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Congressman Brad Sherman:

- *Foreign Policy – The Middle East and Ukraine**
- *The Economy & Home Mortgages**

COMMUNITY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014 - 7:15 PM
NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL
RIVERSIDE & WOODMAN, SHERMAN OAKS

Congressman Brad Sherman will be our guest speaker on Wednesday, August 20, 2014. He has been a member of Congress since 1997, is a senior Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and sits on the House Financial Services Committee. In addition, Congressman Sherman is one of our neighbors – Sherman lives in Sherman Oaks.

As member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he can give us insight into the conflicts in the Middle East and, in particular, the conflict in Israel and Gaza. He will discuss efforts to change the quasi-governmental mortgage system and its possible effects on the housing market.

Congressman Sherman is both an attorney and Certified Public Accountant. He previously served as a Member of the California State Board of Equalization. Congressman Sherman graduated from UCLA, Suma Cum Laude, and Magna Cum Laude from Harvard Law School.

Jules Feir announces that Maria's Italian Kitchen will be our Restaurant of the Month. Since 1997 owner Madelyn Alfano has been a huge supporter of SOHA. She opened her first restaurant in 1985 and continues to be a major presence in our community. She will soon be opening her 13th restaurant and continues to grow throughout the Los Angeles area.

Her success is no surprise to those who frequent Marla's Italian Kitchen and enjoy the authentic Hoboken N.J. flavor of mouth-watering dishes. It's no wonder that Maria's Italian Kitchen was voted Best Italian Restaurant in 2013!

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

* * *

IMT (owner of the Sunkist property at Riverside and Hazeltine Ave.) held a Public Scoping Meeting in July. Its purpose was to solicit public comments regarding the issues to be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). SOHA was dark during the month of July and few Members were given notice of this meeting. IMT sent notices to homes only within 500 feet of the project. The developer presented a summary of their current plans. There was no public testimony allowed at the meeting. The community was given a deadline of July 30th to submit their comments to Sarah Molina at the City Planning Department. These comments will be considered in the preparation of the EIR.

Kimberlee Gerston, Chair of SOHA Sunkist Committee, met with her Committee where they prepared an information sheet and letter voicing the numerous concerns about the project including how it would affect the Hazeltine and Riverside Drive areas and beyond. This was distributed via SOHA membership emails, community organization emails, and hand delivered to homes in the area. Ira Handelman, engaged by IMT to provide community outreach and to work with SOHA and other community groups, has been available to meet with the Committee.

You can access more information on this project at our website at www.shermanoaks914.com, click the button Sunkist Development on the left.

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Bob Anderson reports that LAMetro one again failed to meet their promised June 30th completion date for I-405 project work in Sherman Oaks, and they do not expect to finish until the end of September. Somehow, work on the Sepulveda underpass near Valley Circle and Fiume Walk that was going to take two months is now taking five months. Morning traffic backups in this area are horrendous because Sepulveda is being reduced to one lane. Overnight work is disturbing nearby Sherman Oaks residents.

LAMetro blames the delay on needing to do other work to get the HOV lanes ready for their grand opening. But, the real question is why LAMetro failed to notify our community about the schedule delay.

In addition, construction delays are not the only I-405 challenges that we face. In the southern part of Sherman Oaks between the I-405 and Sepulveda, there are some serious disputes over landscaping. About 200 trees were removed during construction. The EIR requires that all trees removed during construction be replaced. However, homeowners on certain streets have been told that their trees will not be replaced, which causes serious environmental and financial hardships for these homeowners. This is not right and our public officials need to ensure that neighborhoods are returned to their original conditions once construction is complete.

Bob Anderson also reports on SOHA's support for improvements to the Valley's subpar transit systems. Did you know that the Valley has only two of 80 rail transit stops in Los Angeles County, even though we represent 20 percent of the county population? We do have the popular Orange Line busway, which is so successful that it already operates at maximum capacity. But, we need 21st century transit options to relieve worsening congestion along our freeways – the I-101 and I-405 – and our major thoroughfares – Ventura, Van Nuys, and Sepulveda Boulevards. SOHA has joined with the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) and Valley on Track, a coalition of community organizations, transportation experts, and elected officials to advocate upgrading Valley transit systems.

Valley residents contribute millions in tax dollars to the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) through Measure R and other dedicated local and state tax revenues. We want to ensure that MTA prioritizes Valley rail projects in future ballot measures and Federal funding requests, with special focus on three primary routes: the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, the Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor, and the Orange Line.

Potential conversion of the Orange Line to light rail received a recent boost when Sherman Oaks State Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian (who lives in Sherman Oaks) obtained the Governor's signature on legislation that allows such a conversion. SOHA sees this as a way to jumpstart a broader examination of the next chapter in Valley transit.

The City Planning Commission approved most of Buckley School's requests for extending the campus expansion plan. A notable exception is that Buckley wanted to build for 25 more years, and the Commission granted them a maximum of 25 years from the date of the issuance of the original building permit, effectively cutting the building time down by several years. Of course by then, most of the Buckley administrators will have retired, the families will have graduated and the neighbors will be left to contend with the extra traffic and noise. Unfortunately, traffic mitigation issues were not addressed and this presents a danger to the neighbors. Last year there were several incidents of Buckley School parents driving on the wrong side of the street to gain quicker access to the school as well as going through stop signs without stopping. This put residents in great danger! School is starting soon and we can only hope that Buckley effectively addresses this ongoing problem for the safety of the drivers in Sherman Oaks.

We have received numerous complaints about traffic on the northbound 405 Freeway from Mulholland Drive to the 101 Freeway. Although the Freeway has an additional lane and the lanes have been widened, there are more slowdowns and backups on this northbound stretch especially during the afternoon rush hours.

The complaints that we have received indicate that the traffic on the right lanes (transitioning to the 101 or exiting at Ventura Boulevard) are worse now than during the construction period and even prior to the start of construction.

We have spoken with our Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian and he will be discussing this problem with CalTrans. We will let you know what the Assemblyman learns from CalTrans.

Recently, the beautiful mural of the endangered Steelhead Trout made of 40,000 natural stones was unveiled at the North Valley Vista Riverwalk near Ethel. Many elected officials attended the event. SOHA is proud to be a sponsor of this river beautification project and encourages you to take a stroll along the river.

In order to supplement the City's existing street cleaning efforts, Councilman Tom LaBonge's office has been deploying its beautification truck once a week to focus specifically on Ventura Boulevard. A recent effort was cleaning out weeds and trash from the street tree wells. If you see an area that needs attention from the beautification truck, email or call Council Deputy Tommy Newman at tommy.newman@lacity.org or at (818) 356-6507.

Council District 4 and the Department of Recreation and Parks held the groundbreaking for the Van Nuys Sherman Oaks Synthetic Turf Soccer Field Project in July. The project, which has a construction budget of about \$2.6 million, will take about 10 months to complete and will save hundreds of thousands of gallons of water a year, while also significantly lowering maintenance costs and providing a safe place for the thousands of people that use the Park every week.

Through the efforts of Council Deputy Tommy Newman in Councilman Tom LaBonge's office, Nancy Kaleel thankfully reports that the speed humps from Library Square's Traffic Mitigation Plan were re-installed in July. They had been removed in April when the neighborhood was repaved.

Do you receive our email updates? If not, we do not have your email address. Email it to us at soha914@gmail.com. If you would like to see snippets from our past Meetings, go to www.youtube.com and search officialSOHAvideo to see portions of the Meeting.

Very truly yours,


Richard H. Close, President