

FOUNDED IN 1952

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:



*Important
Information
Enclosed*

PRESIDENT

Joan Luchs

CHAIRMAN

Lynette Berg Robe

VICE PRESIDENT

Charley Mims

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Liz Tigar

RECORDING SECRETARY

Ann Walnum

TREASURER

Dan Palmer

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

BelAir Knolls Property
BelAir Skycrest Property
Benedict Canyon Association
Cahuenga Pass Neighborhood
Crests Neighborhood Association
Encino Property Owners
Forest Hills Homeowners
Franklin Ave/Hwd.Blvd.West
Franklin Hills Residents
Glenridge Homeowners
Highland Owners Association
Hollywood Dell Civic
Hollywood Heights Association
Hollywoodland Homeowners
La Tuna Canyon Community
Laurel Canyon Association
Los Feliz Improvement
Mt. Olympus Property Owners
Mount Washington Association
Mt. Wash. Homeowners Alliance
Nichols Canyon Association
No.Beverly Dr./Franklin Canyon
Oak Forest Canyon Association
Outpost Estates Homeowners
Pacific Palisades Residents
Residents of Beverly Glen
Roscomare Valley Association
Shadow Hills Property Owners
Sherman Oaks Home Owners
Studio City Residents Asso.
Tarzana Property Owners
Torreyson-Flynn Association
Upper Mandeville Canyon
Whitley Heights Civic

CHAIRMEN EMERITUS

Jerome C. Daniel
Patricia Bell Hearst
Gordon Murley
Polly Ward

CHAIRMAN IN MEMORIUM

Brian Moore



**Laura Chick
Los Angeles City Controller**

We are honored to have Laura Chick accept our invitation to be our special guest speaker at our April 1, 2009 Board meeting

Laura N. Chick is the first woman elected to citywide office in the history of Los Angeles. As Controller, Laura Chick serves as the chief auditor, accountant and watchdog for the City of Los Angeles—working to ensure its fiscal health. Since taking office, Chick has released more than 150 audits that served as effective road maps for change in the operations of the City.

Chick exposed contracting improprieties at the Airport and Harbor, millions in over-billing by Fleishman-Hillard Public Relations and hazing and harassment at the Los Angeles Fire Department.

Continues on page 2

NEXT MEETING
Wednesday, April 1, 2009
Social Hour at 7 PM
Meeting starts promptly at 7:30 pm
UNIVERSAL CITY NISSAN
3550 Cahuenga Blvd. West
between Lankershim-Universal Drive bridge
off ramps; park underground garage/street;
take elevator to 2nd floor conference room

AGENDA

- Introductions: Members/Guests**
Minutes: February and March
President's Report:
A. EAHCLA Lawsuit: SB 1818
Densification Update
B. 9001/9005 Crescent Drive
victory/ Laurel Canyon
C. Solar Energy Results/Measure B
D. Run-Off Candidate Forum: City
Attorney and Council District 5 at
May 6th Board meeting
Special Guest Speaker: Laura Chick
Treasurer's Report:
A. Membership Renewal Update
Executive Committee Election:
A. Dr. Niles Chapman
Sign Ordinance: Guest Speakers
A. David Garfinkle
Hillside Mansionization Mapping
A. David Garfinkle
Adjournment

**HILLSIDE FEDERATION PRESENTS RUN-OFF
CANDIDATES AT MAY 6 MEETING**

Continued from page 1

In October she released a watershed audit showing that the LAPD had a backlog of nearly 7,000 untested rape kits. The Chick report drew national attention and prompted immediate action from the City's elected leaders.

In February Chick authored the City's Blueprint for Ending Gang Violence. Chick's report was the catalyst for sweeping change in organizing, funding and monitoring the City's multi-million dollar anti-gang efforts.

To further expand the ability of the Controller's Office to root out significant problems, Chick created the City's Waste and Fraud Unit and 24 hour whistleblower hotline.

Recognized as a forceful change agent, Chick was named by Los Angeles Magazine as one of the most influential people in the City. The Daily News editorialized, "...as City Controller, she's often been downtown's lone champion of good government."

Prior to becoming Controller, Laura Chick served as Los Angeles City Councilmember, Third District, in the west San Fernando Valley, from 1993-2001. Chick served as the first woman to ever chair the City Council's Public Safety Committee.

Before entering elective office at the age of 49, Chick had already lived a full life as a stay-at-home mom, manager of a family owned business and social worker. "I didn't approach elective office to be something. I entered politics to help solve problems." said Chick.

Having called Los Angeles home since 1952, she received her Bachelor's Degree in History from UCLA and a Master's in Social Work from USC.

Laura Chick lives in Silver Lake, and is the proud mother of two grown daughters and a grandson.

The Hillside Federation is honored to present 4 run-off candidates for the offices of City Attorney and Council District 5 at its regular monthly Board meeting on May 6. Are more surprises in store for us at the May 19th runoff election? Your vote will help decide, but learning more about the candidates will enable you to make an informed decision...

Street corners are alive with campaigning as the run-off candidates for **Council District 5 Paul Koretz and David Vahedi**, intensify their outreach in that community. With less than 100 votes separating them in the March 3rd primary election it would appear to reflect almost equal confidence in their ability to lead that district in the desired direction.

The **City Attorney run-off election** surprise keeps one's political blood circulating on high as to whether **Carmen Trutanich or Councilman Jack Weiss** will be chosen to replace termed out City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo at the May 19th election. Both Weiss and Trutanich are attorneys; Trutanich having served as a Los Angeles County Deputy DA and Weiss as current Councilman for District 5 the last 8 years... So far three out the four have accepted our invitation. Bring friends and bring questions!

**ELECTION OF DIRECTORS
at
APRIL 1st MEETING**

Nominees are as follows:

- Chairman: Lynette Berg Robe
- President: Joan Luchs
- Vice President: Charley Mims
- Vice President: Lannette Pabon
- Executive Secretary: Laura Gutierrez
- Treasurer: Dan Palmer
- Recording Secretary: Ann Walnum

Nominations from the floor will be accepted

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED SIGN ORDINANCE



The City Planning Department has drafted a new ordinance to better control signs in the City. **There have been several hearings before the City Planning Commission and the last one is scheduled for Thursday March 26th at 8 AM located at Van Nuys City Hall.** Assuming passage by the CPC, the ordinance must go to the City Council Planning and Land Use Management Committee and then the full City Council. The proposed ordinance has a number of excellent provisions including elimination of all new off-site signs, limits to the size of signs including billboards, prohibition of digital signs and super graphics except in special Sign Districts, and substantial fines for violations of the ordinance.

Unfortunately, as noted in testimony before the City Planning Commission, it has a number of serious flaws which make it unacceptable in its present form to the general public and several of the CPC members. The Hillside Federation and Tarzana Property Owners Association are urging that the City modify the proposed ordinance and implement a three phase approach.

Phase One: Pass the Baseline Ordinance. Implement the baseline proposed ordinance, which contains everything except the controversial Sign Districts and Comprehensive Sign Program, with the amendments proposed by City Planning Commission members at the March 18 hearing. The amendments include wider notification, methods to modulate sign illumination, provisions to limit roof signs, and limitations on discretionary actions by the Planning Department without public hearings

Phase Two: Defer Consideration of the Comprehensive Sign Program. This provision would allow larger signs than the baseline provisions for any commercial site greater than 100,000 sq ft, the size of most “big box”

stores and strip malls. The overwhelming response of the public, and those of several Commission members claim no justification to exceptions for larger projects. Larger developments would have longer street footages and thus be allowed larger signs than would be the case for small developments. The potential blighting and safety issues would remain the same. Comments made about the need for special consideration due to the current economic situation are disingenuous.

How can you justify a permanent entitlement for a temporary situation? Such an exemption is arbitrary and would essentially emasculate any sign ordinance. Commissioner Woo’s suggestion to reexamine the situation in a year to see if such a provision makes sense is practical and easily accomplished. Passing it now and reexamining it next year has the potential for massive proliferation of oversized signs during that time. In addition, it is much harder to remove an unnecessary provision than it is to add a beneficial provision later and finally, those signs permitted during the year would have permanent status.

Phase Three: Defer Consideration of Sign Districts. Essentially all of the public comments have strongly opposed the current provisions regarding creation of special Sign Districts. Federal Judge Audrey Collins has ruled that the current definition of sign districts is not compelling and does not sufficiently establish a basis for allowing exemptions in specified areas from the provisions of the general sign ordinance. While the City has appealed that ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, their response is not expected for a year. The City should at least wait until the ruling of the Court of Appeals and craft any special sign district parameters based on that ruling. As that may take some time, particularly if there is further appeal to the Supreme Court, the moratorium on any provisions for contemplated sign districts should be extended until the final adjudication of the issue.

A better solution might simply be to eliminate all consideration of exemptions for special designated areas (Sign Districts) as there does not appear to be any overriding reason to create such special districts. At the very least, the City must craft a set of specific parameters to define a Sign District that is likely to withstand further court challenges. The crafting of such a set of strict and enforceable criteria must include input from citizen groups including the neighborhood councils and established homeowner groups.

Critical items that must be addressed include proper notification of proposed Sign Districts, significant reduction in existing signage in exchange for exceptions to the general Sign Ordinance requirements, and significant restrictions of the impingement of any signs on neighboring communities. Furthermore, we agree with the majority of the City Planning Commission that there is no justification for granting grandfather status to the areas proposed as sign districts that have not been evaluated by the Planning Department or undergone any public hearing.

What needs to be done. Every civic minded individual and organization needs to urge the City Planning Commission, PLUM and City Council to adopt a thorough and thoughtful approach to the proposed sign ordinance; **immediately pass a baseline ordinance incorporating the provisions that the citizenry of Los Angeles is crying out for; defer consideration of Sign Districts until permissible and acceptable provisions are defined; and defer consideration of any Comprehensive Sign Program unless and until the need becomes apparent after review of the effectiveness of the baseline ordinance.**

David R. Garfiinkle
President
Tarzana Property Owners Association

REMINDERS: ISSUES & MOTIONS

Federation meetings are scheduled to start at 7:30 PM and end by 9:30 PM. In order to end on time, issues to be brought to the Board require a complete outline and a background, including what is being requested, then emailed to president@hillsidefederation.org at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting along with a direct phone and fax number or phone and email address if available.

MOTIONS to be made at the meeting should be well thought out and printed so that they are clear and concise, with enough copies for all member associations. Each presenter will be given 5 minutes to make a presentation so that meetings can be kept on time. All requests to agendize an issue **MUST** be approved in writing by the President before the item will be placed on the Agenda.

HILLSIDE APPLICATION DENIED IN LAUREL CANYON

For more than 100 years, building homes on unimproved hillside streets has brought traffic to dangerous roads that have never been improved to City of Los Angeles basic standards of safety. The property at issue here is located in Laurel Canyon at **9001/9005 Crescent Drive**.

Laurel Canyon resident Jim Nelson, who for 30 years has led a campaign to improve its streets or stop their construction, found all the old City laws and policies dating back to 1910. When put together, Nelson discovered not only how the bizarre situation of houses on dirt paths could be approved and built, but why such construction has been illegal for 75 years.

Sadly, there is another dark side of a 1936 law being lost and not enforced. Recently, a beloved member of the canyon died with two others when his car plunged over a cliff. This tragedy occurred at the exact spot that Jim Nelson tried to get the City to erect a guardrail. The City's response was that it was not required to do so because the street was technically "closed" in accordance with its 1936 law.

Clearly, the use of a withdrawn street as frontage and access for a building site requires approval from DWP. At a March 17, 2009 hearing, Associate Zoning Administrator Larry Friedman determined that Crescent Drive must be improved to a width of 22 feet per DWP standards and that it must be in place prior to considering the issuance of any building permit. Only the DWP has the right to approve access; therefore, issuing permits before DWP's action was illegal.

With the DWP having the clear authority to define the requirements for returning withdrawn streets to public use, potential builders must take those requirements published by the city into consideration when preparing their plans.

Note: This article was adapted from Laurel Canyon Ass'n. Vice President Jim Nelson's March 23, 2009 letter to the Los Angeles Planning Department. Support at the hearing came from many Laurel Canyon residents and organizations such as Sunset Doheny Homes Association, Lookout Mountain Alliance, Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, Rick Seireeni, Hillside Federation and most of all Jim Nelson.

**DENSIFICATION ORDINANCE LAWSUIT:
EACHLA ORAL ARGUMENT
PRESENTATION**



Attorney Doug Carstens provided the following report on rulings of the court and what resulted after his oral argument on Monday, March 16.

Last week, (on Friday the 13th of March, appropriately enough), Judge McKnew issued a tentative decision against EAHCLA in its Density Bonus Implementation Ordinance litigation against the City of Los Angeles. The tentative stated the writ sought by EAHCLA would be denied because there was no substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the City's ordinance could have an adverse impact on the environment. The Judge's tentative decision also denied the writ in the companion case brought by Sandy Hubbard on all grounds. Although the tentative is a preliminary indication of the Judge's analysis, most Judges do not waiver significantly from their tentative opinions when they issue a final ruling.

The Judge's two page tentative decision did not detail his reasoning about the evidence, but it is apparent he did not regard the statement of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association that "SB 1818 will require agencies to adopt ordinances that may result in significant indirect effects on the environment by reducing the effectiveness of existing protective standards" as evidence of potential significant impacts. Nor did he regard Supervisor Yaroslavsky's letter identifying impacts such as a net loss of affordable housing as providing such evidence.

The tentative decision stated that proposed development projects would "certainly require discretionary approval in other respects" than for their density bonus component.

However, contrary to his reasoning, a building allowable by right under existing zoning (such as is involved in the Louise Street Apartments litigation against the City of Los Angeles) would not require any discretionary approval, and therefore would not require CEQA review. Further, the tentative stated that EAHCLA has no standing (no right to bring a lawsuit) because it did not participate in the administrative review process, but this is incorrect since Public Resources Code section 21177(c) specifically provides for standing to bring a lawsuit if a member opposed the ordinance as it was reviewed before EAHCLA was formed.

After oral argument on Monday, March 16, the Judge decided not to enter his tentative decision as the ruling of the Court and said he would look further at the issues. The main areas it is likely he will reexamine are:

- (1) the difference between state law and the City's densification ordinance;
- (2) the potential environmental impacts identified by the California Chapter of the American Association of Planners, and
- (3) the potential for no further CEQA review of density bonus projects.

There is no way to know when the Judge will issue a final ruling, but it is required to be issued within 90 days of the oral arguments.



**VIEW FEDERATION
WEBSITE**

at www.hillsidefederation.org

**Latest Newsletters, News and
Update Links are available**

**If there is something else you'd like to see,
or if you want to send an article for the
newsletter, let us hear from you.
Call Joan Luchs at (213) 368-6120
with your suggestions.**

MARCH MINUTES**DRAFT MINUTES
HILLSIDE FEDERATION****General Membership Meeting
March 4, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at Universal City Nissan at 7:45 p.m. There were self-introductions by members and guests. Guests included **Barbara Broide** from Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight and **Alan Bell**, Senior Planner for Los Angeles City Planning Department.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS:

The Los Angeles City Election of March 3 was surprising as the results unfolded. Early returns favored Solar Project Measure B and **Jack Weiss** for City Attorney. Later post midnight returns turned negative on Measure B and forced Weiss into a run-off. The Council District 5 candidates, **Paul Koretz** and **David Vahedi**, slated for a run-off have been invited to the May 6 Federation meeting as have City Attorney candidates **Carmen Trutanich** and **Jack Weiss**. The May 19 election will also feature four state propositions placed on the ballot by the governor and the legislature.

Directors' and Officers' Insurance as well as General (injury) Liability insurance have been obtained by new companies at lower rates.

HILLSIDE FEDERATION'S NOMINEES

Charley Mims announced the candidates who have put their names in nomination as directors for 2009. **Lynette Berg Robe**, chairman; **Joan Luchs**, president; **Charley Mims**, vice president; **Laura Gutierrez**, executive secretary; **Dan Palmer**, treasurer; and **Ann Walnum**, recording secretary. Nominations will be accepted at the April meeting. Voting eligibility will be confirmed for representatives whose organizations have paid 2009 dues prior to the deadline.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Dan Palmer reported that 21 organizations have paid dues. President **Joan Luchs** has contacted all remaining groups and has received almost unanimous renewal promises.

LOS FELIZ HISTORY BOOK:

Don Seligman (Los Feliz Improvement Ass'n.) reported on the process of producing and self-publishing a hard-back, glossy paper, "coffee table" history of the Los Feliz district from the area's native American pre-history to 1940 and discussed acquiring the book's 150 maps, drawings and photographs from various archives and other sources. The sale price is \$25 plus tax. He offered to help any other organizations working to compile and publish a similar book.

BILLBOARD NEWS:

Guests **Barbara Broide** from Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight and **Alan Bell**, City Planning Department Sr. Planner, discussed city and citizen reactions to overall billboard issues and specific instances of abuse by billboard companies. Bell talked about the careful processes of the Planning Department to produce an effective ordinance. They have looked at the physical appearance and sign ordinances of Santa Monica and Pasadena, as well as other laws in more distant cities. The current Los Angeles City ordinance is the most permissive in Los Angeles County, probably in California, and maybe the nation.

Forests of pole signs abound, with Lincoln Blvd. being an especially egregious example. Safety concerns of giant digital billboards are being considered. Adding culpability of the property owner and changing the enforcement process to civil rather than criminal penalties should speed legal effectiveness. Future dates for hearings were announced. **Barbara Broide** told about their methods of mobilizing interested persons for City Hall appearances. They have been able to generate impressive attendance.

MARCH MINUTES

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m. with the announcement that Controller **Laura Chick** will be the guest speaker at the April 1st meeting

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Walnum, Recording Secretary

FEDERATION OFFICERS PRESENT

President	Joan Luchs, Cahuenga Pass
Vice President	Charley Mims, Franklin Hills Residents
Treasurer	Dan Palmer, Residents of Beverly Glen
Recording Secretary	Ann Walnum, Mount Washington Ass'n.

FEDERATION DIRECTORS PRESENT

Mark Stratton	Belair Skycrest
Nikie Miner	Benedict Canyon
Don Andres	Franklin Ave/Holly/West
Don Seligman	Los Feliz Improvement
Madeline O'Donnell	Nichols Canyon
Robert Levy	No.Beverly/Franklin Cyn.
Laura Gutierrez	Sherman Oaks

NON-VOTING DIRECTORS PRESENT

Lois Becker	Belair Skycrest
Hilda Hoesli	Cahuenga Pass
Yvonne Hessler	Franklin Ave/Holly/West
MarianDodge	Los Feliz Improvement

GUESTS PRESENT

Barbara Broide	Westwood Nbrhd.Council
Alan Bell	L.A. City Planning

**MULHOLLAND SCENIC
PARKWAY DESIGN
REVIEW BOARD**

**Meets the first and third
Thursday of the month at
6:30 PM**

**MARVIN BRAUDE
CONSTITUENTS SERVICE
CENTER
6262 Van Nuys Blvd.,
Van Nuys, CA
First Floor Conference Room**

Free parking under the building:
Entrance just east of Van Nuys Blvd.
on Sylvan Street

