

Hillside Federation
October 7, 2015
Draft Minutes

I. Call to Order

President Marian Dodge called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Guest Speaker: Paul Edelman, MRCA

Paul Edelman of Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority provided an update on LA County ballot measures HH and MM. The measures, passed in 2012, created community facilities districts in the Santa Monica Mountains funded by parcel assessments within the districts. The MM area (District 2) generates approximately \$308,000 annually, \$20,000 of which goes to the County Registrar/Recorder. MM money has been used for maintenance and ranger patrols. Maintenance included work at the top of Reseda – Caballero Canyon, where a trailhead restroom was fixed and an ADA kiosk was built. Money has also been used at San Vicente Peak on dirt Mulholland. MRCA hopes to use MM money to gain public access to Gerard Reservoir in Woodland Hills.

The HH area (District 1) generates approximately \$680,000 per year. \$20,000 goes to the County Registrar/Recorder. \$275,000 per year for the next 8 years pays for the previous Laurel Canyon and Mulholland acquisition. Maintenance in District 1 included a restroom in Lower Franklin Canyon, as well as trail improvements.

Paul distributed several pages showing small parcels acquired in the Cahuenga Pass, Universal Overlook, and Beverly Glen, and potential target properties. The next fee simple properties will record in February, based on when the fund money “hits” (in February and June each year). Paul noted that there are two surplus City of LA properties in the District that could be available for acquisition, one near Griffith Park. Generally, any inexpensive properties up to \$15,000 can be acquired, but must either generate capital or be some kind of park improvement.

II. Approval of Minutes

The October minutes were approved as submitted.

III. Officers’ Reports

A. President’s Report – Marian Dodge

Marian asked George Abrahams to provide a summary of the appeal outcome for the *La Mirada v City of Los Angeles* case regarding the Old Spaghetti Factory. George provided a brief history of the case, and noted that the \$9M City money was the only thing the court did not require the developer to give back. The Court of Appeals upheld the trial court, but “forgot” to do anything about the stay that the developer received to avoid following the Department of Building and Safety’s order to vacate (which was issued by LADBS after the trial decision). LADBS likely must issue a new order to vacate. Tenants will probably be out by October 11.

George also updated the board on proposed updates to the Alquist-Priolo Act. Several reforms have been proposed, and George flew to Sacramento to the State Mining and Geological Board to testify. One positive reform proposed would require agencies to have geotechnical review analyzed by a qualified person. Negative proposals included cutting the number of years needed to consider a fault “active” from approximately 11,000 down to only 5,000 years, and moving from the active fault concept to categories of hazardous/non-hazardous. (For point of reference, the Hollywood fault was active 8,000 years ago, so the change would mean it would no longer be considered an active fault.) The Millennium project’s geotechnical engineer is on the technical advisory committee, and is pushing for these changes, but George noted that the state geologist

and others were very critical of the proposals that would weaken existing standards. In fact, the state geologist wants to increase the length of seismic activity to qualify as an active fault. George requested that the next hearing be held in Los Angeles.

Marian updated the board on the letter Councilmember David Ryu (CD4) sent to the City Ethics Commission supporting stronger requirements for lobbying and candidate contributions, like San Francisco. Wendy said the Ethics Commission needs to hear from Federation members and asked Marian to forward CM Ryu's letter to the Ethics Commission and encourage community participation.

Marian provided an update on the Department of Recreation and Parks decision not to extend the contract to run the Greek Theatre. The Department will self-operate and has hired the SMG management company, which manages other theaters. The plan is to continue with the same parking, sound, and other vendors. Griffith Park stakeholders are monitoring developments. There is no new request for proposals being issued at present.

Marian announced that the revised Sign Ordinance was considered by the City Planning Commission on September 24. They announced that they would take no position at that meeting, but would bring the ordinance back for further review in October. Because the period for review was so short between issuance of the staff report and the hearing, there was virtually no opportunity for neighborhood councils to weigh in. Wendy-Sue Rosen noted that this is the first time the ordinance is back to the CPC since they reviewed it in 2009. The 2009 version of the ordinance was not perfect, but it is better than the version recommended by PLUM (which added additional "grandfathered" districts, proposals for sign amnesty, a CUP process for billboards, and other items). The Planning Commission President asked Frank Bush (LADBS) whether it was true that the City could have been enforcing \$2500 fines per day for illegal signage under the current ordinance (yes). The City has not cited any illegal signage while the ordinance has been considered, even though the City Attorney made it clear that his office would assist in enforcement if LADBS would take action.

Councilmember Krekorian proposed an alternative to place digital signs outside of sign districts to generate revenue, but only on City property (described as the "public-only" option). Four Councilmember representatives testified, generally agreeing with preliminary CPC positions (opposed to amnesty, no digital signage outside of sign districts, no CUPs, and so forth).

Marian attended Governor Brown's SB 350 signing ceremony at Griffith Observatory earlier today. The Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 promotes sustainable energy. The bill number originates from climate experts' desire to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million.

The Centennial Anniversary of the National Park Service will be celebrated in Los Angeles beginning with a press conference at 2:30 pm, Thursday, October 15 along the LA River Greenway in Balboa Park, where the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail passes through the park. As part of the program, fourth graders from surrounding schools and their families will receive National Park Service passes.

B. Treasurer's Report – Don Andres

Don reported that Bel-Air Association has joined the Hillside Federation, bringing us to 45 members, the highest this century. Don reminded members to ensure that their organizations have updated their membership contact and information forms.

The annual Holiday Party will be held on Thursday, December 10. Wendy-Sue Rosen encouraged all member orgs to buy a table to enjoy the festivities. Marian reminded boardmembers that this is not just a party for our member org representatives, but for organization members as well. It is a great opportunity to meet local elected officials (most

Federation-related Councilmembers are expected to attend). The tickets will be \$45 for full buffet, and wine is included. Don noted that we have had three years in a row with more than 100 people in attendance, and doesn't want that streak to end.

IV. New Business

A. Hidden Creeks project – Paul Edelman, MRCA & Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

Paul provided a project summary and several handout pages showing the proposed project location in the Santa Susana Mountain foothills between Browns Creek and Mormon Creek, in an unincorporated part of Los Angeles County adjacent to Porter Ranch. Paul noted that there is no more important area in the Los Angeles area with respect to perennial streams. The project would annex project land into the City of Los Angeles. This would vastly increase what is permitted to be built, because City code allows much greater development than County zoning provisions (under County zoning the project could include 33 homes, which the EIR claims is economically infeasible); under City zoning, as many as 188). The City Planning Commission has approved the project, but it must come back with a new tract map.

Paul described the project as “the most environmentally destructive project I have ever seen.” It would move 8 million cubic yards of earth, and includes digging down the depth of an 18-story building to extend Mason Avenue, and yet the project EIR claims that there are no significant biological impacts. The project would wipe out 250 acres of habitat from the LA River watershed and Santa Susana Mountains ecosystem. In addition, grading limits come within an inch of a blue line stream.

Marian noted that the project cuts into the adjacent Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park. Paul noted that the project would be within the viewshed of the NPS Rim of the Valley Corridor special study area. There are many letters opposed to the project (approximately 1,000), including from Las Virgenes Homeowners Association, Audubon Society, NRDC, noted environmental scientists, and many others. George Abrahams suggested that the State Geologist should be informed about the work that would take place in a part of the project with a historic landslide. The project would dedicate only minimal public space.

Paul requests that the Hillside Federation draft a letter in opposition to the project.

MOTION: Don Andres moved that the Hillside Federation oppose the proposed Hidden Creeks Estates Project, and communicate said opposition to the Los Angeles City Council, the Mayor's office, and LA County. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Biodiversity Motion – John Given

John described the City Council motion made by Councilmember Koretz (CF# 15-0499) that would convene a working group of City departments to report back on current and future strategies to protect biodiversity in the City. Alison Simard provided additional helpful background, and noted that this is a great chance to involve scientists and create a biodiversity index for the City.

MOTION: John Given moved that the Hillside Federation draft a letter in support of Council Motion 15-0499 (Koretz) to create the proposed Biodiversity Working Group, Technical Advisory Group, and develop and implement biodiversity best practice strategies. The motion passed.

C. CEQA Update – Wendy-Sue Rosen

Wendy reported that the Governor's Office of Planning and Research is proposing changes to the CEQA guidelines that will result in the weakening of CEQA protections and noted that comments on the proposal are due by October 12. She provided several examples, which included pulling aesthetics out of CEQA at the state level to allow local municipalities to address aesthetics, and changing one of the transportation standards from Level of Service to Vehicle Miles Traveled. Wendy asked for support for a detailed letter addressing our opposition to the

changes, explaining the position is consistent with the Federation's policy of not supporting any changes that weaken CEQA.

MOTION: Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that the Hillside Federation write a letter urging the governor not to weaken CEQA. The motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business

A. Harvard-Westlake – Sarah Boyd

Sarah provided an update on the status of the Harvard-Westlake plan to build a large parking lot with an athletic field on its roof on the west side of Coldwater Canyon across from its existing campus. DEIR comment letters were submitted in December 2013. The City is still working on the EIR, which is not yet released. Save Coldwater Canyon! met with Councilmember Krekorian, who says that he will not take a position on the project until the EIR is released. Councilmember Ryu, the adjacent councilmember, is opposed. The petition opposing the project now has 1,100 signatures, and is being shared with local elected officials and City Planning.

Recently, the City's Bureau of Engineering received an air space vacation request for the proposed pedestrian bridge that would cross Coldwater Canyon, and a street vacation request for a portion of Hacienda Drive on the west side of Coldwater, where the southern tip of the garage retaining wall would be built. HW describes the area as a paper road, though neighbors dispute that characterization. The 30-day notice was not provided to all nearby neighbors, but the local church received notice and shared with community members.

Save Coldwater Canyon! requests that the Federation submit a letter to the Bureau of Engineering and to the file for the EIR process based on the following: 1) the City cannot grant use of public air space for a private bridge because Coldwater Canyon is a scenic roadway and this sets a dangerous precedent for other scenic roadways; 2) the pedestrian bridge does not solve a safety hazard since no crossing guard will be present to ensure it is used, and any hazardous condition is created by the applicant's proposed garage; 3) the City cannot grant the vacation of a public roadway for a private use if the roadway has a current or potential public use, and 4) the street vacation request was not included in the draft EIR and thus violates the multiple approvals ordinance.

MOTION: Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that the Hillside Federation write a letter to oppose the project's application for vacation of airspace and roadway. The motion passed unanimously.

B. 8150 Sunset Blvd. – Adara Salim

Adara Salim provided an update on the project at 8150 Sunset Boulevard (the project at the corner of Crescent Heights), noting that the project has had a lot of changes. A new alternative known as Alternative 9, designed by Frank Gehry, was released and re-circulated. Adara stated that all previous DEIR comment letters would be "ported over" to this alternative and addressed in the EIR. Community members were pleasantly surprised by some changes, though there are still issues of concern.

Adara stated that the biggest beneficial change is reduction of the commercial FAR by 40%. Local community members are very happy with this change because it will greatly reduce daily trips in a very congested area (expected number of employees is also lowered from 311 to 192). In addition, the building mass has been broken up. In the original plan two large buildings blocked views from and of the hills. The new version has four buildings, with 150 feet of space between the two towers. The Chase bank building is somewhat architecturally significant, and is not going to be part of the new design, though apparently the Millard Sheets tile design on the Chase Bank will be saved, even if not part of the project. The Sunset side buildings will be between 1-3 stories, with taller buildings pushed back from Sunset, 65' and 150', respectively. In the original project, 1,000 bicycle spaces were intended to offset required vehicle parking, but in

new project provides 57 more spaces than required (144 spaces above code when considering the bicycle parking bonus). The garage will be dug an entire story deeper to accommodate greater parking. Save Sunset also likes that the Sunset entrance has been removed from the new design, and that the right turn onto Crescent will be preserved.

New concerns include that the tallest building is now 234' tall (identified as 15 stories). Adara noted that the building is slimmer and "Gehry-esque," but it is still considered too tall. Marian asked about the "marquee element." Adara thought it could be a large sign on one of the 1-3 story buildings facing Sunset. She said community members would request luminance limits.

MOTION: Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that Hillside Federation write a letter expressing our concern about the purpose of the marquee and problems with the ELDP CEQA streamlining process. The motion passed unanimously.

C. 2251 Nichols Canyon

Wendy-Sue Rosen reported that Michael Peretzian researched the project since the Federation's last meeting and found that the project application is by-right. He sent an email thanking the Federation for its help, acknowledging that there is no action that can be taken on the project at this time.

D. 10101 Angelo View Dr. – Aaron Green

Aaron represents neighbor Jeff Franklin, who could not attend. He provided a brief description of the proposed 82,000-square-foot single-family residence project. [For more details see June, 2015 newsletter, p.6.] Based on concerns about the project expressed by stakeholders (including the Hillside Federation) and Councilmember Koretz, the applicant previously agreed to voluntarily undergo an EIR for the project. The property owner's attorney sent a letter to Councilmember Koretz rescinding the offer to do an EIR, but promising instead to do an "enhanced MND." Marian reminded the board that this was the project we described as the "poster child for why the Baseline Hillside Ordinance needs tweaking." The applicant will present the project at the next Bel Air/Beverly Crest NC meeting. Hopefully, plans for the project will be shared.

Aaron hopes that the Federation will communicate to the City that an EIR is required, and that if an EIR is not done that the MND will be conditioned with additional procedural safeguards for the community. As examples, Aaron suggests that any environmental review should have a 75-day public comment period and should review at least some project alternatives that an EIR would have required. Wendy-Sue Rosen asked whether there is an "unusual circumstance" that would apply to the project to require an EIR. Aaron responded that the proposed house is massive compared to other homes in the immediate vicinity. There are some homes as large as 10-20,000 sq ft., but most are 3,500-6,000, and there are no heliports or helipads. In addition, there are oak trees on site that are likely to be impacted by the project. Wendy-Sue suggested that an expert should report on potential environmental impacts associated with the project.

MOTION: Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that the Hillside Federation continue to support an EIR for the project. The motion passed.

E. Moraga Drive – Bruce Kuyper

Bruce provided a brief update. He and Pat Nation followed up with the City Planner regarding the project site's location within a designated "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone" which disqualifies the project for on-menu density bonus incentives. The City Attorney's office was consulted and confirmed this was the case. The project has been withdrawn. George Abrahams suggested for future reference that projects in these sorts of zones may require walls with greater fire ratings.

F. San Vicente Peak Tower – Michael Leslie

Mike (Brentwood Hills Homeowners Assoc.) described one of the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System (LA-RICS) project locations at San Vicente Peak, which is within San Vicente Mountain Park on dirt Mulholland. The site is well known by hikers and mountain bikers as the home of the cold war era Nike missile site. LA-RICS is a joint powers agency among the City, County, and other local cities. The entire project encompasses many other locations, and would install two different networks, Land Mobile Radio (LMR) and cell phone (LTE). At this site the concern is over the LMR system that would authorize construction of a 180' tower, with a blinking light on top.

The Federation previously wrote a letter supporting an EIR for the project. The state legislature exempted the LTE (cellphone) portion of the project from environmental review, but fortunately that is no longer part of the San Vicente Peak site. FEMA also asked for comments for the federal environmental review.

MOTION: John Given moved that the Hillside Federation write a letter regarding the San Vicente Peak site requesting consideration of alternative sites, alternative size and tower type, and that San Vicente Peak be taken out of the project altogether, and that the Federation be added to the project notification list. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.
John Given, Executive Secretary

Members Present:

Beachwood Canyon	George Abrahams
Bel-Air Assn.	Bruce Kuyper
Bel Air Skycrest	Mark Stratton
Benedict Canyon	Kerry Welland
Brentwood Hills	John Given
Brentwood Residents	Wendy-Sue Rosen
Cahuenga Pass POA	Krista Michaels Steven Kates
Canyon Back Alliance	Lois Becker
Franklin Ave/Hlwd Bl	Don Andres
Franklin Hills Res.	Charley Mims
Hollywood Dell	Mary Ledding
Hollywoodland	Lucy Gonzalez
Kagel Canyon	Kit Paull
Laurel Canyon	Alison Simard
Los Feliz Impvmt.	Marian Dodge
Oaks HOA	Gerry Hans
Roscomare Valley	Steve Twining
Save Coldwater Canyon!	Heidi Mackay Sarah Boyd
Save Sunset Blvd.	Adara Salim
Sherman Oaks	Elke Heitmeyer
Studio City Res.	Claudia Freedle
Upper Nichols Canyon	Stacy Sillins

Guests:

SMMC/MRCA	Paul Edelman
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Brentwood Hills
Afriat Consulting
Moraga Dr.

Mike Leslie
Aaron Green
Pat Nation