

"Together we have clout!"

★ **LIVE COMMUNITY MEETING – NEW LOCATION** ★

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023 - 7:15 PM

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD, 91403

ALSO STREAMED ON ZOOM

## CAN LA FIX HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, AND PUBLIC SAFETY?

### HEAR NEW LA CITY ATTORNEY HYDEE FELDSTEIN SOTO'S PLANS FOR IMPROVING OUR CITY

Hydee Feldstein Soto is the 43rd Los Angeles City Attorney, sworn into office in December 2022. She is the city's general counsel and serves as the legal advisor to the Mayor, City Council, and the hundreds of boards, departments, officers, and entities that make up the City of Los Angeles.

She interprets LA laws, drafts ordinances, is responsible for all law enforcement, and defends the city and its charter. As chief prosecutor, she oversees prosecution of misdemeanors and administration of criminal justice, including alternatives to incarceration. Her citywide team comprises more than 500 attorneys and almost 500 support personnel who can make a difference to our city.

City Attorney Feldstein Soto was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and moved to the United States to attend Swarthmore College and then Columbia University School of Law. After law school she moved to Los Angeles, which she has called home for more than 40 years.

Email your questions for her to [SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com](mailto:SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com) by Tuesday March 14th.

This is a live meeting, but we will also stream it via Zoom. We email the link to our members, and you can always find it at [SOHA914.com](http://SOHA914.com). The Zoom ID is 840 6755 5211 with passcode SOHA914. Streaming starts at 7:15 pm.

## RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH CARNIVAL

by Jules Feir, Community Liaison Chair

SOHA is happy to announce that Carnival will be our March Restaurant of the Month. Carnival Restaurant is one of the most popular restaurants in the Valley, and especially Sherman Oaks.

Located at 4356 Woodman Avenue, the owners Nabil and Afif assure that you will have a most enjoyable meal. Their Lebanese menu is a favorite, especially such items as chicken and lamb shawarma and kabobs – and, of course, lamb shank.

Once again, we thank Carnival Restaurant for their community support, and all look forward to enjoying a special taste of their delicious food during our Social Hour starting at 6:15 pm.



## **DYING ON THE STREETS OF SHERMAN OAKS**

*by Larry Slade, Housing Committee Chair*

In recent months we have been writing about, talking about, and planning ways to remove the homeless from the streets – especially the ones that present a danger to themselves and others. It's true enough that many in our community are deeply concerned about the proliferation of homeless on our streets. But it's also true that our community is deeply concerned about the welfare of those it seeks to "remove".

Our "emergency" is so much more of an emergency for the homeless than it is for the "homed". Recently, there have been several homeless people that have met their deaths on Sherman Oaks streets. Yes, that's right. Homeless people dying on our streets. Let's put aside our sadness at how this impacts our community and focus instead on how much greater impact this has for the homeless and their families. We are after all, thinking and caring people.

The homeless are dying on our streets because they are victims of crime, drug addiction, no health care, and traffic accidents – exacerbated by extreme weather like our recent frigid spell and torrential rains. Per an article in the LA Times on February 19th, many also are dying because they can get no relief from the heat in summer. They are literally baking to death. Think about how it would feel being unable to escape that cold or hot, and having no ready access to shelter, heat, shade, or water.

This is the horrible reality for the homeless. It's not hard to feel outrage at the seemingly out-of-control carnage playing out on our streets. Sure, it's unsightly, frustrating, and unsafe for Sherman Oaks residents when the dangerous homeless threaten our peace. But this reality poses a much greater risk to the homeless themselves than to us.

Our lobbying efforts to get the dangerously homeless removed from the streets is about protecting our community and making our streets safe again. But this is not the only motivation behind the work that we do for our community. We seek to ameliorate the other more profound life and death impacts on homeless people themselves. We do not lose sight of the significant impacts of these realities on their lives. Regardless of why they are homeless, these are human beings who should have the reasonable expectation that they will not be left on the street to die. They need help and basic human decency requires that they receive the help they need.

Yes, it's true ... we want to remove the dangerously homeless from the streets. We don't want to have to look at them, deal with them, or be threatened by them. But we don't want them to die or be put in a jail cell. And we certainly do not want anyone to freeze or bake to death on our streets. We want them removed and helped.

We continue to work with elected officials and the courageous nonprofits that work so hard and in good faith to help as much as they can. We do so with our hearts filled with compassion for the homeless. And we know one thing for sure – **leaving this specific subgroup of homeless on the streets is not the answer.** Not for them. Not for us. Not for our great city. They must be both removed (voluntarily or involuntarily) and helped. We have a moral obligation to both the homeless themselves and to the sanctity of our community to make sure that both occur. The status quo cannot stand.

If you have questions, need information, or want to help SOHA on homelessness, contact Larry at [SOHA914@gmail.com](mailto:SOHA914@gmail.com).

## **THE STATE AND ITS INFINITE WISDOM**

*by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair*

SOHA's Legislative Committee usually focuses attention on specific state housing bills that will affect our community. However, we are finding that it isn't necessarily one bill that we need to be concerned about. The real concern is a growing trend in both state and local legislation that slowly erodes public participation on matters that effect all of us. At the state level, new legislation each year keeps taking away local control from cities and giving it instead to state agencies and private developers. And at the local level, our City Council keeps listening less and less to their constituents while city agencies seemingly pay even less attention to public concerns.

Although this may not seem problematic, it actually erodes the democratic process to the point that the public has no

say in what happens in their communities and no confidence in the process.

New Senate Housing Bill 423 is an example of this loss of local control. This bill involves the Housing Element that is mandated by the state and requires every city to identify enough zoning capacity to meet its housing needs as set by the state during an eight-year cycle. SB 423 would allow housing developments that have some affordable housing units to be built “by right” even if they don’t meet local zoning standards (too big or too high) if a city looks like it will not meet the housing goals set in its Housing Element. This type of development approval is called a “Builder’s Remedy” project. The state will require cities to submit a report every two years on how much housing is being built and then compare it with the goals in the city’s Housing Element. If a city seems unlikely to meet its quota, Builder’s Remedy is triggered.

**But cities don’t build housing, developers do** – and market conditions will determine whether developers build housing or not. Therefore, cities will be penalized for something they cannot control.

The City of Los Angeles must fight SB 423 or we will have no control over any part of our built environment. SOHA will oppose this bill. If you have any questions reach out to Maria at [mpkalban@gmail.com](mailto:mpkalban@gmail.com).

## **METRO – SHOW US THE MONEY – NOW!**

*by Bob Anderson, Transportation Committee Chair*

**Metro has NO TRANSPARENCY** – especially about project affordability. They treat the public like mushrooms – keeping us in the dark, dumping manure on us at “pony-show” public meetings, and hoping we’ll ask no questions. That’s not going to happen on the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project.

Our key question is “Why is Metro spending more than \$100 million studying unaffordable Sepulveda Pass alternatives that will never be built?” Metro’s standard answer – “Don’t worry, we’ll get the funding” – is not acceptable. The public needs to know now what funding Metro has for this project. Measure M, which voters approved in 2016, funds 90 transit and transportation projects and each has its own budget. The Sepulveda Pass budget is about \$7.5 billion in today’s dollars. Yet, Metro is studying heavy rail subway alternatives that will cost \$20 to \$25 billion or more. Metro – start being fiscally responsible.

A perfect example of why SOHA worries about funding and affordability is Metro’s East San Fernando Valley Transit project. Metro soon starts construction of this 9.2-mile low-capacity street-level light rail line along Van Nuys Blvd. Its Measure M budget is about \$1.7 billion. Metro officially estimates the first 6.7 miles will cost \$3.6 billion – more than twice its Measure M funding – and they don’t yet know the cost of the last 2.5 miles. The project could end up costing more than \$5 billion – three times its budget. Metro just asked California for \$1.9 billion in additional transit funds. They got \$600 million for this project but failed to get the other \$1.3 billion they requested for two other underfunded transit projects. Unlimited funds are not available anymore – even for the critical Sepulveda Pass.

Metro – put your money where your mouth is. Provide the public a list of all secured and potential federal, state, county, and local funding for every Measure M project that you are currently building, studying, or planning to study soon. **This act of TRANSPARENCY** might help the public begin trusting you again.

Email Bob at [FairTransit4ShermanOaks@gmail.com](mailto:FairTransit4ShermanOaks@gmail.com) to receive our latest project updates and get answers to any questions you may have.

## **BIG THANKS TO LINDA AND MARTY**

Linda and Marty Levine are the super-nice people who greet you at SOHA’s Community Meeting sign-in table. They’ve been doing this for almost 45 years and we can’t thank them enough. They consider volunteering an important community service and always ensure they welcome every person to our meetings.



*Thank You!*

They also like to meet people who want to participate and learn how to make their community better. Linda and Marty have been married 56 years, raised and educated their children in Sherman Oaks, and enjoy knowing what’s going on in the community. She was a clinical social worker and he was a supervisor at the California workers compensation department. Be sure to say “Hi and Thanks” to them when you attend our meetings.

# SCOOTERS CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

*by Jules Feir, Community Liaison Chair*



Since the city introduced electric scooters for personal transit, they've created a lot of unintended problems. Many scooters are illegally driven on sidewalks like a fast toy and pose a danger to pedestrians.

On streets, they are often driven irresponsibly, interfere with traffic, and create dangerous situations. Once rides are finished, scooters are left lying on sidewalks, at bus stops, on streets, in front of businesses, and around residential neighborhoods.

Scooter companies are supposed to pick them up within 24 hours – but they don't. The scooter in the photo has been sitting in the same Sherman Oaks location for two weeks. The city should enforce scooter pickup – or even better, renegotiate scooter contracts to make scooter companies more responsible, operation more enforceable, and our neighborhoods less hazardous.

## SHERMAN OAKS HAS TWO SENATE OVERSEERS – BUT NO SENATOR

*by Bob Anderson, Vice President*

Our entire Sherman Oaks community was officially redistricted into new California legislative districts in 2021. We are in Assemblymember Laura Friedman's 44th Assembly District and Senator Henry Stern's 27th Senate District. SOHA asked both districts to provide an update at our February Community Meeting – and learned that Laura Friedman is our Assemblymember – but Henry Stern is not really our Senator until 2024.

What happened? The Senate Rules Committee decided communities that did not elect their "new" senator are not really constituents until after the 2024 election. So, for two years, Sherman Oaks south of Riverside Drive is "overseen" by Senator Ben Allen (24th District south of Sherman Oaks) while Sherman Oaks north of Riverside is overseen by Senator Caroline Menjivar (20th District north of Sherman Oaks).

By the way, no one in Sherman Oaks voted for these senators either. No one informed us about this, but Senator Stern's office told us they will be sending out an announcement soon.

## NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS

*by Matt Epstein, President*

On weekends, Casa Vega now offers a pop-up barbecue in the back parking lot, featuring Michelin star chef Adam Perry Lang. You might want to arrive early ... the barbecue is open from noon to 3 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, and people line up early to try the delicious food. Chef Lang varies the barbecue from week to week, offering a variety of meats, including chicken, ribs, NY strip roast, and lamb, as well as other surprising items like barbecued clams. You can learn more about the special menus that change weekly at Adam's Instagram (@AdamPerryLang).

Annabelle's Book Club LA is a delightful Studio City store founded by a 16-year-old book lover named Annabelle. Annabelle's dream was to create a small bookstore where young adults could find wonderful books that have been vetted. The bookstore features a wide range of books, including an "Unforgettable" section filled with memoirs and non-fiction, a "Riveting" section for kids' activity books, and a "Heart-Stopping" section that features banned and challenged books, graphic novels, and historical fiction. The store also features a section devoted to young teen romance called "Swoonworthy". Annabelle's Book Club is not just for young adults but for everyone who loves to read. It's located at 122200 Ventura Blvd ([annabellesbookclubla.com](http://annabellesbookclubla.com)).



Argo Authentic Mediterranean Grille is a new family-owned restaurant that is inspired by the owner's childhood memories of his mother's hummus and his father's grilling expertise. The restaurant will offer a full bar and will be open for lunch and dinner. Not sure when this location will be opening. This new restaurant will be located in Studio City next to Jumpin Java at 11923 Ventura Blvd.

Unfortunately, Kraser's Natural Pet Store has closed, but Earthwise will be replacing it and offering the same type of pet products and grooming services. Earthwise is a natural pet foods and products store with six locations in Southern California. This location is on the corner of Whitsett at 12507 Ventura Blvd (earthwise.pet.com).

Whether you want to find a great book, enjoy Mediterranean cuisine, buy pet products, maybe pamper your pet, or indulge in a mouthwatering barbecue, there is something for everyone near our Sherman Oaks community.

## **CONCERNED ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE IN SHERMAN OAKS? JOIN SOHA NOW - OR RENEW - AND ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORS TO JOIN!**

*by Nancy Sogoian, Membership Committee Chair*

Growing SOHA's membership is THE most critical component to strong advocacy to protect quality of life for you and all Sherman Oaks residents! As the ONLY non-profit community organization that's member-supported, volunteer-run, and completely free of city or county influence, SOHA's clear mandate is to obtain the best possible solutions to major issues affecting Sherman Oaks. As such, since 1964 SOHA has earned the respect of decisionmakers who impact our lives. In short, we are your eyes and ears, identifying and working to better the community we all love. Whether it's major transit, crime, reducing homelessness, obtaining zoning to protect our neighborhoods so housing is added in appropriate locations, or eliminating/minimizing negative impacts on major real estate developments, SOHA advocates for YOU.

The only way that happens is with the strong support of the community we represent. If you aren't a member, please join NOW! It's a small investment that yields huge benefits – and we literally cannot do it without you! If you've received a renewal reminder, please renew without delay. And – this is important – each month take a few minutes to share your Newsletter with neighbors and encourage them to join. Members receive SOHA's Newsletter monthly, full of important info and updates.

**Joining is easy!** Go to SOHA914.com, click on "JOIN SOHA", select Member Level (Basic \$45, Silver \$75, or Gold \$125), enter your name and email, click on "Subscribe", and pay with debit or credit card (enter card info via PayPal Guest). Or join by mail. Select your Member Level, legibly include your name, address, and email address, then mail your check payable to Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association to SOHA MEMBERSHIP, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.

If you're a current member but not receiving our occasional email updates on important issues, that means we don't have your email address! Please send us your name, address, and email at SOHA914@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you at our next community meeting the third Wednesday of every month at the Sherman Oaks Adult Center at the corner of Van Nuys Boulevard and Hartsook Street (enter parking from Hartsook). A big THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT from Nancy Sogoian, Membership Committee Chair.



# Sherman Oaks

# SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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

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