

PO Box 1673, Hollywood Hills, CA 90078

**FOUNDED IN 1952**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE FEDERATION**

**PRESIDENT**

Joan Luchs

**CHAIRMAN**

Bill Eick

**VICE PRESIDENTS**

Mel Remba

Conrad Schoeffter

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Cassandra Barrère

**TREASURER**

Dr. Niles Chapman

**MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS**

BelAir Knolls

BelAir Skycrest

Benedict Canyon

Briarcliff

Cahuenga Pass Neighborhood

Encino Property

Forest Hills

Franklin Hills

Franklin Ave/HollyBlvd West

Glassell Park

Glenridge

Highland Homeowners

Hollywood Dell

Hollywood Heights

Hollywoodland

Holmby Hills

Homeowners of Encino

Kagel Canyon

La Tuna Canyon

Laurel Canyon

Lookout Mountain Alliance

Los Feliz Improvement

Montecito Heights

Mt. Olympus

Mount Washington

Nichols Canyon

No. Beverly Dr/Franklin

Outpost

Pacific Palisades

Residents of Beverly Glen

Roscomare

Shadow Hills Property

Sherman Oaks

Studio City

Tarzana

Upper Mandeville

Whitely Heights

**CHAIRMEN EMERITUS**

Jerome C. Daniel

Patricia Bell Hearst

Gordon Murley

**CHAIRMAN IN**

**MEMORIUM**

Brian Moore

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Congratulations to all of the newly elected officers to the Hillside Federation's Executive Committee. Each and every one of you bring something very special and I am honored to be your President.

I also wish to thank all of the outgoing Executive Committee members who worked very hard to preserve open space, the natural topography and wildlife of our mountains and hillsides throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and other hillside areas of Los Angeles. Specific thanks goes to Polly Ward, Steve Twining, Carol Sidlow, Marilyn Stefano and Fritz Zeiser. Polly and Steve received plaques for their service to the Hillside Federation.

Dear Members:

As your new President I wish to protect the property and quality of life of our residents and to encourage and promote policies that will best preserve open space and wildlife in our hillside areas. Specifically I want each and every member to feel comfortable in contacting me with your concerns, questions and suggestions.

Our entire Executive Committee is very excited about their new challenge but there is much to learn. In short, we need your support and participation. We can not do it alone nor do we want to and we look forward to your contributions and involvement. Together we are capable of moving this venerable and seasoned organization forward and upward.

Success does not come in a vacuum....

Joan Luchs,  
President-Elect

**NEW MEETING PLACE**

**NEXT MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2007**

**Dinner:6:30PM**  
**Meeting:8:00PM**

**Mulholland Tennis Club**  
**2555 Crestview Drive at Skyline**  
**Off Mulholland between Laurel**  
**and Coldwater Blvds.**  
**Hollywood Hills, CA 90046**

**AGENDA**

- Introduction of Members and Guests
- Approval of April Minutes
- Induction of new Executive Committee Officers – Jerry Daniel
- President's remarks
- Website – Rick Seireeni
- Future Meeting Locations
- Appointments- MRCA Assessment
- District Citizens Oversight Committee
- Possible Motion and vote
- Guest Speakers:
  - o Supertankers for Aerial Fire Protection
  - o Tony Morris & Bob Cavage
  - o Developers invading Glassell Park –
  - o Laura Gutierrez & Alisa Smith –
  - o Possible motion and vote
- Reports:
  - o President
  - o Chairman
  - o Vice President
  - o Treasurer
- Old and New Business by members

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## **Crescent Drive Developer is Denied Parcel Map for 3 Homes**

For the last six months, friends of the hills have been gearing up for a fight with a developer who wants to build three oversized trophy homes on a cliff overlooking West Hollywood. The site is at 9100 Crescent Drive at the very top of Sunset Plaza Drive, a site with characteristics that should limit development but are very steep lots and on which developers would like to build more than one house.

The site is spectacular with 180° views from downtown to Malibu. The lot is about two and half acres, large for this area, but it was larger. The property was split in two just a few years ago and came with undocumented promises of no further lot splits. So let this be a lesson: get those promises in writing and into a protective covenant that runs with the land. Now, the new owner wants to further split one of the lots into three parcels for three homes; one house would be 10,000 square feet and two more about 6,300 square feet each. The average home in this area is 1,700 square feet plus a 400 foot garage according to an MLS survey, but it may be fair to say that recent up-sizing in home construction would make the average of recently built homes somewhere between 2,000 to 3,500 square feet living including a garage. However, by any reckoning, these homes are huge and out-of-scale with the Laurel Canyon community.

Many hillside community groups came together as the two hearing dates approached for the subdivision request and for a separate request for variances to the Hillside Ordinance for the larger of the three homes. Taking the lead was the Laurel Canyon Association, the Sunset Doheny Homes Association and the Lookout Mountain Alliance. Providing additional support were several nearby HOA's and block groups from Stanley Hills, Laurel Hills, Sunset Plaza and Wonderland Park. And then came Joan Luchs, President-Elect of the Hillside Federation providing overall leadership on strategy. The Bel-Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council provided critical and weighty support with the presence of president, Steve Twining, and their land use board member, Bob Knotek. Added to this was the support of Councilman Jack Weiss.

So, what happened?

The hillside groups built an argument against the project based on five points.

The mission of the Hillside Federation shall be: To protect the property and the quality of life of 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.

1. The hearings were scheduled out of order. There should have been a determination on the lot split before deciding on any exemptions for a specific house.

2. The site is not safely accessible given the current conditions of the roads. This area is accessed by Sunset Plaza Drive and Wonderland Avenue. But Sunset Plaza is not a road for its last 100 yards or so. It's not even a private dirt road. It's simply private property that has been clearly posted and could be taken out of public use at any time on the whim of the owner. That leaves Wonderland Avenue as the only legal way in and out. Wonderland Avenue, the last quarter of a mile is one lane, on a sheer cliff without guard rails, and clearly substandard. The road can not support more traffic without first being upgrading.

3. The site is home to the endangered Red-Tail Hawk. A pair of nesting hawks has been using this wide-open cliff as a hunting area for years. These birds are protected by The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Neighbors photographed the hawks perching on an old post on the subject property on the day of the first hearing, and it was neighbors, Mark Schoolery and Kevin Keyser, who brought this to everyone's attention at the variance hearing.

4. The site is unstable and a known slide area. Despite studies from the Department of Building and Safety, adjoining properties have experienced non-stop sloughing of loose granite and debris.

5. As mentioned before, the proposed homes are out of scale with the community, ranging from 6,300 square feet including a garage to 10,000 square feet. They are by all standards grossly out of scale with the surrounding area.

At the first hearing, which was held on April 16th, the Zoning Administrator raised serious doubts about the need to grant multiple variance exceptions to such a large lot. Why should this house be granted exceptions to the required 20 foot road improvement, or a reduced side yard setback or a height of 45 feet when this proposed 10,000 square foot home could simply be reduced in size to conform to the codes without any exceptions? It was at this hearing that evidence of the existence of the red-tailed hawks was also presented. The ZA suggested that both sides consult with a professional ornithologist to determine if the birds were nesting or using the property for habitat. The applicant was clearly taken aback by this unanticipated complication and complained that the neighbors had "thrown him a hot potato".

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Well, the very next day, the perch the hawks had been photographed on the day before and used as an overlook for their hunting area was removed. It had been there for twenty years, but just a day after evidence of their presence was submitted, it vanished.

At the second hearing on April 18th, a Parcel Map request for dividing the parcels into three lots was denied. And the reason was a surprise to everyone. The request was found not to be allowed according to the slope/density provision in the Hollywood Community Plan\* as well as LAMC Code Section 17.50 E. In other words, extremely steep lots are allowed only limited density. In this case, only one house is allowed on this otherwise large lot.

We are sure that the developer, Mr. James Wecker, will appeal, and a decision on the first hearing is still pending. Nevertheless, we noticed a profound shift in the attitude of the City with regard to these types of development. The City properly applied the current Slope Density law to limit development to one house. The community greatly appreciates Councilman Jack Weiss' support in opposing this project.

*\*It is the intent of this Plan that all natural slopes generally in excess of 15% be limited to the minimum density range. Transitional building heights should be imposed, especially in the Medium density housing designated areas where this designation is immediately adjacent to properties designated Low Medium 1 or more restrictive. Hollywood Community Plan (page three).*

The rule calls for .5 to 1 house per gross acre . . . or more restrictive!

*Submitted by:* Rick Seireeni, Laurel Canyon Association, Board Member

## **HILLSIDE FEDERATION DINNER MEETING**

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

HOSTED BUFFET DINNER, FOLLOWED BY  
INSTALLATION OF NEW 2007 OFFICERS, AND  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING.

Where: Mulholland Tennis Club  
2555 Cresview Drive at Skyline off Mulholland  
(Between Laurel & Coldwater Canyon)

Time: Dinner 6:30 PM; Main Dining Room  
Meeting: 8:00 PM; Senior Lounge

**All Hillside Federation affiliated representatives and  
past officers of the Federation are welcome**

RSVP by Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> to either:

- Joan Luchs: 323-851-1597
- Mel Remba: 323-851-1647

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## **SLOPE DENSITY**

The revision/clarification to the slope density ordinance was passed by the L.A. City Planning Commission in March 2007. Council Member Wendy Greuel has actively supported this revision. The next step is to have the matter scheduled before the Planning Land-Use Management Committee of the Los Angeles City Council. The purpose of the amendment is to require the developers to show their work in advance, to provide for the use of uniform topographic maps and to require the density to be calculated on the overall project area rather than on 5

## **REMINDERS: ISSUES & MOTIONS**

Federation meetings are scheduled to start at 8:00 PM, and end at 10:00 PM and, in order to end on time, issues that are to be brought to the Board require a COMPLETE OUTLINE AND BACKGROUND INCLUDING WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED; then emailed to <president@hillsidefederation.org> or faxed to 323 851-9160 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 speaker will be allowed 5 minutes to make their 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 put on the Agenda.

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acre grids. This matter is of substantial importance to all of the hillside areas of the City of Los Angeles. There is one remaining issue which relates to the application of the slope density ordinance regardless of the zoning. It is likely that the planning department will request a study on this last issue and report back in 90 days. The Hillside Federation will continue to support the efforts to pass this important legislation.

*Submitted by:* Bill Eick, Chairman-Elect  
Shadow Hills Property Owners Association

### **FOR SALE: YAMASHIRO & MAGIC CASTLE**

You've seen it on the evening news...

What's on the market are a little over 10 acres stretching from Franklin Ave. up the hill to Yamashiro and east to Orchid. The property includes Yamashiro, the Magic Castle, a couple of boutique hotels, apartment buildings and plenty of open space. For now, the members of the far-flung family of owners are just testing the waters; they have not set an asking price. What will happen once this iconic slice of the Hollywood hills changes hands? Judging by the property listing, the sellers' suggestion appears to be to tear down Yamashiro and cover the hill with housing. The Magic Castle is a historic landmark but Yamashiro is not. The hill is zoned R3-1D and the stretch along Franklin Ave. [Q]R5-1VL. Variances are easily obtained, as recent developments in Hollywood have shown. Under a worst case scenario, Yamashiro and the Magic Castle's parking lot could

accommodate several condo towers; the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel and a couple of tall, historic apartment structures on lower Hillcrest set the precedent.

If, on the other hand, the buyer were to preserve Yamashiro, the outcome would be vastly more respectful to the immediate community and the city's heritage. Some parts of the hill, such as the west facing slope, could be developed without impacting the romantic appearance of Yamashiro to the south.

The lower portion of the property, specifically the Magic Castle's parking lot, is ripe for development under any scenario. The density along Franklin between La Brea and Highland will undoubtedly increase in the near future. Just think of the abandoned apartment building at 7071 Franklin, among other potential targets. Yet Franklin is congested as it is. The intersection with Highland is the busiest in town -- more so than any in Westwood. Thousands of condos have been approved in Hollywood and hundreds are already under construction. None of these developments offer real traffic mitigation. The hills are choking with cut-through traffic already now. Maybe if Pico and Olympic can become one-way streets, so can Franklin and Hollywood Blvd. If Magic Castle is a historic landmark, then Yamashiro should become one, too.

*Submitted by:* Conrad Schoeffter  
Hollywood Heights and Vice President-Elect

### **FEDERATION'S NEW WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING**

The Federation's new website is:  
< [www.hillsidefederation.org](http://www.hillsidefederation.org) >

Please take a look. If there's something else you'd like to see, or if you want to send in an article to the Newsletter, we'd like to hear from you. Call Joan Luchs at (213) 368-6120 to give us your suggestions.

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## **LAUREL CANYON- MULHOLLAND DRIVE INTERSECTION PROPOSAL**

Periodically, the LA Department of Transportation (LADOT) studies, prioritizes, develops, and submits proposals for street and highway improvements to State and Federal agencies for funding of such projects. The most recent list of such funding requests includes a proposal for improvement of the Laurel Canyon – Mulholland intersection and a section of Laurel Canyon Blvd. just south of Mulholland Drive. As most of us know, Laurel Canyon is a heavily traveled north-south arterial and commuter route along the Santa Monica Mountains range.

### **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

According to Transportation Engineer Irwin Chodash, one of the senior LADOT planners, “the proposal is designed to reduce chronic congestion and achieve improved mobility for traffic on southbound Laurel Canyon Blvd, which reduces to one lane at Mulholland, from the two lane north of Mulholland. The sudden reduction in roadway capacity does not effectively accommodate the existing traffic demand

and leads to lack of mobility and congestion related accidents. The proposed improvement project would remedy this situation by providing two travel lanes through the intersection and eliminating the need to merge immediately into one lane south of the intersection. In addition, the project would improve the operation of the MTA bus line by creating a bus bay on the southwest corner”.

The proposed project will widen about 280 ft. of Laurel Canyon south of Mulholland to provide two through receiving lanes, and re-stripe southbound approach just north of Mulholland to one left turn, one through lane, and one shared through and right turn lane. Traffic signals at the intersection will be modified to include eastbound and westbound protected left turn phases. The overall LC widening will provide for a bus stop and shelter, and related pad pavement, lighting and curbing along the west side of Laurel Canyon Blvd. This is a preliminary plan which is subject to community input and may be modified.

In a series of meetings in which DOT presented their proposal to the community, a vocal minority of residents living south of the proposed widening area on Laurel Canyon convinced many of the attendees to voice opposition to this proposal and thereby to kill the funding request. Some more reasoned voices recommended that the funding proposal be submitted per DOT recommendation and that if approved, then DOT will come back to the community to address their concerns and modify the plan. Obviously the issue, so often the case in the hillsides, is how to balance the pristine natural beauty of the canyons with the growth and traffic increases in our city, and how to deal with the rights and concerns of the nearby affected residents.

The latest information is that this proposal was submitted and a response from the funding agencies

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should come in June-July of this year. If it is approved, all may be sure that the local community and interested parties will have a chance to address the issues and influence the final project.

*Submitted by:* Mel Remba, Vice President-Elect

**DRAFT MINUTES for the April 4, 2007 Board of Directors Meeting of the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc.**

The Board of Directors of the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations met on April 4, 2007 at the OSULS at 3921 Laurel Canyon Blvd in Studio City.

President Polly Ward called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05PM. A quorum of 18 voting Board Directors was present.

Topics discussed were 1) Public Transportation and 'Ride free' issues raised by Pat Bell regarding the 405 Sepulveda Pass widening along with her call for a 'demand shuttle' service to alleviate the gridlock. 2) Bill Eick gave a report on the slope density revisions to the existing ordinance and explained the 'loopholes' which were closed – the amendment has passed unanimously from the Planning Commission to PLUM and now is at City Council , 3) There was a call to diligently pursue and acquire more open space in our hillsides.

Treasurer Fritz Zeiser gave the Financial report.

Due to the election, a thorough discussion was held regarding who was and who was not an eligible representative, fully paid and able to vote.

Election rules and procedures were explained and supervised by Ann Walnum.

Polly Ward and Marilyn Stefano declined their

nominations. The following candidates won on white ballots: President-Joan Luchs, Vice-President-Mel Remba, Vice-President-Conrad Shoeffter, Treasurer-Niles Chapman, and Recording Secretary-Cassandra Barrère.

There was uncertainty about the rules regarding the passing of the president's gavel following outgoing President Ward's "farewell" comments; the President Elect will preside over the next meeting.

Due to a disagreement regarding the rules, the gavel was not passed by President Ward to President Elect Luchs. The New Board Elect will be inducted and seated at the May meeting.

Following the Election, Steve Twinings, Marilyn Stefano and Polly Ward announced their resignation from the Federation.

Comments were made by the Board Elect regarding their commitment to maintaining the Federation's standing and the need to work in common.

Old Business: The group discussed the status of the Directory, the need to contact member organizations and the need to find a Webmaster to help upgrade the Federation Website.

New Business: Ann Walnum from Glassell Park reported systemic violations by a developer. The Federation will support the HOA in its position and President-Elect Luchs promised to call the President of Glassell Park to see what support we should take.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20pm

**Cassandra Barrère, Laurel Canyon Association  
Recording Secretary-Elect**

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**FEDERATION OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Chairman	Steve Twining
President	Polly Ward
Vice President	Joan Luchs
	Carol Sidlow
Executive Secretary	Marilyn Stefano
Treasurer	Fritz Zeiser

**FEDERATION DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

BelAir Knolls	Barbara Orhmann
BelAir/Skycrest	Skipp Nevel
Benedict Canyon	Marilyn Stefano
Briarcliff	Phil Feldman
Cahuenga Pass Neig	Joan Luchs
Franklin Hills	Charley Mims
Franklin Ave/Hollywood Blvd.	Don Andres
Hollywood Heights	Conrad schoeffter
Laurel Canyon	Cassandra Barrere
Lookout Mountian Alliance	Carol Sidlow
Mount Olympus	Mel Remba
Mount Washington	Ann Walnum
Nichols Canyon	Madeline O'Donnell
No. Bev. Dr/Franklin	Robert Levy
Res/Beverly Glen	Dan Palmer
Roscomare Valley	Fritz Zeiser
Shadow Hills	Bill Eick
Sherman Oaks	Niles Chapman
Studio City	Polly Ward
The Outpost Estates	Ray Schuldenfrei

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS & GUESTS:**

La Tuna Canyon	Frank Buchanan
	Dee Ricci
Roscomare Valley	Steve Twining