

BRENTWOOD HILLS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 49495 • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90049

www.brentwood-hills.org

Neighborhood News

February 2002

The new year has brought with it two important issues that require the attention of our entire community. The first is the LAUSD's Sullivan Canyon property on Old Ranch Road, which LAUSD is attempting to sell for private development, despite its current open space zoning designation. Our new president, Michael Leslie, has written an excellent summary of that issue below. The second item is the upcoming redistricting of the fifteen city council districts of Los Angeles, which could remove our elected representative, Councilmember Cindy Miscikowski, and replace her with Councilmember Ruth Galanter. In addition, we have news to report on the Mandeville Canyon speed tables controversy, an update on the Westridge Road trailhead, and the results of our most recent director and officer elections.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Sullivan Canyon Open Space and Riding Facilities in Jeopardy

by Michael Leslie, President - BHHA

Many members of our community are familiar with the 8 acres of open space on Old Ranch Road at the mouth of Sullivan Canyon, either through walking in that area or riding at the equestrian facilities. This property was acquired by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) several decades ago by eminent domain for potential use as a site for a new school. Since then, it has been held for public use, including as a riding facility under lease from LAUSD.

The land is designated as "Open Space-public recreational uses" in the Brentwood - Pacific Palisades Community Plan, and is zoned for open space and public recreation. The land use policy in the Community Plan states that "open space, park and recreational lands, whether deeded to the City or privately held as open space land should be protected by provisions which would prohibit any future construction of non-recreational buildings on the protected areas."

Recently, this public resource has been placed in jeopardy, as LAUSD has expressed an intention to sell this land to the highest bidder for private development. Many of you will remember this, since we have had speakers on this issue at the BHHA Annual Meeting.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), a state agency related to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, has sought to purchase the land to add to the park holdings in the Santa Monica Mountains so that it can be

protected for public uses.

LAUSD obtained an appraisal that valued the land as it is currently zoned for "open space" at \$2 million. MRCA has offered to purchase the land at that value, but LAUSD categorically rejected the offer. LAUSD has made it clear that it expects the City to change the Community Plan and rezone the property to permit private residential development. Thus, LAUSD's position is that it will only sell the property to the MRCA if the MRCA pays for the site at an impossibly high appraisal value of \$17 million. However, that appraisal value assumes that the site has already been re-zoned from public open space to permit private residential development.

The MRCA, together with a committee formed by concerned citizens, have fought LAUSD's efforts to sell the land for private development. However, their lawsuit was recently denied in what they feel is an erroneous court ruling that they will appeal. LAUSD now plans to put the land on the open market for private development this month.

This would not only be a tragic loss of open space, especially since this land was purchased with public funds and has been used for public recreation for many years, but the LAUSD's position would create a very dangerous precedent. This would be the first time to our knowledge that land designated as public open space in the Brentwood Community Plan would be changed to permit private development.

Equally significant, if LAUSD's position were to prevail, it would greatly impede the efforts of the

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MRCA and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to acquire and protect additional open space in the Santa Monica Mountains. LAUSD's position would make it almost impossible for the MRCA or the Conservancy to acquire public land sought to be sold by a public agency as excess property, as it would require them to pay a greatly inflated value for the land that assumes a new zoning and land use designation that is contrary to the current designation of the land in the Community Plan and contrary to the current zoning on the parcel.

For example, if the Sanitation District that owns the open space land in Rustic Canyon and upper Sullivan Canyon wanted to sell that land, it could put a value on that land that already assumed conversion to private development, thereby making it impossible for the Conservancy, MRCA, or any other agency to purchase and protect the land. Sale to a private developer would then be a foregone conclusion.

Because the BHHA Board feels this is an important community issue, we have written a letter

to our Council Member, Cindy Miscikowski, asking her support for retaining the current zoning and open space designation of the land, and asking her to do whatever she can to facilitate purchase of this land by MRCA for continued public and open space uses. We are attaching that letter to this newsletter. Many of the other homeowners' groups in Brentwood, as well as the Brentwood Community Federation and Save Our Mountains, Inc. (SOMI) have written similar letters seeking protection of the public land on Old Ranch Road.

If you are interested in weighing in with your own opinion on this issue, please contact:

Councilmember Cindy Miscikowski
Council District 11
200 N. Spring Street, Rm 415
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213)-485-3811

Councilmember Miscikowski may also be contacted at her West LA office or by e-mail. That information can be found on page four of this newsletter.

Mandeville Canyon Speed Tables Update

by John Given, Secretary - BHHA

Few local issues during the last few years have had as much debate or provided as much controversy as the speed table proposals and installations on Mandeville Canyon Road. The testing process should be complete by now, but we have yet to hear the final word on the subject from the city. A meeting among the concerned parties will be held later this month at Cindy Miscikowski's west side office.

Complicating things further, during the last period of testing on Mandeville, someone apparently removed some of the expensive testing equipment that the LADOT uses for their speed monitoring. LADOT is primarily interested in getting this equipment back, so if you have any information or witnessed any suspicious activity, please contact us.

Although we don't yet know the agenda for the upcoming meeting, we can only assume that some determination regarding the testing and final status of the tables has been made. We hope that the result will be a compromise resulting in no additional devices being installed, but we are prepared for any outcome.

Westridge Trailhead

by John Given

Since the acquisition of the Boeckmann property early last year, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has been developing plans for a trailhead at the end of Westridge Road. The trailhead is currently in the design phase. Early sketches look very promising.

As part of the Prop K funding agreement, MRCA agreed to provide parking access for a minimum of thirty vehicles on site, which may alleviate some of the congestion that continues to plague certain streets in our neighborhood. The trailhead will likely have basic restrooms (in other words, enclosed portable toilets), access to drinking water, and will be patrolled by Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy rangers.

Five directors of BHHA were appointed to serve on the Volunteer Neighborhood Oversight Committee (VNOC), and the community will have a strong voice in the development of the trailhead. There is no schedule for completion, but design work is ongoing. We will share additional information with you as plans progress.

Los Angeles City Council Redistricting

by John Given

Los Angeles city council districts are remapped every ten years following the collection of census data. Per the new city charter enacted in 1999, this year the council district maps are being redrawn by the Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commission. The council members, the mayor, the city attorney, and the city controller appoint the twenty-one member commission.

The commission has been holding a series of public hearings throughout the city to receive testimony from residents on how these districts should be drawn. The commission also receives testimony by letter, e-mail, or fax. Meeting and contact information follows this article.

The commission has already released a draft proposal of the new council districts, and while it is only a draft and is subject to change, there are some major concerns with the proposed changes to Council District 11 (our district) and Council District 6 (currently serving the Westchester, Venice, and Playa Vista areas). As drawn, the proposal would create a coastal district including Westchester (and the airport), Playa Vista (with its ongoing major development), Venice, Mar Vista, Palms, West LA, Pacific Palisades, and Brentwood. While it would put all of the coastal areas in one district, it would divide the Santa Monica Mountains at Mullholland.

The proposed district is designated as 11-06 on the proposal, meaning it is unclear whether we would retain our current elected representative, Cindy Miscikowski, or be represented by Ruth Galanter, who serves CD 6.

In an open e-mail to members of the community dated February 8, Councilmember Miscikowski expressed her desire to see the coastal district be numbered as district 11, which would allow her to continue to serve much of her current district, where she has thirty years of experience. Ms. Miscikowski has three years left of her final term, while Ms. Galanter has only one before she will be termed out.

Another major concern with the current draft proposal is that the Veterans Administration property, traditionally considered to be the gateway to the Brentwood area, has been relocated to CD 5.

Since the vast majority of land use issues with the VA affect Brentwood far more than Westwood, this oversight causes major concern to Brentwood residents. All of the VA land except for the cemetery is west of the 405 freeway. In addition to the VA property, parts of Brentwood Glen and Brentwood Village are proposed to move to district five as well, which makes very little sense to anyone who lives or works in the Brentwood area.

If you would like to keep Ms. Miscikowski as your council member, it is important that you let the commission know that you believe Brentwood should remain part of Council District 11. If you agree that Brentwood should not be split across council district boundaries, and that the VA should remain part of our district, it is important that you communicate that to the commission as well. The final proposal on redistricting will be presented to the city council in March, and the council will approve a final map by June 30, 2002.

For more information on the redistricting process, the current proposal, or to receive council district maps and proposed maps, please contact:

Andrea Adleman
Director of Media and Community Relations
(213) 473-4690
aadleman@laccrc.lacity.org

LACCRC Hotline: (213) 473-4595

website: www.lacitydistricts.org

To submit testimony:

Send a fax: (213) 473-6425

Send an e-mail: redistricting@laccrc.lacity.org

Send a letter:

John Emerson, Chair
Los Angeles City Council Redistricting
Commission
250 E 1st St., Suite 1005
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Director and Officer Election Results

by John Given

The five directors elected in September to new three year terms are: Sheila Greenberg, Bob Kadlec, Sue Keane, Stu Krieger, and Dominic LoBuglio.

Our new officers for the coming year are: Michael Leslie - President, Dominic LoBuglio - Vice President, Loretta Ditlow - Treasurer, and John Given - Secretary.

We would like to acknowledge our outgoing president, Eric Edmunds, who did an outstanding job for the last two years. Eric is one of the primary activists that we have to thank for the terrific success with the Boeckmann acquisition and many other neighborhood concerns. Eric continues to serve on the board of directors.

2002 Annual Dues Remain \$35

by John Given

It is time once again to collect dues from our membership. We have not raised our dues in many years, and you will find that compared to many homeowners association, our dues of \$35 per year are a great bargain.

We have helped with some major victories in the community in recent years - most recently the acquisition of the Boeckmann property by the City and Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy. But with the heated LAUSD/Sullivan Canyon land-use dispute, the ongoing Mandeville Canyon speed tables dialog, the city council redistricting, development of the Westridge trailhead, and other important issues, it is important to keep BHHA a strong and vital organization.

We have an excellent relationship with Councilmember Cindy Miscikowski, as well as her staff. We provide newsletters, our web site, and monthly meetings for our membership.

We urge you not only to join or renew your membership with BHHA, but to communicate to us any concerns that you have about the neighborhood or city generally. The more participation we have from our community, the more strength our collective voice has. Please return your dues in the enclosed envelope and use the space provided to let us know your thoughts on any neighborhood concerns you might have.

Important Numbers and Contact Info:

Los Angeles Police Department
West LA Division
1663 Butler Ave, LA 90025

Emergency #: 911

Non-emergency #: 310-575-8401

Community Relations/
Crime Prevention: 310-575-8431

website: www.lapdonline.com

Los Angeles Fire Department
Fire Station 19
12229 Sunset Blvd., LA 90049

Emergency #: 911

Non-emergency #: 310-575-8519

Brush Clearance: 818-756-8022

website: www.lafd.org

Councilmember Cindy Miscikowski
Council District Eleven
West LA Office
1645 Corinth Avenue, Rm. 201
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310-575-8461
310-575-8305 fax
website: www.lacity.org/council.htm
e-mail: miscikowski@council.lacity.org

If there is a phone number or address for city or state government that you are having difficulty finding, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to find the information you need.

Our Contact Info:

Brentwood Hills Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 49495
Los Angeles, CA 90049

website: www.brentwood-hills.org

e-mail: webmaster@brentwood-hills.org