

Hillside Federation Newsletter October, 2010



Federation Praised for Its Advocacy for the Baseline Hillside Ordinance

Marian Dodge

The Hillside Federation has lobbied long and hard for a strong Baseline Hillside Ordinance to protect the unique and charming character of our neighborhoods while still providing for appropriate development. We don't get everything we want, but we're always there testifying on your behalf. Special thanks go to those people who met privately with the Planning Department and Councilmembers and spoke at the Planning Commission, PLUM, and City Council: Dave Garfinkle, Bill Eick, Bob Anderson, Wendy-Sue Rosen, Steve Twining, Marian Dodge, Mark Stratton, Lois Becker, Carol Sidlow, Nickie Miner, Cassandra Barrère, Pat Hearst, Don Keller.

The following article appeared in the Park La Brea News on August 21.

L.A. Restricts Future Hillside Homes

The Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously on August 4, 2010 to have the city attorney draft language to create the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO), which will require all future single-family homes on hillsides to be built in accordance with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Agenda

October 6, 2010

7:00 pm

- I. Introductions
- II. Approval of July 7 and Sept. 1 minutes
- III. President's Report
 - A. President's comments
 - B. Confirmation of Shirley Cohen as Chair Emeritus
Joan Pelico, CD 5
 - C. Approval of ad hoc Bylaws Committee
 - D. Holiday Party
- IV. Old Business
 - A. Widening of 405 impact on traffic
 - B. Van de Kamps - Dan Wright
 - C. BHO grading changes update
- V. New Business
- VI. Adjournment

Next meeting - Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2010

Universal City Nissan
3550 Cahuenga Blvd. West
between Lankershim and Universal Dr. bridge off
ramps. Park in the underground garage or on the
street; take elevator to 2nd floor conference room.

The mission of the Hillside Federation shall be: To protect the property and the quality of life of the residents of the Santa Monica Mountains and other hillside areas of Los Angeles and its environs, and to encourage and promote those policies and programs which will best preserve the natural topography and wildlife of the mountains and hillsides for the benefit of all the people of Los Angeles.

The BHO is similar to the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO), which took effect in 2008 in non-hillside areas of Los Angeles. The council's approval came after the Planning and Land Use Management Committee (PLUM) approved amendments to existing building codes. Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge, 4th District, said he has received many complaints from residents of hillside communities about development that are out of scale with the neighborhood.

"Long overdue, this ordinance will assure the architecture and scale will fit the contours of the hills," LaBonge said, "When it passes, we won't see 'McMansions' all over our hillsides. I thank the neighborhood Hillside Federation, the neighborhood councils and neighborhood associations who have been waiting for over a century to see this pass."

Previous planning laws did not place restrictions on single family hillside dwellings, which allowed the construction of large, box-like mansions with the actual living area built to the maximum allowed height and width. The city attorney will draft the ordinance to consider various aspects of hillside construction, including the slope of the lot and height of the proposed structure. The ordinance will also require developments in special use areas, such as equestrian neighborhoods or lake districts, to maintain the distinguishing characteristics of the particular neighborhood. The city council will consider the proposal again once the ordinance is drafted by the city attorney.

The two motions negotiated with Councilmember Kotetz which would have reinstated grading restrictions were not approved. However the following motion was presented at the August 4, 2010 Council meeting by Reyes. Special thanks go to Carol Sidlow for suggesting a grading inspector.

VERBAL MOTION

I HEREBY MOVE that Council AMEND the Planning and Land Use Management Committee Report, relative to amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to establish new regulations for single-family zoned properties which are designated as Hillside Area, to:

1. REQUIRE the Department of Building and Safety (DBS) to increase the geotechnical analysis and reporting requirements to the most stringent level possible where slopes are greater than or equal to 100 percent.
2. REQUIRE inspection by a Deputy Grading Inspector, paid by the applicant per DBS P/BC 2002-34 which states that Section 91.1701.1 of the LAMC requires the use of a Registered (Licensed) Deputy Inspector for certain grading or foundation earthwork in hillside areas.
3. DIRECT the Planning Department to implement Q Conditions and Overlays to address the concerns expressed by Councilmember Koretz regarding modifying the Hillside Development Standards and grading on extreme slopes.

PRESENTED BY
ED REYES Councilmember, 1st District

SECONDED BY
PAUL KORETZ Councilmember, 5th District



Bobcat Study Comes to Griffith Park

Gerry Hans

For the next three to four months, UCLA researchers will be conducting a study of bobcats in Griffith Park. The study will involve live trapping of bobcats at relatively hidden, remote spots of the park. When captured, the cats will be anesthetized, blood samples drawn, and ear tagged for later identification. Then the cats will be released.

A general decline in bobcat population has been associated with mange epizootic within some local urban areas. Animals that have died of mange were also found to have been exposed to anticoagulant rat poisons. Bobcats are likely exposed to these rat poisons through their small mammal prey.

In addition to studying bobcats within Griffith Park, a broader objective of this study includes sampling across the Santa Monica Mountains. This research is a collaboration between the National Park Service, US Geological Survey, and UCLA. If any hikers see one of these traps, be assured they are for official use; it is important that they not be disturbed. Please pass the word around.

For more information go to:

www.urbancarnivores.com
www.friendsofgriffithpark.org/GPNHS/Griffith.htm

September 1, 2010 Draft Minutes

There was no quorum present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 PM by President, Marian Dodge. Members introduced themselves. Shirley Cohen, candidate for Federation Chairman Emeritus was introduced to the Board.

California State Parks Initiative:

Guest Don Robinson, Chair of the CA State Parks Foundation and Chair of the SMMC Advisory Board spoke, as primary initiator, in favor of Prop. 21 on the November ballot. Prop. 21 would increase the vehicle registration fee \$18 per year. Those fees would directly fund State Parks and would save the State \$130 million currently budgeted. In exchange residents will get free day use of the state parks. At this time, no one opposes the proposition.

Minutes: Minor corrections to the July 7 minutes were made.

President's Report:

1. Cell Tower update: Jane Usher will set up a meeting with Chris Spitz and the city attorneys involved.
2. The Dept. of Recreation & Parks sent a letter thanking us for supporting rangers.
3. The Baseline Hillside Ordinance was approved but not adopted by Council. It was sent to the City Attorney. There was much frustration over the eleventh hour changes to the grading as well as the feeling that back door deals were engaged to trump the process leaving the community unrepresented. Wendy-Sue Rosen suggested a letter strongly objecting to this

practice. Cassandra Barrère was asked to help draft letter which can then be used as Federation outreach to HOA's in Council Districts with hillside areas. It was suggested that we invite Councilmember Koretz to our next meeting so that we can plead our case with grading with him.

4. Walmart did not get its CEQA exemption from the state legislature.
5. Citywide Design Guidelines to insure good design were released by the Planning Dept. Comment is due Sept. 27. Marian will send them to members.
6. Everyone agreed the December holiday party is a good event and volunteers were requested – Cassandra Barrère and Nickie Miner will help Marian with the party plans.
7. Speakers Time Limit - need a motion – that each member be allowed to speak on a topic the first time for 3 minutes. Then, after everyone has had a chance to speak, each member will be allowed to speak for an additional 2 minutes.

New Business:

Widening of the 405 freeway: Mark Stratton of Bel Air Skycrest POA described the 405 widening as a disaster and efforts are being made to keep the ramps at Skirball as they are. There is a window of opportunity if the project runs out of money. Encino is leading the charge to scrap the new on/off ramp which would save money and increase public safety. Irene Sandler was mentioned as a good speaker on the issue.

Bel Air Presbyterian School Expansion: Mark Stratton described the proposed expansion of the school located in the Mulholland corridor. Previous expansion plans were opposed by the SMMC and the Hillside Federation. They want a master plan for the Mulholland Corridor and an EIR. Since the federation has

already taken a position on this school, Wendy-Sue Rosen and Mark Stratton will draft a letter regarding the overriding considerations.

Solar Panel Arrays: Dan Wright of Mt. Washington is wondering if solar panel arrays on empty lots are popping up in any other neighborhoods.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Barrère
Acting Secretary

Members Present:

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|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Bel Air Skycrest POA | Mark Stratton |
| Benedict Canyon Assn. | Nickie Miner |
| Cahuenga Pass Neigh | Joan Luchs |
| Laurel Canyon Assn. | Cassandra Barrère |
| Los Feliz Improvement | Marian Dodge |
| Nichols Canyon | Madeline O'Donnell |
| Res. of Beverly Glen | Dan Palmer |
| | Gillian Calof |
| Roscomare Valley | Robin Greenberg |
| | Shirley Cohen |
| Upper Mandeville | Wendy-Sue Rosen |

Guests Present:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Cal. State Parks Found. | Don Robinson |
| Brentwood HOA | Donald Keller |

**Mulholland Scenic Parkway Design
Review Board**

Meets 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month,
6:30 pm

Marvin Braude Constituents Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Blvd. Van Nuys, CA
1st floor conference room

July 7, 2010
Draft Minutes

(Note: Some edits were made at the September meeting.)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by President, Marian Dodge.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Marian thanked Cassandra for doing double duty last month and taking the minutes in June.

Marian announced the nomination of Donna Messinger for Recording Secretary. Her nomination was approved unanimously.

Past Executive Secretary Liz Tigar sends a warm hello and her best wishes.

Marian asked the Board about the start time for meetings. Is 7 pm too difficult for people with long drives? Would it be better if we started at 7:30? Past President Shirley Cohen suggested that from her experience if you move the start to 7:30, then the meeting won't actually start until 8:00. Marian asked if anyone is aware of a free venue for us where they have the space to accommodate all members and visitors for the meeting in addition to parking. The Board will consider the change if it helps.

Each Board Member was asked to fill in their organization's area on a map so we can keep it in mind for potential new venue for the monthly meetings.

In order to keep the meetings flowing Marian proposed a time limit of 3 minutes for speakers who are not on agenda since there are many who need to discuss their individual organization's concerns. After the

presentation each person will have opportunity of 2 minutes to discuss the topic. After each person who wishes to speak has done so, those who have additional comments will have another two minutes. It was agreed by consensus to try the plan.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Federal environmental officials will have a 'listening session' tomorrow (July 8) at Occidental College, 3-7pm.

Wendy-Sue Rosen described The California State Parks ballot initiative which would provide funding for state parks whose funding has been reduced due to the financial crisis. They are proposing an \$18 fee for non-commercial vehicles with an estimated potential of over \$500 million to be raised. She's asking organizations to get involved and will invite a guest speaker to talk about this at our September 1st meeting. Marian will forward their newsletter to directors.

We don't meet in August, but in September we will meet on September 1st.

Matt Epstein has been named to serve on City Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Upper Stone Canyon Reservoir - Shirley Cohen

(Shirley is a past president of the federation, including the 25th anniversary of Hillside at Al Bodine's house, a gala event which included Mayor Tom Bradley.)

Upper Stone Canyon is a man-made reservoir, and falls under the federal requirement that all reservoirs need to be covered. The issue is how to cover it. She distributed a hand out of

potential solutions for covering: a buried concrete cover, an aluminum cover, or a floating cover. Local residents want to preserve the scenic view with its native habitat and vegetation. The preferred solution is the buried cover which is more expensive. It would be covered with soil and native plants preserving the natural environment of the area. A discussion followed regarding the safety of earth dams, the impact of construction on the wildlife, security.

Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that the federation support the buried concrete cover because it would retain the natural environment of the area, it is the safest alternative, and it would allow for limited public access. The motion passed.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the May 5 and June 2 meetings were approved as written.

NEW BUSINESS:

B. Van de Kamps Bakery - Laura Gutierrez and Miki Jackson, Van de Kamps Coalition

Van de Kamps Bakery, modeled after Dutch architecture, was built in the 1930s. After the bakery closed, the building was preserved and was supposed to become a satellite campus of Los Angeles City College. In 1999 the VdK Coalition went out to communities for support, including the Hillside Federation. Proposition A and AA bond measures funded the construction of the campus. They devised an 80/20 plan where fee classes would support the college credit classes so that the campus would not be dependent on state funding. Then in April, 2009, citing lack of funding to run the campus, LACC handed the property over to the Los Angeles Community College District to become commercial rental

property. School bond money (\$7.1 million) was being spent illegally for tenant improvements. The Van de Kamps Coalition has hired an attorney to pursue the CEQA violations for changing the use of the site. More information is available at: www.vandekamps.org.

Wendy-Sue Rosen made a motion to: Continue gathering information with supportive documents and revisit it at our next meeting with attorney Dan Wright. The motion passed.

C. Amend bylaws to allow voting by e-mail; quorum

Our organization needs to have some manner to respond promptly if there's something urgent that needs addressing between monthly Board meetings. Additionally there is the problem of being unable to act because of a lack of a quorum. According to federation bylaws, a quorum is 1/3 of 32 members. Wendy-Sue Rosen: Other professional boards she sits on have allowed for voting by e-mail in unique cases such as between board meetings if necessary.

Joan Luchs: There was a discussion before meeting about amending bylaws. The July 7 agenda specifically says amend bylaws. Joan cited the definition of the term 'previous notice' in Robert's Rules: please refer to p. 118-119 of *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, 1990 – 9th Edition (Scott, Foresman) Shirley Cohen: I don't think you should decrease the number of quorum.

Madeleine O'Donnell: Suggested a phone tree to get people to go to City Hall when necessary.

Philip Feldman: Noted the lack of enthusiasm of people not showing up. Instead of e-mail he suggested a list serve... not that expensive

but lasts about a year. He did not think there were many emergencies.

Marian Dodge: Clarified that the Exec Committee needs an alternative solution in the event that there is something urgent to be taken care of before the next monthly meeting.

Marian read Nickie Miner's comments that she received by e-mail: To lower an organization's standards for a quorum is the beginning of that organization's downfall. 33% is already lowered.

E-mail voting can be abused. Scratch that vote by email idea. Get people to recognize the importance of coming to the meetings.

Michael Chasteen: Agreed, e-mails can be abused.

Mark Stratton noted the importance of the Lopez Canyon presentation last month, but because we didn't have a quorum no position could be taken.

Wendy-Sue Rosen: Every board has an emergency procedures. She belongs to a number of professional organizations which have such an alternative in place for rare urgencies. She recommends a straw vote.

Joan Luchs: Reread Roberts Rules aloud. She objected to Marian Dodge telling board member Michael Meyer from Outpost Homeowners that there would not be a vote taken on the bylaws although they were listed on the agenda "Amend bylaws to allow voting by e-mail." Michael Meyer came to the meeting because the bylaws were listed on the agenda, but after the president told him that the bylaws would not be voted on, he left the meeting before it started. No vote was taken to amend the bylaws.

Marian Dodge: Thanked members for all their comments. The point of this discussion is to create conversation and share ideas to see where we all stand in the thought process here.

Philip Feldman: Moved that the President appoint a committee to discuss the two distinct issues: 1. Low attendance at monthly Board meetings so an alternative is needed to make a motion. 2. Emergency votes/matters that need to be answered in between monthly scheduled board meetings. Niles Chapman made a friendly amendment that votes between meetings be only in case of urgency. The motion passed 13 - 0.

D. EIR for AEG's NFL Stadium

AEG is seeking an CEQA exemption for their proposed new NFL stadium in downtown Los Angeles. This would set a terrible precedent for other large projects. The Planning and Conservation League in Sacramento is making a list of groups who oppose the exemption.

Wendy-Sue: There is a move to completely gut CEQA, and we have had numerous emergency e-mails. We need to get public input; that's the only way to get them help. She proposed a general policy statement so that the federation will not have to take a position on each specific case that arises.

Wendy-Sue Rosen: I move that we adopt a policy to oppose the weakening of CEQA. The motion passed 11 - 3. Marian will add the federation's name to the list of organizations who oppose the exemption.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Baseline Hillside Ordinance

Wendy-Sue Rosen: Limits on grading have been removed from the proposed ordinance. Councilmember Paul Koretz' office is working with Wendy-Sue and Mark Stratton to see if we can get unified modifications to present to PLUM. Wendy-Sue will send a

memo and will invite a guest speaker to the September meeting to discuss this further.

B. Lopez Canyon Update - Marlene Rader
The Lopez Canyon Alliance has retained an attorney and will file a lawsuit appealing the decision to allow a truck driving school to be built on the Open Space landfill. Dan Wright was great but they have had to go to another attorney who is part of a charitable organization and she has negotiated a flat rate to work with them. The next step is holding fundraisers and bake sales etc. to help fund the next step of the lawsuit.

Also, Lopez Canyon was grateful for the support of the Hillside Federation. Kagel Canyon took a vote and will officially rejoin the Hillside Federation to respectfully support us in return. They will have payment in for the next Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Donna Messinger, Recording Secretary

Members Present:

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|---|---|
| Bel Air Skycrest POA | Mark Stratton Lois Becker |
| Benedict Canyon Assn. | Michael Chasteen |
| Cahuenga Pass Neigh. | Joan Luchs |
| Hollywood Heights | Donna Messinger |
| Hollywoodland HOA | Jeanne Clark |
| Los Feliz Improvement | Marian Dodge |
| Nichols Canyon | Madeline O'Donnell |
| No. Beverly/Franklin Outpost Estates Res. of Beverly Glen | Robert Levy Michael Meyer Dan Palmer Tensie Palmer |
| Roscomare Valley | Shirley Cohen Phyllis Gottlieb |
| Sherman Oaks HOA | Dr. Niles Chapman |
| Studio City Residents | Philip Feldman |
| Upper Mandeville | Wendy-Sue Rosen |

Guests:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Van de Kamps Coalition | Laura Gutierrez, Miki Jackson |
| Kagel Canyon Civic | Marlene Rader |
| No. Beverly/Franklin | Connie Levy |

Web Site

The Hillside Federation has a new web site, www.hillsidefederation.org. It is still a work in progress.

One of the things we want to do is have live links to the web sites of all our member organizations. Please send us the link to your association's web site. In return, we ask that you post a link to the Hillside Federation web site on your web site.

Motions:

If you are planning on making a motion at the meeting, please prepare your motion ahead of time and bring enough copies for all member associations. This will make it easier for the directors to consider the merits of the motion and easier for the secretary to record it.