

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

FOUNDED IN 1952

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Slope Density Ordinance

If it feels as though all of Los Angeles is under attack, you are probably not crazy, just aware. The flatlands certainly have had their fair share of re-zoning and population control issues, but the hillsides have their own special issues.

One of them is the Slope Density Ordinance, designed to protect hillsides from over-development for aesthetic reasons, but also for practical and public safety reasons. We are informed that the proposed Canyon Hills development in the Verdugo Mountains north of Burbank says it has the right to build 175 houses on its 887-acre property, and the Planning Department has agreed.

But Sierra Club activists and community land-use lawyers have found that the map used to determine the average slope of the land did not meet accuracy standards required. They also say that an incorrect method of calculation was used, and correct calculations would indicate a maximum 67 houses are allowed.

All organizations are asked to write a letter to **Councilwoman Wendy Greuel** expressing your concern. She is also concerned about the development, and is proposing a different (and smaller) solution to the project.

e-mail: gruel@council.lacity.org

mail: 200 N. Spring St., #475, LA 90012

Canyonback Trail

Please note accompanying article re Canyonback Trail in this newsletter, and express your concern to the appropriate Councilmember(s). The organizers ask that you send your letter through them at:

e-mail: info@canyonback.org

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.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, MAY 4, 2005 - 8:00pm

!!NEW MEETING PLACE!!

TREE PEOPLE

**Corner Mulholland Drive &
Coldwater Canyon
Studio City**

AGENDA

- * Introduction of Members and Guests
- * Minutes of April Meeting to be approved
- * Presentation of Proposed Construction at Buckley School, Sherman Oaks - Cindy Starrett, Consultant
- * Discussion of development along Canyonback Ridge, & impact on access to Canyonback Trail - Thomas Freeman
- * Discussion of Castle & Cooke Mountain-gate project - Patricia Bell Hearst
- * Reports: President
Chairman
Vice Presidents
Treasurer
- * Old and New Business

fax: 310-201-2110

for transmittal to the City Planning Department. They say that it is critical that the letters be sent to them (Thomas Freeman, Bird Marella, 1875 Century Park East, 23rd Floor, LA 90067) to assure that they are part of the official Administrative Record.

More information will be available at the May meeting.

Castle & Cooke Project

Patricia Bell Hearst will give us more information about this project at the May 4th meeting.

**CANYONBACK ALLIANCE:
PRESERVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO
CANYONBACK TRAIL**

Canyonback Trail is a critical access point to the Westridge-Canyon Back Wilderness Park in the Santa Monica Mountains. It connects two major trail networks within the public parkland and is also an important gateway to a continuous network of trails within the "Big Wild," a 21,000 acre urban wilderness paradise that extends from the San Fernando Valley to the Pacific Ocean.

A section of the Canyonback Trail is also a public street, Canyonback Road. Last year, a homeowners association tried to privatize and gate the northern section of Canyonback Road, which would have restricted public access to public parkland. Thanks to tremendous public opposition, we prevailed in terminating further construction of the Canyonback Gate - temporarily.

A new development in Mountaingate is being planned along Canyonback Ridge, to the south of existing Canyonback Road. The developer wants to privatize the area - including the section through which the Canyonback Trail runs. If the City approves these plans, the public will be forced to beg access from the future residents of the "private enclave." While the developer promises that the gate it plans to install will provide for "pedestrian access," there is nothing that would prevent future residents or their homeowners' association from restricting or even prohibiting public access.

The developer's plan to impair public access should have been fully analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") mandated by state environmental law. But the City allowed the developer to prepare an EIR

NEWSLETTER
Editor/Publisher MARILYN STEFANO
HEY! Is anyone reading this beside Claire Carafello? What's happening? 'Sup? What's going on in your neighborhoods? I feel like the mother whose children don't call anymore - isn't anyone interested in spreading the word about great (or awful) news in their neighborhoods? We want a Newsletter that keeps us informed about what's happening (let's have some fun stuff, too). Please PLEASE send us stuff - we appreciate being in the know.- or now - or no? Articles might be subject to some editing for grammar or syntax, if needed - NOT for content - though I doubt it will happen! Fax a hard copy 2 weeks before the next meeting to 310-275-8414 ; OR email at marijoe90210@earthlink.net For JUNE, send by MAY 21st.

that simply ignores the issue. The developer must be required to circulate an EIR that adequately addresses the project's adverse impact on public recreational access and analyzes ways to minimize or avoid the impairment of public access.

Another scheme calls for the creation of a substandard "bypass trail" to route trail users off Canyonback Road, which would then be privatized and gated. This 2-mile bypass trail would be carved into the steep, unstable, landslide-ridden slopes that would be impossible to maintain, thereby degrading public access. But by then Canyonback Road would be "private," and the public would have lost forever the access it once enjoyed through this public parkland.

The bypass trail would also destabilize the hillsides, placing lives and property at risk in the canyon below.

What You Can Do:

1. Send An Opposition Letter to the Canyon Back Alliance (sample letter attached)
2. **Fax: 310-201-2110 or E-Mail: info@canyonback.org** -
3. Attend the May 18, 2005 Public Hearing to Oppose the Project
4. City Hall, 200 N. Spring St., Rm.1020, LA 90012 Applicant: Castle & Cooke Cal, Inc, Case #CPC 2000-2276-VZC-GPA, VTT No. 53072, Time: 10:30am

**FEDERATION'S WEBSITE UP
AND RUNNING**

The Federation's new website is
www.hillsidecanyon.org

Please take a look at it, and if there's something else you'd like to see on it, or if you want to send in an article to the Newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. Call Steve Twining at (310) 472-6091 to give your suggestions.

5. Distribute This Opposition Letter To Friends
6. Check for Updates at www.canyonback.org

SAVE CANYONBACK TRAIL SAMPLE LETTER

To: Sue Chang, Senior City Planner Re: Final EIR No. ENV-1999-3251-EIR

Jimmy Liao, City Planner Project Title: Mountaingate Project

Environmental Review Section State Clearinghouse No. 2003071197

Department of City Planning Testing Tentative Tract Map No. 53072

c/o: Canyon Back Alliance

fax: (310) 201-2110 or e-mail: info@canyonback.org

Dear Ms. Chang and Mr. Liao:

I strongly oppose the privatization and gating of Canyonback Road and the construction of a dangerous bypass trail. Such action will inhibit public access to the Canyonback Trail, a critical access to the Westridge-Canyon Back Wilderness Park and the "Big Wild" network of trails and parkland beyond.

I ask that you please do the following:

1. Add my opposition letter to the file on Final EIR No. ENV-1999-3251-EIR.
2. Do not approve the tract map until a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report is circulated, fully and adequately addressing the public access issue.
3. Keep Canyonback Road a public and un-gated street, to both the north and south.
4. Do not allow construction of a bypass trail on the slopes of Western Canyonback Ridge. Such a trail would be cut into unstable, landslide-ridden hillsides, placing lives and property at risk in the canyon below.
5. Allow no compromise on public access.
6. Notify me of all public hearing dates, times, and locations on this issue.

Sincerely,

Name:

Phone:

E-mail or fax:

Address:

Date:

WARNING OF ONGOING SLIDE DANGER IN HILLSIDE AREAS

Noting that residents may not realize that water-soaked hillsides may be vulnerable to mudslides for weeks following the last series of storms, 5th District Councilmember Jack Weiss and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) are urging residents to stay alert for signs of storm damage or possible mudslides.

"Although it seems the worst of the rain is over, there is still potential for danger in hillside areas." said Weiss. "Weakened streets and hillsides are vulnerable to collapse. All residents should be on the lookout for any signs that structures or slopes may be failing, and notify the City immediately if they see or hear signs of a slide."

The LAFD has provided the following danger signs that residents should immediately report if they are observed:

- Signs of soil movement on slopes;
- Large new cracks in pavement or crumbling along road edges;
- New lines of dirt between grassy areas that may suggest the ground is moving;
- New cracks in walls or foundations;
- Doorjambes that are suddenly out of alignment

Residents should report any locations with potential danger signs to the City's main information line 311.

Federal and local assistance is available for residents of homes that have been red-tagged as unsafe due to slides. For more information, contact Weiss Valley District office at (818) 756-8083.

BAN ON LOBBYIST FUND-RAISING

E-mail from **Bill Boyarsky, Ethics Commission** (edited - full text will be available at May meeting)

Last month, I asked my fellow commissioners to discuss at the May meeting a resolution asking the City Council Rules and Elections Committee to hold a hearing on a proposal submitted by Mayor Hahn and endorsed by us to prohibit lobbyists from fund raising for elected officials and candidates. It was one of five campaign measures proposed by the mayor on Feb. 20 2004.

Of the Hahn proposals, I think the ban on lobbyists raising money is the best. It obviously takes away a big advantage from a fund raising lobbyist--the ability to lobby for a client before a lawmaker for whom the lobbyist has raised money. Such lobbying is comparable to lawyers donating money to a judge who is hearing one of their cases.

The lobbyist fund raising ban will help create a level playing field at City Hall, which I think is the aim of such proposals. And it is a simple proposal, not requiring complex enforcement machinery. In that respect, it is like the ban on commissioner fund raising, which has been enacted into law

I spoke to a group of lobbyists about a ban a few months ago. They raised several objections. The most persuasive is that such a prohibition violates their First Amendment freedom of speech rights.

This objection should be debated, along with other pros and cons about the proposal. However, the measure has been in the Rules and Elections Committee without a hearing since June, 2004, and on January 10, 2005, our executive director, LeeAnn Pelham sent the committee chair, Council President Alex Padilla, a letter stating that the commission looks "forward to the council's consideration of these important issues in the coming weeks."

I feel the proposal deserves a public hearing before the council committee instead of sitting there. If the council members don't like the proposal, they should vote it down--in public. With City Hall awash with investigations into fund raising and influence, this is a time for open government.

If you or anyone else wants to be heard on this, the ethics commission is meeting at **9:30 am, Tuesday May 10 at City Hall, probably room 1050**. Or you could communicate with **Council President Padilla Padilla@council.lacity.org**; and committee members **Wendy Greuel greuel@council.lacity.org** and **Dennis Zine zine@council.lacity.org**. Or you could communicate with **LeeAnn Pelham lpelham@Ethics.lacity.org** and she can pass your thoughts on to the commissioners.

CONTROLLED BURNS

A letter has been received from the National Park Service advising of controlled burns (or prescribed fires) on federal lands in our areas, probably starting in June. The objective is to help control the spread of wildland fires by removing vegetation in

strategic locations. Further information will be available at our May meeting.

BEL AIR BEVERLY CREST NC OFFICE

Chairman STEVE TWINING, also President of the above Neighborhood Council, advises that Councilperson Cindy Miscikowski has stated that we should all participate in choosing the next Planning Director of the City, and that there will be hearings around the City to discuss the possible candidates. If you are interested in attending any meetings, please contact STEVE TWINING at the Council office: 310-479-6247, Fax: 310-479-0458, 1525 S. Sepulveda Blvd., #5; Michele Barrere is in the office Mon. & Wed., 9am-6pm, and Fri. 9am-1pm.

REMINDERS: ISSUES & PETITIONS

Federation meetings are scheduled to start at 8:00 pm, and end at 10:00pm and, in order to end on time, an **OUTLINE OF ISSUES & PETITIONS** to be brought before the Board should be mailed to : Pres. POLLY WARD at P.O.Box 1041, Studio City, CA 91614 or faxed to: (818) 761-4065, 48 hours before the scheduled meeting.

MOTIONS to be made at the meeting should be thought out beforehand, and put into writing so that they are clear and concise. **EACH SPEAKER** will be allowed 5 minutes to make his/her presentation, so that meetings can be kept on time.

MULHOLLAND SCENIC PARKWAY DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

MARVIN BRAUDE SAN FERNANDO
CONSTITUENTS SERVICE CENTER
6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys

Date: the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month
Time: 6:30pm