and to learn what can be done to help with this epidemic situation.

Jules Feir announces that MidiCi Neapolitan Pizza will be our Restaurant of the Month.

Located at the corner of Ventura Boulevard and Cedros Avenue, MidiCi has opened to rave reviews. This attractive and busy restaurant is unlike any other.

The credit goes to Amit Kleinberger who is also the CEO of Menchie's Frozen Yogurt. Forbes Magazine has recognized Mechnie's as "Americas Most Promising Top 100 Companies" and Amit is listed as one of "Americas Most Promising CEO's."

There isn't room enough in this Newsletter to write more about Amit and so visit MidiCi to experience their Signature Neapolitan Pizza, Neapolitan appetizers, Fresh Salads and other delicious menu items including finishing your meal off with their authentic Italian gelato.

We look forward to enjoying a sampling of their delicious food during our Social Hour that starts at 6:15 p.m.

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Bob Anderson reports that the November election will be a crucial turning point for Valley rapid transit, and SOHA will keep you up to date with a continuing series of articles over the next few months. So, keep watching. LAMetro, the organization that plans, builds, and operates rapid transit systems across Los Angeles County, is working on a November ballot measure to fund increased rapid transit.

Right now, most of the light-rail rapid transit countywide, such as the Red, Blue, Gold, Expo, and Purple lines, is being funded through a one-half-cent sales tax passed under Measure R in 2008. Such tax measures need two-thirds voter approval, and Measure R squeaked by with 67.22 percent. The November 2016 ballot measure – most call it Measure R2 – will extend the existing Measure R one-half-cent sales tax and add a new additional one-half-cent sales tax. This gives LAMetro a huge pot of money to build new rapid transit.

What have we gotten so far? Well, the Valley has about 1.8 million people out of about 10 million in Los Angeles County. That's 18 percent. SOHA wants to ensure that the Valley finally gets its fair share. LAMetro boasts of 80 rail rapid transit stations countywide. That's great! But, guess what? The Valley only got two of these stations! That's less than three percent. What happened to the other 15 percent? How do we get back our fair share? And quickly! We've already been set back at least ten years.

SOHA wants real commitments to near-term completion of three critical projects that will form long overdue north-south and east-west transit corridors in the Valley:

- **Sepulveda Pass Corridor – Light rail from the Orange line at Sepulveda Boulevard and Oxnard Street, through the Sepulveda Pass and connecting to at least the new Expo Line on the Westside, and preferably all the way to LAX.**
- **East Valley Transit Corridor – Light rail from the Sylmar MetroLink to the Orange Line at Sepulveda Boulevard and Oxnard Street.**
- **Orange Line Upgrade – Light rail with safer and faster grade separations from the Red Line North Hollywood station (or, even better, Burbank Airport) to the West Valley.**

What do we mean by real commitments? Not promises or pledges or ballot measure language that dances around potential projects. We want formal, written, legally binding requirements by LAMetro and politicians that absolutely guarantee that the Valley will get its fair share of rapid transit in the very near future.

LAMetro is moving forward now and drafting their November ballot Measure R2. They are studying and modeling all potential projects countywide to develop a Draft Expenditure Plan that will soon be released for public comment. LAMetro is planning to make their final decision on the ballot measure in June.

SOHA is closely following all LAMetro activities and will keep you informed of their progress and of opportunities to voice your comments. LAMetro needs strong Valley voter support to reach two-thirds majority approval for its tax increase. Together, we can make sure that the Valley gets its fair share this time. We won't be fooled again!

* * *

Marshall Long and Kimberlee Gerston Chairs of SOHA Committee studying the proposed Sunkist project met with the Sunkist design group and their expediter Ira Handleman. Also in attendance were the traffic consultant for the developer and their architect, and Julia Duncan from Councilman David Ryu's office. Discussion was wide ranging. The design team discussed the status of the project. The scope is approximately the same as in previous designs. It includes 298 dwelling units, 39,241 square feet of commercial space. The existing building will be dedicated to commercial office space with parking below.

The parking for the retail areas and for the office areas is also in a separate six-story building, with two floors of below grade parking and four stories above. As before, the environmental studies are not yet complete. The plan is to submit the project to the City for review in August. The traffic engineer, Pat Gibson, summarized his findings; that the impacted intersections were Woodman and Hazeltine Avenues at Riverside Drive. The traffic analysis included traffic from a proposed expansion of the Fashion Square shopping center, but not the Chase Knolls project.

Objections were raised to the blocky fortress architecture and the lack of clear site lines to the existing building. The possibility of more underground parking was raised which could free up enough space to lower some of the surrounding buildings and create a park area for residents and the public.

* * *

Signatures are being collected for the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative scheduled for the November ballot. It would stop developers from obtaining spot zoning and exemptions from Community Plans i.e., building developments in violation of City regulations. Fear of the measure has led labor unions and developers to circulate their own Initiative for the November ballot.

Their Initiative would make it easier to obtain exemptions from City laws and easier to build bigger buildings. Also, it would impose requirements on who must be hired to construct the buildings and making the projects more expensive. Even pro-development business groups are complaining that the labor union Initiative would make the projects too expensive.

If you would like more information, please contact us at soha914@gmail.com.

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Last year, our Councilman David Ryu created a Discretionary Funds Task Force, a volunteer-driven advisory team that works to identify, review, and prioritize projects that will benefit Council District 4 in the long-term. Our Bob Anderson is a Member of the Task Force.

The purpose of this project is to refocus Council discretionary funds on their intended purpose of benefitting the District and its neighborhoods. Task Force meetings take place every first Tuesday of the month. To request funding for specific projects in your neighborhood, visit www.davidryu.lacity.org and fill out the discretionary funds request form and then email it back to his office at cd4.funding@lacity.org.

* * *

Very truly yours,



Richard H. Close, President