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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Special Guest Speaker:
Jane Ellison Usher**



Who controls City Hall? Why is she speaking out against Los Angeles "Politics as Usual"?

Jane Ellison Usher served as the President of the LA City Planning Commission from October 2005 until her resignation in December 2008. She was appointed to the City Planning Commission by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. From 1989 until 1993, Ms. Usher served as Counsel to the Mayor under Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley.

Voters showed up and spoke out!

Despite relatively light voter turnout, the May 19, 2009 election may go down as something historic. The Los Angeles City municipal election was combined with the state-wide special election on the six state ballot propositions related to California's budget woes. Some experts believe the voters drawn to the polls by State propositions 1A to 1F, spoke loudly that the state legislature must fix the structural deficit by avoiding tricks and more taxes.

Continued on page 2...



*Important
Information
Enclosed*

**Next Meeting
June 3, 2009
ALERT
NEW STARTING TIME
Meeting starts promptly at 7 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: May

President's Report:

A. Densification Ordinance Lawsuit:

**City files Motion to Reconsider -
Hearing set for June 5th**

**B. Billboard and Sign Ordinance went to
City Council**

Special Guest Speaker: Jane Ellison Usher

**Election results show that everyone's vote
does count - Dan Wright**

**City's Budget Crisis is not just a bump in
the road - Ron Galperin**

**Mountain Bikes don't belong in
City's parks - Marian Dodge**

Adjournment:

...Continued from page 1

Voters, following the lead of the Presidential election last November, voted for change in the City Attorney's office. In a widely observed race that drew upon the strength of the community activist and blogger coalition that defeated Measure B in the March 3rd municipal primary election, political newcomer Carmen Trutanich trounced City Hall insider Jack Weiss by almost 12 percentage points. This is evidence that the internet-based blogging and e-mail lists of community activists courted by Trutanich and ignored by Weiss (and Villaraigosa) made a huge difference.

As of press time, the CD 5 race hung in the balance with Paul Koretz holding a 702 vote advantage. However, the entire election may be up in the air due to significant errors in printing the ballots. At least 6 precincts may have had the CD 5 candidate omitted from the ballot. More information on this race at the next meeting.

The very next night Trutanich appeared at a forum before the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association to thank community volunteers for getting out the word about his candidacy. He confirmed again his intent to be the People's Lawyer – which sparked more cheers and applause.

The development of a strong viral network to educate voters about important races and measures is undermining more traditional methods used by the current City Hall incumbents to obtain their seats (special interest money to buy television and radio ads). Many political commentators confirm that the defeat of Antonio Villaraigosa's heavily promoted Measure B, immediately followed by the huge percentage loss by Villaraigosa-endorsed Jack Weiss, show that Villaraigosa's thinly disguised ambition to run for Governor may be crashing on the rocks of increasing community activism over his administration's failure to deliver election promises.

Daniel Wright
Mt. Washington Homeowners Alliance

L.A. City's Budget Crisis

By Ron Galperin
Crests Neighborhood Association



On May 18, the L.A. City Council approved a \$7.1 billion budget for the 2009/ 2010 fiscal year.

- The good news: Our City budget was approved on-time and balanced.
- The bad news: Expect significant cuts in services and staffing.
- The very bad news: With the failure of the State's ballot measures on May 19, City officials expect the State to take anywhere from \$30-160 million in our local tax money to balance their own budget. Once we learn of the real impact, the City Council will likely be back to another round of budgeting. Add to this the fact that our "balanced" budget is based on a set of economic assumptions about the economy and projected revenues. If the economy continues to falter, we'll have to revisit the budget and make more cuts or find more revenues. The alternative would be to simply run out of cash.
- The very, very bad news: While this year had "only" a \$530 million budget gap, the projected budget deficit for next year is in excess of \$1 billion.

A few budget highlights:

Mayor Villaraigosa has asked the Council to declare a Fiscal Emergency to grant him authority to layoff and furlough thousands of city workers. In his letter to the Council, the Mayor stated: "The gravity of the fiscal emergency that we face is enormous. Unless we act with urgency, the city will face a cash flow crisis, raising the prospect of running out of cash between November and February." The City and labor leaders are trying to reach agreement on cost cutting and early retirement. The Council's budget may require 26 furlough days for each civilian employee (a 10% payout) and 1,200 civilian layoffs.

Continued on page 3...

...Continued from page 2

Departmental budgets are being reduced, and there is a hiring freeze imposed in the City ... resulting in a reduction in City services. Library and pool hours will be cut, trees may only be trimmed every 12 years and the City will be cutting sidewalk repairs, installations of speed humps, and varied transportation improvements.

The budget provides funding to replace 480 LAPD officers that we expect to retire or leave this year. Funds to fight gangs through prevention and intervention have largely been spared for now. The budget also seeks to add a few more firefighters.

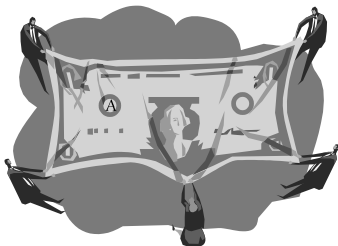
Neighborhood Council budgets – currently \$50,000 per Council will be reduced to \$45,000. That amount was cut to as low as \$11,000 per Council during the Council’s Budget & Finance Committee meetings – but agreement was reached to limit the cut in funding to just 10%.

If 2009 /2010 revenue shortfalls are anything like the shortfalls in 2008 / 2009, L.A. could face an even deeper crisis. For example, actual revenue for Documentary Transfer Tax in 08/09 was 25% less than projected in the 08/09 budget. Hotel tax revenues were 10% less than estimated, vehicle license fees 37% less than estimated, and parking users tax 10% less.

It is estimated that within a few years our obligations to the City Employee and Fire & Police Pension Plans will exceed \$ 7 billion.

In short, the current budget is sobering – and the outlook for the near term is even more so. With crisis, however, comes opportunity. It’s now time for all L.A. residents and businesses to get better informed and involved in protecting and preserving our City and its future.

Learn more about the budget at our June 3rd Hillside Federation meeting when Ron Galperin will be make a presentation and hand out more budget details.



Billboards and Sign Ordinance Goes to City Council



On Tuesday, May 26, the City Council is expected to act on far-reaching revisions to the city sign ordinance that would ban all digital billboards and signs, forbid the huge supergraphic signs that drape entire sides of buildings, and levy severe financial penalties on companies putting up illegal signs.

With less than a month before the expiration of a 6-month moratorium on any new digital billboards and supergraphics, City Council voted for a three month extension to the Interim Control Ordinance ICO to allow the new City Attorney, Carmen Trutanich time to fully understand the issues and provide some useful advise. The **Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight** and others are still pushing for changes to close loopholes that could allow the proliferation of these types of signs in other areas.

The biggest loophole is the provision allowing digital and supergraphic signs in special sign districts. This provision in the current ordinance has been a mechanism for sign proliferation, as well as a point of attack for sign companies that have sued the city multiple times in an effort to overturn its 2002 ban on off-site advertising signs.

The revised ordinance approved in March by the City Planning Commission significantly tightens the sign district criteria, in particular requiring the takedown of existing billboards in the surrounding community at a greater than one-to-one ratio before any new digital or supergraphic signs could be put up. The commission also rejected a move to “grandfather” a number of sign district applications pending with the city planning department, which would have allowed them to be established under the current, much more lax, criteria.

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Unfortunately, the City Council's PLUM committee decided to grandfather ALL the pending sign districts, a move that could potentially result in more than 100,000 sq. ft. of new digital and supergraphic signage (the equivalent to 150 full-sized billboards) to be erected in sign districts without the removal of a single existing billboard in the surrounding community.

One of those proposed sign districts is the Metro Universal project at the north end of the Cahuenga Pass. According to the draft EIR for the project, some 50,000 square feet of digital and full animated signs would be part of the project, as well as supergraphic signs of unlimited size. Since one of the buildings in that project is 26 stories, a supergraphic the height of the building could result.

Councilman Tom LaBonge, with Councilman Bill Rosendahl's support, has introduced a motion to restore the City Planning Commission action and forbid the grandfathering of any existing sign districts that haven't received commission approval. LaBonge has also introduced a motion limiting sign districts to the downtown area only, as opposed to some 20 areas of the city now zoned as "regional center" or "regional commercial."

LaBonge and Rosendahl, in conjunction with the **Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight**, held a news conference and rally on City Hall's steps to support the amendment. There is strong opposition to these proposals from well-heeled developers and big business interests, so it was important that many people attended the rally to show their support for protecting the city's public spaces and visual landscape from being filled with commercial advertising blight.

Contact the **Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight** at info@banbillboardblight.org for more information. And for news and views about many signage issues, visit the website at www.banbillboardblight.org.

DENNIS HATHAWAY
President
Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight

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 agendaize an issue **MUST** be approved in writing by the President before the item will be placed on the Agenda.



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.**

MOUNTAIN BIKES IN CITY PARKS

Marian Dodge, Los Feliz Improvement Assoc.

Ten years ago a group of mountain bikers tried to change the city ordinance which prohibits wheeled vehicles off road in Los Angeles city parks. The proposal was defeated by a coalition of community groups including the Federation.

Now the issue of mountain bikes in city parks has resurfaced--this time in the guise of a means of transportation. A small mountain bike lobbying group, Concerned Off-Road Bicycle Association (COBRA), is working this time with the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) to change the code to allow off-road biking as a way of commuting, when the fact is, that mountain biking is an extreme sport, a form of adrenaline-driven, high-impact recreation that should not be confused with street cycling. There is already a bike path adjacent to the LA River and bike commuters use Crystal Springs Dr. The bikers got the city to hire Osprey, a consulting firm, from Colorado to mediate the issue in closed meetings with no public input. Rec & Park is the agency that should make policy.... not DOT.

A motion by Councilmembers LaBonge and Garcetti was discussed at the April 15, 2009, meeting of the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee chaired by LaBonge. *07-3494-S1: Motion (LaBonge-Garcetti) relative to directing the Department of Recreation and Parks to remove Griffith Park from future off-road mountain bicycle use and work with the Departments of Planning and Transportation, through the development of the new Bicycle Plan, to continue to explore the possible use of mountain bicycle at other City parks and related matters. (Also known as Transportation Committee)*

Asst. General Manager of Rec. and Parks (RAP), Kevin Regan, stated that RAP is not driving this change in policy because of the conflicts between park users. He said that RAP needs to be part of the process. One representative at a closed meeting isn't good enough; the meetings should be open with community involvement. He does not want RAP to be mandated a change that doesn't fit its plan.

Mountain bikes have been prohibited in city parks by municipal code for years. Wheeled vehicles create a hazard and are not compatible with hikers, strollers, and

horses on the same trail and create dangerous situations. Off-road mountain bikes cause extensive erosion to trails and environmental damage when they go off-trail. There are many nearby trails available to mountain bikers in the Santa Monica, San Gabriel and Verdugo Mountains. A recent Needs Assessment by the Rec & Parks showed no need for off-road mountain bike access.

The current city ordinance which prohibits wheeled vehicles off road (MC Sec. 63.44b16 states:

"No person shall ride or drive any cycle or vehicle, whether powered by a motor or by human power, except on paths, roads, or drives designated and provided for such purposes."

Michelle Mowrey, Bike Coordinator for DOT, said they are addressing the transportation element. DOT expects to have the Bicycle Plan ready by June. He thinks that mountain bikes can work in some parks.

LaBonge is considering leaving the ordinance as it is per the equestrians. Therefore he is removing Griffith Park from any proposed changes. He asked that the motion be held for 30 days and requested the City Attorney to report on the transparency of the public process. He also asked to see the contract for the consultant and will talk to Gail Goldberg, the head of the Planning Department.

During public comment, Jim Hasenauer of the International Mountain Bike Assoc said the trails in Griffith Park are wide enough to share with bikes. Other speakers in favor of the motion stated that access to parks is needed for mountain bikes as a new form of recreation yet none claimed it was a means of transportation.

Speakers supporting the maintenance of the current city ordinance and against the motion included the Sierra Club's Joe Young who pointed out that safety and environmental issues were not discussed at the closed meeting. Numerous other speakers opposed allowing mountain bikes off-road in city parks and supported the current ordinance.

We strongly urge the Federation and its affiliates to support the existing city ordinance prohibiting off-road bikes in city parks. Please write to Councilmen LaBonge and Greuel, to Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager to the Dept of Rec & Parks and Rita Robinson, General Manager of Transportation.

MAY MINUTES

**DRAFT MINUTES
HILLSIDE FEDERATION**

**General Membership Meeting
May 6, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by President Joan Luchs at 7:27 p.m. at Universal City Nissan. Procedural announcements regarding the evening's candidate forum were made. Question cards were passed out allowing the audience to submit/augment the Federation's prepared questions. Moderator Cheryl Glasser from N.P.R. station KCRW was introduced. Fifth Council district candidates were present. Paul Koretz is a former state assemblyman, West Hollywood Councilman, and chief of staff for Board of Equalization member Brad Sherman. Attorney David Vahedi has served the State Board of Equalization as auditor and is a member of Westwood South of Santa Monica Homeowners Association and Westwood Neighborhood Council.

The Federation Board's questions were alternately sequenced to each candidate. Responses were strictly timed to one or two minutes with three minute opening and closing statements. Mr. Koretz said he would hire staff from within the district and move times and places for City Council meetings to improve public access and participation. Mr. Vahedi discussed planning issues by stating that the state required infrastructure studies which had been done only once, and that LA City's version of SB 1818 would be destroying affordable housing. Both candidates agreed to address the billboard problem.

Mr. Koretz addressed the city's financial problems recommending the need for large reserves at times of budget surplus, bringing in new employees at lower salaries, and not counting on early retirement as a money-saver, due to the long-term maintenance of retirement benefits. Both candidates listed their environmental credentials and endorsements.

Mr. Vahedi favors maintenance of financial support for neighborhood councils and eliminate overstrict financial reporting for council members. Mr. Koretz said that parking problems are transportation related and presented innovative solutions. The debate went smoothly

and concluded at the scheduled time for the candidates to attend a second forum.

The following took place while waiting for the city attorney forum to begin:

1} Attorney Doug Carstens reported on EACHLA lawsuit. After presenting additional oral arguments to the court Judge Thomas McKnew stated that the City of LA had acted illegally with its Densification Ordinance which in some cases tripled the state-allowed bonus. The court further ruled that projects already approved projects would be retroactively overturned and that the City must now consider environmental impacts per CEQA and that the City is prohibited from processing applications for density bonuses that exceed State S.B. 1818 allowances. The City filed a motion for reconsideration to be heard June 5th.

2) Jerry Daniels, Hillside Federation Chairman Emeritus conducted the swearing in of the following 2009-2010 officers – chairman, Lynette Berg Robe; president, Joan Luchs; vice president, Charley Mims; vice president, Lannette Pabon; executive secretary, Laura Gutierrez; treasurer, Dan Palmer; and recording secretary, Ann Walnum.

3) Funds are still needed for the EACHLA lawsuit. Contribution checks were to be made out to the Hillside Federation and earmarked for EACHLA which will be forwarded to Chatten-Brown and Carstens with the Federation credited.

4) Further land use issues include progress on the lawsuit requiring the City to prepare infrastructure analysis' and reports. The hearing is scheduled for October. Also a motion has been made changing the time for appeal and attempting to limit the scope of a CEQA appeal before City Council. The proposed rule would require all CEQA grounds for appeal to be raised at the Area Planning Commission's level or otherwise precluded.

5) Dr Niles Chapman moved and Dan Palmer seconded the following nominations for District One and Two's Citizens Oversight Committees of the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation Assessment:

District One: Joan Luchs, Ginny Kruger, Niles Chapman
District Two: Desmond McDonald and Mike Teheripour

Since the hour for candidate Trutanich to arrive was well past the agreed 9 PM a motion was made to adjourn. A vote was taken but rejected. President Joan Luchs apologized for the unanticipated delay of our forum. Members assured her that the problem was not for lack of careful planning or preparation.

Candidate Trutanich arrived at 9:30 and apologized for not calling and disclosed that an interview on national television had delayed him. Candidate Weiss was not expected despite countless attempts to secure acceptance of Hillside Federation's invitation. President Luchs addressed City Attorney candidate Carmen Trutanich with the questions prepared by the Federation and timed by Moderator Cheryl Glasser. Some highlights of his answers are:

1) Current billboard law is like "Swiss cheese," full of holes and unenforceable. He advocates ban on digital signs, removal of all illegal signs and total enforcement of laws.

2) Eliminate the need and expense of hiring private attorneys in conflict of interest cases by switching with other municipal jurisdictions and paying at government rates.

3) Expand role of neighborhood prosecutor to monitor land use issues, especially environmental mitigations. A planning czar will be installed at the City Attorney's office. Retain CEQA appeals.

4) The City Charter provides that the role of our City Controller is to investigate and audit "any program" or department and thus be allowed access to City Attorney or any elected official.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Walnum, Recording Secretary

FEDERATION OFFICERS PRESENT

Chairman: Lynette Berg Robe,
Studio City Residents
President: Joan Luchs, Cahuenga Pass
Vice President: Charley Mims, Franklin Hills
Vice President: Lannette Pabon,
Hollywood Heights
Exec. Secretary: Laura Gutierrez, Sherman Oaks
Treasurer: Dan Palmer, Residence of
Beverly Glen
Record. Secretary: Ann Walnum,
Mount. Washington

FEDERATION DIRECTORS PRESENT

Mark Stratton	Belair Skycrest
Linda Taheeripour	Belair Skycrest
Nickie Miner	Benedict Canyon
Alan Fine	Benedict Canyon
Michael George	Cahuenga Pass
Tammy Ehrenfeld	Hollywood Dell
Marian Dodge	Los Feliz Improvement
Daniel Wright	Mt. Washington Alliance
Madeline O'Donnell	Nichols Canyon
Robert Levy	No.Beverly/Franklin Cyn.
Arnie Newman	Oak Forest Canyon
Niles Chapman,M.D.	Sherman Oaks
Alan Dymond	Studio City Residents
Liz Tigar	Tarzana Prop.Owners

GUESTS PRESENT

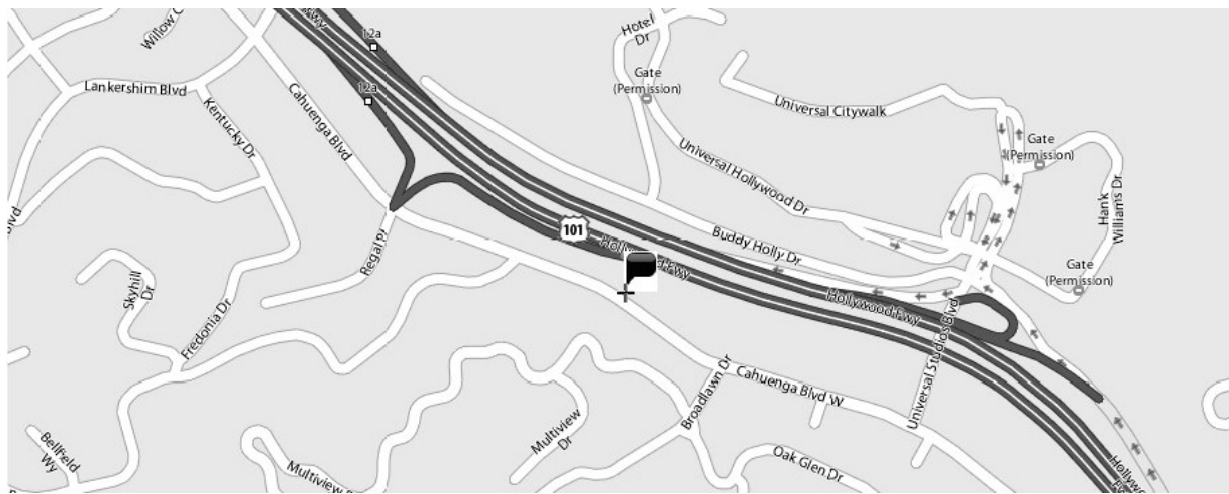
Conny Levy	
Kenny Ortega	
Hilda Hoesli	Cahuenga Pass
Barah Rezvani	Belair Skycrest
Michael Taherirpour	Belair Skycrest
Lois Becker	Belair Skycrest
Beth Dymond	Studio City Residents
Off. John Cataland	LAPD
Courtney Driver	
Peter Flaherty	
Linda Flahety	
Laurence Miner	Benedict Canyon
Paul Koretz	CD 5 Candidate
David Vahedi	CD 5 Candidate
Carmen Trutanich	City Attorney Candidate
Eric Sanjurjo	CD 14 Staff
Alex Richmand	CD 5 Campaign
Doug Carstens	Chatten Brown & Carstens
Michael Cohen	Videographer
Paul Gamperg	Trutanich Campaign
Jerome Daniel	Chairman Emeritus
Joshua Olivas	Vahedi Campaign
Cheryl Glaser	KCRW Radio
Jane Ellison Usher	Trutanich Campaign
Mrs. Trutanich	Trutanich Campaign
Mort Allan	Trutanich Campaign
David Berger	Trutanich Campaign
Daniel Tamm	Koretz Campaign
Sara Wedman	
Officer Pudally	LAPD
Tania Bradkin	Koretz Campaign

**NEXT MEETING JUNE 3, 2009
ALERT NEW STARTING TIME
Meeting starts promptly at 7 pm**

UNIVERSAL CITY NISSAN

3550 Cahuenga Blvd. West
Los Angeles, CA 90068

Between Lankershim and Universal Drive bridge off ramps:
Park on street or in underground garage; take elevator to "S" street level or enter
through showroom, turn left, follow signs to 2nd floor conference room



THE FEDERATION

OF HILLSIDE AND CANYON ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

PO BOX 1673
HOLLYWOOD HILLS, CA 90078
213-368-6120



*Important Information
Enclosed*

