

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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Laurel Canyon Car Wash Approval Appealed

A car wash has been proposed on the vacant lot, formerly a gas station, at 4647 Laurel Canyon Boulevard north of 101 freeway. The property owner applied for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). In August 2003 the LA City Planning Department recommended that the CUP not be approved because it does not comply with the Valley Village Specific Plan. The Plan development guidelines prohibits new projects that create problems with traffic flow and circulation, and a car wash is a specifically prohibited land use.

The CUP applicant appealed to the South Valley Area Planning Commission (SVAPC), a citizen zoning review committee appointed by the Mayor. At a November 2003 public hearing before SVAPC, the applicant stated that this project is not prohibited under the Valley Village Specific Plan. Further, the applicant claimed the City Planning Department originally did approve the project and later reversed itself and ordered a stop to the planned construction. In spite of overwhelming neighbor opposition and the City Planning Department's recommendation to deny the CUP, the SVAPC approved the project.

On February 10, 2004, the Valley Village Homeowners Association (VVHA) and an adjacent neighbor appealed the decision to the City Council, requesting the SVAPC approval be overturned and the project rejected. Our appeal alleges abuse of administrative discretion and abuse of due process by the City by the manner in which it handled and processed the application, and abuse of administrative discretion on the part of the SVAPC by the manner in which they approved the project. During the course of our examination of the facts surrounding this project application, serious questions arose about the city's handling of the project application. We are asking Councilmember Wendy Greuel to request an investigation.

We are hopeful we will prevail in our appeal before City Council since Councilmember Wendy Greuel, in whose district this project is located, is also opposed to the project.



Neighborhood Council Up and Running

On January 28th Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) held its monthly meeting. The board heard several presentations as well as conducted routine business.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Devon Brown discussed the Chandler Busway construction. Ms. Brown also answered questions about the project and heard public comments.

An attorney representing the owner of the proposed car wash did a presentation and requested the board's support of the project. The board postponed any recommendation pending further review of the project and the Valley Village Specific Plan. More discussion about the carwash is expected at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held at Colfax Elementary School Auditorium on February 25th at 6:30pm. Also on the agenda is the sound-wall construction on the 170 freeway, Department of Public Works regarding valley water projects and the opportunity for the public to voice other concerns.

Chandler Busway

Over two years ago the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) staff presented a landscaping plan for the Chandler Boulevard median in Valley Village for public comment. The plan consisting of drought resistant plantings and no irrigation was contrary to the wishes of the surrounding community.

President Lori Dinkin and Marc Woerschling, the Association representatives on the landscape advisory committee, have recommended a more park-like plan which would include lawn or green groundcover along the outer edges with drought resistant shrubs in the center to screen the asphalt roadway. The MTA landscape architects are revising their plans in response to the committee's recommendations and will present their new plans at the next scheduled meeting.

At the Neighborhood Council meeting in January, the MTA indicated that a permanent irrigation system will be installed on the median. This is what the Association has been urging for over two years. Much thanks is due Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky for his support of the Association's position.

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From The President

Congratulations on the formation of Neighborhood Council Valley Village. We are looking forward to working together.

We are very fortunate that the main speaker at our next meeting on February 26th will be Assemblyman Paul Koretz who has represented the 42nd Assembly District since November 2000. We hope that he will give us an "inside" look at the actions and policies of our newly elected Governor. We will bring to his attention the sound-wall issue on the west side of the 170 Freeway from Burbank Blvd. to Riverside in hopes that he will be able to speed up the process.

The letter below from Mayor Jim Hahn was in response to our strong complaint regarding the hearing before the South Valley Area Planning Commission (see Car Wash article on page one). The hearing was called for 4:30pm and our issue came up at approximately 10:00pm. Not knowing what time we would get to speak, we were not able to leave the room and at no time did the SVAPC announce a break. We did not leave this meeting until close to midnight.

Dear Lori,

I was sorry to hear about your experience at the Area Planning Committee hearing. It sounds like you and your neighbors were forced to endure an extraordinarily long meeting under less than comfortable circumstances.

As you know, I strongly believe that neighborhood input is an invaluable part of our community planning process. We should do our best to accommodate the concerned residents that take the time to share their concerns with us.

Please be assured that I will discuss this matter with Con Howe, General Manager of the City Planning Department and Michael Mahdesian, President of the South Valley Area Planning Commission. I am sure that the staff and commissioners do not like to sit through 7 hour meetings either.

Thanks for letting me know about your experience and for your suggestions on how to improve our services. Please feel free to contact my new South Valley Area Director, John Bwarie at ..., if you have any other concerns.

Very truly yours, James K. Hahn, Mayor

We appreciate the Mayor's concern. We will follow up on his promise and hopefully this shabby treatment by the Commissioners will be improved upon.

See you at the February 26th Meeting, Lori

