

"Together
we have
clout!"



★ **COMMUNITY MEETING** ★
— WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023 - 7:15 PM —
— SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM —
SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

CAN LA STOP NEIGHBORHOOD TERROR LIKE SMASH-AND-GRAB?

**TAMAR GALATZAN
TELLS SOHA HOW HER NEW
LA COMMUNITY LAW CORPS
WILL HELP PROTECT
OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**

Sherman Oaks' former Neighborhood Prosecutor Tamar Galatzan has an important new job – Supervising Attorney leading LA's brand-new Community Law Corps – the first point of contact for LA residents to enhance their safety and quality of life. Tamar will tell us how the Corps collaborates with community members, tackles homeless issues, nuisance properties, short-term rentals, party houses, and vacant properties, resolves challenging legal and safety issues, works with City Hall to address emerging concerns, and **MAKES OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER.**



Email questions for Tamar to SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com by Tuesday November 14th. Streaming works great now and starts at 7:15. The Zoom ID is 829 0999 3182 with passcode SOHA914. The Zoom link is on SOHA914.com, and we email it a day before the meeting. The MEETING VIDEO is available a day after the meeting – search YouTube.com for "SOHA Community Meeting".

SOHA HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

Save The Date!

SOHA's 25th Annual Holiday Toy Drive
will be held in Gelson's Market front parking lot on
Sunday, December 10th from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Don't miss this opportunity to help the LA County Department
of Children and Family Services by donating toys to some of the
70,000 needy children in our county.



No SOHA Community Meeting in December – Happy Holidays – See you at our January meeting!

THE ETHEL PROJECT – HUGE APARTMENTS COMING TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SOON

by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair

The LA City Council has just approved The Ethel Project – a 7-story, 200-unit affordable housing development in Sherman Oaks in an R1 single-family neighborhood. How did this project happen? Mayor Bass issued Executive Directive 1 which streamlined the approval process for any project that was 100 percent affordable housing. Streamlining means no public notices, no environmental reviews, and limited parking requirements – which saves developers so much time and so much money that they think they can profitably build such projects. With this streamlining process in place, suddenly more than 30 projects became feasible in single-family residential neighborhoods. The city says their intent was not to build apartments in single-family neighborhoods, so the mayor’s directive was quickly amended to exclude R1 residential neighborhoods. As a result, developers stopped most of these 30 projects. But eight projects were green lighted before the mayor’s amended directive was in place. The Ethel Project was one of those allowed to proceed.

THE ETHEL PROJECT IN SHERMAN OAKS

200-Unit Apartment House in a Single-Family Residential Zone



Because Sherman Oaks’ COUNCILMEMBER NITHYA RAMAN SUPPORTED THE ETHEL PROJECT, the City Council approved the project. Our neighboring Councilmember Bob Blumenfield did not support the projects in his district, so the City Council voted them down. The neighbors around The Ethel Project are now left to fight on their own.

But The Ethel Project is really just the tip of the iceberg for LA residents and communities. Los Angeles has an abundance of land to accommodate housing on hundreds of miles of commercial corridors and on other publicly owned property. This is where the apartments should be and where the city can meet its housing needs. But the LA Planning Department is thinking about allowing apartments in our single-family neighborhoods. How?

The LA Planning Department is currently rezoning communities through the Housing Element which is part of the city’s General

Plan and is also called “The Plan to House LA”. The Housing Element identifies LA’s housing needs and opportunities, and SUPPOSEDLY establishes clear goals and objectives to inform future LA housing decisions. The Planning Department meets their “clear goals and objectives” by up-zoning many of LA’s single-family neighborhoods for 4- to 6-story apartment buildings – including many Sherman Oaks neighborhoods.

If the city approves the Housing Element as the LA Planning Department currently proposes it, get ready to have many huge apartments like The Ethel Project as next-door neighbors – approved with no public notice to residents and no public input from us. We can’t wait! We must fight this together now!

Remember – Mayor Bass amended her Executive Directive 1 to exempt R1 single-family neighborhoods from huge apartment buildings. So, we feel strongly that the LA Planning Department’s Housing Element must also exempt all single-family neighborhoods from huge apartment buildings. But so far, the Planning Department is ignoring the problem – and our neighborhoods will definitely suffer. The city needs to focus its efforts where we have the most opportunity to develop significant amounts of affordable housing – our existing commercial corridors which already have the space and the infrastructure to accommodate large apartment buildings. Leave our residential neighborhoods alone!

IMPACTS OF HOUSING ELEMENT ON YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

4, 5, 6-Story Apartment Houses in Our Single-Family Residential Zones



SOHA will be soon sending out a CALL-TO-ACTION eblast asking you to send letters to Mayor Bass and Councilmember Raman demanding that they stop this unfair and unneeded assault on our single-family neighborhoods. Please have everyone in your family send a letter. Please ask your neighbors to send letters.

DON'T STAY SILENT – BECAUSE YOU WILL REGRET IT.

LOOKING FOR THE GREATER GOOD IN OUR CITY'S HOUSING CRISIS

by Tom Glick, Planning Committee Chair

Many of our local leaders equate affordable housing production to the reduction of homelessness. Several studies do justify that point of view and it is hard to argue with the fact that we are in a severe housing crisis. My daughter lives in San Diego with three other roommates and still pays almost half of her monthly income for housing. Fortunately for her, she has a safety net in my wife and myself – but so many people don't have that safety net. It is a fact that the price of housing in Los Angeles is outrageous in comparison to the other parts of the country and I applaud the efforts of many local and state leaders to produce more affordable housing. Unfortunately, many of these efforts are aimed at the wrong places, such as single-family neighborhoods.

Los Angeles City is the largest metropolitan area by land area in the State of California and the 7th largest in the United States behind only Anchorage, Jacksonville, Houston, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, and San Antonio. The City of LA has plenty of underutilized land in all land-use categories, including commercial corridors, multi-family residential corridors, and surplus government land. There are so many areas in LA ripe for redevelopment with affordable housing. But the disconnect for many is why it seems like the state's target – and our more-than-complicit city – is to incentivize this production – not in those higher-density and higher-intensity areas, but in our stable single-family neighborhoods. This doesn't make sense because many single-family neighborhoods lack the necessary infrastructure to handle any housing increases, let alone huge apartments. Our local leaders, especially Mayor Bass, insist that they support the preservation of single-family neighborhoods – but there is always a caveat in their support saying "... but of course this all depends on what the state does." So, our local leaders have chosen to hide behind the state and rationalize that they are pro-single-family – but they are also afraid of the state sanctioning our city.

It is totally understandable for our local leadership to feel this way because we have a state with overwhelming Democratic leadership that is out of control – especially when it comes to producing housing. However, many think what the state is doing is a direct reaction to years and years of NIMBYism (not in my backyard) by many local jurisdictions that are afraid to challenge many powerful single-family homeowner groups that seem to fight every major (and sometimes minor) project in their community. And while many people and groups are trying to provide for rational solutions away from single-family neighborhoods – such as densification of commercial corridors and the like – it is never a certainty that whenever a project is proposed on a large commercial lot like the Sportmen's Lodge housing development with its 15 percent affordable housing proposed for Studio City, the nearby neighborhoods still come out in opposition.

The city's threat to our single-family neighborhoods is real. The only way we can convince our leaders to look elsewhere to build is to stick together and not oppose affordable housing projects if located where they are best suited on underutilized commercial and multi-family residential land, as well as on underutilized public land – with direct reference to those neighborhoods who came out in opposition and effectively killed Councilmember David Ryu's proposal five years ago to propose two underutilized commercial public lots in Sherman Oaks for homeless housing. WE ALL NEED TO LOOK TO THE GREATER GOOD IN OUR CITY'S HOUSING CRISIS.

REBALANCING OUR COMMUNITY'S RIGHTS AGAINST THE RIGHTS OF THE MENTALLY ILL HOMELESS

by Larry Slade, Homelessness Committee Chair

We live in a country where the rule of law is the foundation of our society. In the United States, we enact laws to restrict and limit the conduct of the government (amongst other things). Our government can't just burst into your home and search it and place you under arrest at will. It can't suppress your free expression of your opinion or your ability to practice or not practice any religion. It can't lock you in jail without a hearing. And it can't just grab you off the street and incarcerate you simply for not having a place to live.

But each of these civil liberties has limits. Each needs to find its balance when juxtaposed against the rights of others and society in general. And none of these rights or issues take place in a vacuum. What happens when our ideals conflict with the harsh reality of a post-pandemic world? What happens when the pendulum of balance swings too far to one side?

Under current law, it's not illegal for someone to live on the streets. It's not illegal for someone to live on the streets and be addicted to drugs – or for someone to be homeless and suffer from mental illness. But is it or should it be legal to be homeless, drug-addicted, and suffer from mental illness? Again, by itself, without knowing more, it still sounds “legal.”

But what happens when that person starts to act out on the street in a way that endangers themselves and others? At what point do the rights of the community outweigh the rights to live outside? Certainly, there must be some point at which the interests of the state outweigh the rights of the individual – where the rights of the many outweigh the rights of the few – where even very liberally minded people scream “enough!”

Governor Newsome is working to test this proposition and to better “balance” the rights of the homeless against the rights of the community. The CARE Court is coming to Los Angeles. This “court” will aim to better balance these rights by removing the dangerous homeless from the streets, forcing them into treatment, and – if they meet the threshold – providing them a process to set up “conservatorships” for homeless persons who truly present a danger to themselves and others.

Prior to now, there were no real options to get these suffering souls off the street. They were left to suffer in public and their presence served to fundamentally alter our own perception of our safety in our own neighborhoods. A classic lose-lose for all involved.

CARE Court is a pilot program and will both need funding and patience to work and strike the proper balance of the rights of everyone involved. IT'S OUR HOPE THAT THE CARE COURT PROGRAM WILL HELP LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD for the most dangerous of the homeless amongst us and provide a valuable tool to serve all the interests involved. It will be interesting to watch its progress.

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS

by Jay Weitzler, Buckley School Liaison

Under the Buckley School 's Conditional Use Permit, the school must establish a Neighborhood Protection Fund. This fund is used for improvements to traffic, noise, landscaping, buffering, and any other issues which may arise from the school's operation in a residential neighborhood. As most of us are all too aware, the intersection of Valley Vista and Beverly Glen has been a mess for many years due to morning and evening traffic – and Buckley School is one reason for the traffic buildup. As a result, after a meeting with our City Council Office and making these and other traffic complaints known, the LA Department of Transportation (DOT) suggested and designed a roundabout at the Beverly Glen-Valley Vista intersection.

The roundabout will replace the existing stop signs that make it extremely difficult to enter southbound Beverly Glen from westbound Valley Vista. According to the DOT, this should make the flow of traffic better and safer. The roundabout will be implemented in the coming months, and entirely paid for by Buckley and not our tax dollars. In addition, Buckley will pay for speed bumps along Valley Vista on either side of Stansbury to slow traffic and prevent vehicles from running the stop sign and endangering students and others. Finally, Buckley will also pay for landscaping improvements on Coy Drive, making that street cleaner and safer when it rains, as well as a bit more attractive.

VAN NUYS AIRPORT UPDATE

by Nancy Sogioian, Airport Committee Co-Chair

First, some good news regarding Van Nuys Airport (VNY)! You may recall the Bonseph Helinet proposal, which was ostensibly a rebuild to modernize an old airport hangar on VNY site. Unfortunately, the proposal's lease language left a back-door loophole which, by omission, would have allowed jet plane storage and jet flights from the new hangar, neither of which are part of existing hangar activities. As a result of community stakeholder scrutiny by SOHA's Airport Committee, SONC, the CD4 Council Office, and the public concerned with increased noise, pollution, and safety, LAWA (Los Angeles World Airports, which oversees/manages VNY and other airports) has tabled the project. It's uncertain whether the Bonseph Helinet project will be reintroduced in the future, but it will not proceed for the foreseeable future.

SOHA is also watching developments with Advanced Air Mobility (AAMs otherwise known as “air taxis”) and will provide updates periodically on AAM developments. In brief, LADOT, the Mayor’s office, the LA Planning Department, the FAA, NASA, and other entities are working on introducing a “first in the nation partnership” for air taxis in Los Angeles, with a goal in time for our 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Our preliminary information is that these AAM air taxis will serve intercity travel of perhaps two to four people and/or goods – and will likely be electric. There are certainly health, safety, privacy, and flight path concerns. SOHA IS WATCHING – STAY TUNED!

NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS

by Matt Epstein, President

This column regularly highlights the latest openings and closures in our community, fondly referred to as Comings and Goings. Unfortunately, the recent incident involving the amazing Mark’s Garden at 13838 Ventura Boulevard in Sherman Oaks falls into the latter category, but for a rather disheartening reason – an act of arson. Just a few weeks ago, this beloved floral haven succumbed to flames ignited by an arsonist as part of a series of fires in the San Fernando Valley. Mark’s Garden, a longstanding establishment with a rich history dating back over 40 years, has been an integral part of our community since its humble beginnings as Ray’s Affordable Flowers in 1982.

The devastation is palpable, considering the countless beautiful floral arrangements they’ve crafted over the years, even gracing events like my own wedding 29 years ago. Mark’s Garden’s reputation extends beyond our community, catering to high-profile clients such as Beyoncé, Madonna, and Oprah Winfrey, and earning the prestigious role of the official florist for the Academy Awards Governors Ball for more than three decades.

In the wake of this tragedy, I reached out to Mark’s Garden to express my condolences and inquire about their future plans. Despite the closure of their Ventura storefront, Mark’s Garden assured me that business is proceeding as usual, operating out of their Tarzana warehouse. While the timeline for their return to Sherman Oaks remains uncertain, the commitment to rebuild and resume operations in our area is unwavering.

For those who wish to support Mark’s Garden during this challenging time, orders can still be placed via phone or their website. Contact them at (818) 906-1718 or visit www.Marksgarden.com.

On a concerning note, the arsonist responsible for this devastation, a 38-year-old woman, had been arrested the week prior for a series of fires in the Los Feliz area. Shockingly, THIS ARSONIST WAS RELEASED WITHOUT BAIL, only to strike again in Sherman Oaks. This highlights a critical need for both improved support for individuals with such destructive tendencies and accountability for our elected officials. As we approach the upcoming March election, let’s carefully consider the positions of those we elect to office and advocate for necessary changes in our community.

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR SOHA MEMBERSHIP NOW

by Nancy Sogoian, Membership Committee Chair

Did you know SOHA has an operating advantage tremendously benefitting our community, beyond that of other community organizations ...? We certainly do! Because we’re entirely member-supported and receive no funding from any city or county entity – only you, our members. SOHA can work towards the preservation, protection, and improvement of our community free of city or county restrictions or influence – a significant benefit to everyone in Sherman Oaks. WE NEED MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT from the people we serve – and THAT MEANS YOU!

Please join SOHA or renew your membership. Go to SOHA914.com and click on “JOIN SOHA”. It’s only \$45 per year and members enjoy our monthly newsletters, community meetings, and more. Select your membership level and click on Pay via PayPal to use a credit card. You can also join by mailing a check to SOHA Membership at PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - RALPHS

Sean Kurzweil, Community Liaison Chair, is happy to announce that Ralph’s Fresh Fare of Sherman Oaks will be our restaurant of the month. They’ll serve an assortment of baked chicken along with potato salad and coleslaw. We thank Ralphs for their community support and are looking forward to enjoying their delicious food on Wednesday, November 15 during our Social Hour beginning at 6:15pm.

SOHA COMMUNITY CLEANUP DAY

Join us for another SOHA epic family-friendly cleanup event. We need your enthusiasm and help to make it a roaring success.
Saturday, December 2nd, 8:30 am to 10:30 am. Pineapple Hill Saloon and Grill at 4454 Van Nuys Blvd - Patio behind restaurant
– To register or ask questions –
Email h.jaffe@sbcglobal.net or ggreblo@yahoo.com

SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The **ONLY** member-supported,
volunteer-run, non-profit
community organization
dedicated to preserving and protecting
the quality of life here in Sherman Oaks.

★ **BECOME A MEMBER** — 💡 **STAY INFORMED** — ❤️ **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

IT'S EASY! SIMPLY GO TO www.SOHA914.com AND CLICK "JOIN SOHA"

soha

SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 5223
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA 91413-5223

www.SOHA914.com
SOHA914@gmail.com
(818) 377-4590

Return Service Requested

DELIVER BY NOVEMBER 10

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
VAN NUYS, CA
PERMIT NO. 279

IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

▶ **- Please Attend Our November 15th Community Meeting -
Hear How the New Leader of LA's Brand-New
Community Care Corps Will Help Us Protect Sherman Oaks** ◀

▶ **Learn How To Help SOHA Stop the City from Building
Huge Apartment Buildings in Our Single-Family
Communities - We Need To Act Now!** ◀