

Cheviot Hills News

Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association

Winter 2006

Annual Meeting March 29th

The Cheviot Hills Homeowners' Association will hold its **annual meeting on March 29th at the Cheviot Hills Recreation Center** at 2551 Motor Avenue. On the agenda are the board of directors election and a presentation on preserving Aiken-built and other notable houses. As usual, the floor will be opened to comments and questions.

DUES NOTICE

Your Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association collects \$35 in annual dues. Please pay your 2006 dues using the enclosed envelope before or at the March 29th meeting. You can also pay by Paypal. For Paypal, please pay \$36.40 to cover the 4% Paypal fee and direct the payment to treasurer@cheviot hills.org.

It's a Family Affair

For the first time in recent memory, the Association will provide **childcare at the general meeting**. While the main meeting is held in the large gymnasium, we will have Rec Center workers available to watch the kids in the smaller gym down the hall. **R.S.V.P. secretary@cheviot hills.org if you want to use this free service.**

SAVE THE AIKENS

One thing that makes Cheviot unique is its rolling hills and meandering streets. Of course, this should come as no surprise as our Cheviot Hills were named after the real Cheviot Hills – the hilly area between England and Scotland with tiny villages named Dunleer, Wicklow, Bannockburn and Haddington.

Another thing that makes our Cheviot unique are the two dozen or so houses built in the 1930s by *Edmond Aiken*, a former shipbuilder. Each of these houses is reminiscent of an English cottage – hardwood floors, beamed ceilings, paneled wooden walls, and leaded glass.



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AIKENS (cont'd)

Although the Aiken houses are part of our heritage, one of them is now in danger, and others may follow. Developers have bought up dozens of houses, torn them down, and built McMansions in their place. Now, it appears that one such developer is eyeing a Cheviot Aiken. He has bid on the house, and I believe that he intends to replace it with a McMansion!

Yes, developers have a right to make money. Under the current building code, they may even have the legal right to build a McMansion. But, I don't believe that they have the moral right to come into our neighborhood and tear down this small part of our history.

What can we do?

- First, the Aiken owners need to get together. (I own the Aiken on the corner of Dunleer and Haddington.) If you have an Aiken, think you do, or know someone who does, send me an email to jaberman@comcast.net with your name, address and phone number.
- Second, don't sell your Aikens to developers you think will just tear them down.
- Third, there is a possibility that the Aikens can be preserved by obtaining historical monument status for them. One Aiken in Cheviot currently is going through that process, and all Aiken owners should consider it.

- Fourth, the City Council just approved an ordinance covering the Sunland-Tujunga areas that regulates the ratio between lot and house size. The CHHA Board currently is exploring a similar ordinance for Cheviot. Not only would such an ordinance save the Aikens from being replaced by unsightly McMansions, but also it might save other homes from suffering the same fate. □ by *Jeffrey A. Berman*

Bulletin Board

It only works if you use it.

<http://cheviothills.org/board/>

***SOUNDWALL
GROUNDBREAKING***

February 3, 2006, the culmination of years of effort, persistence and determination by neighbors spanning three neighborhoods – Palms, Rancho Park and Cheviot Hills – paid off. The groundbreaking ceremony at Palms Park for the new soundwall included local politicians – past and present – participating in this long awaited event.



ASSEMBLY MEMBER KAREN BASS RECOGNIZES
SOUNDWALL COMMITTEE CHAIR TONY PADILLA

SOUNDWALL (cont'd)

Assembly Member *Karen Bass* presided over the ceremony, which included talks from Supervisor and Metro Board member *Zev Yaroslavsky* and former Assemblyman *Herb Wesson*. All three, during various stages of this successful venture, were instrumental in achieving construction of an “experimental soundwall” design which could become the standard across the county if proven successful.

Certificates of recognition from the California State Assembly were presented to four key neighborhood residents, one from Palms, another from Rancho Park, and two residents from Cheviot Hills – former CHHA board member *Stan Arcader*, and current board member *Tony Padilla*. All four contributed to keeping the project alive, despite a process that took over four years to achieve these results.

Adding to the good news – the proposed soundwall would now span over 2,000 linear feet, with only one break from beginning to end. That break occurs at the Overland off-ramp, and continues until the next neighborhood.

The initial construction phase has begun, and although Cal Trans has allotted one year for completion, the contractor and Cal Trans Project Engineer who were present indicated if all goes well, construction could be completed by end of summer 2006.

Congratulations to all those who helped with their letters and phone calls that kept the dream alive – the quality of life for all those in the neighborhoods affected by the noise and pollution from the freeway has just improved.

□ by *Tony Padilla*

How the CHHA spends your money

Have you ever wondered how the CHHA spends the dues money it collects from our neighbor members? (Warning: percentages ahead.) I went through the CHHA books for the years 2000-2004 to find out what our average revenues and expenditures were. This task was made easier because our former CHHA Treasurer, *Marty Bischoff*, did a fine job with our association’s books during his 15 years of service.

Revenues

During the past five years, dues payments accounted for 95% of our revenues, with the rest coming from interest on our funds on deposit. Our number of dues paying households has fluctuated from a high of 835 (out of a possible 1450) in 2002 to a low of 546 in 2003 during that period. In 2005, we had 722 dues paying households and interest income increased due to rising interest rates, but revenues still fell \$2,400 short of our expenditures for the year. We need dues participation from at least 800 households to afford our current operations.

Expenses

Legal & Professional Consultation.

During the past five years, legal and professional consultation was the biggest expense for the association, accounting for 42.7% of our costs. The vast majority of this money went to the law firms supporting the efforts to create and defend the NTMP, with a minority being spent on traffic engineering studies. In 2005, these expenses were 35% of our total spending, and we expect them to be a significant expense for the foreseeable future.

Communications. Communications costs, encompassing mailing expenses, postage and delivery, printing, signs, meeting space rental and associated banquet costs, telephone, and the website, averaged 33.5% of our expenses from 2000-2004. In 2005, these costs rose to 47% of our spending. Our protracted election process necessitated significant increases in the number of mailings and general meetings, offsetting any savings we may have realized from increased use of the website and e-mail for communications. In addition, the Riddick Center, the site of our monthly meetings, requested that our association make a larger rental contribution to help offset the costs of their facility. We hope that the technology efforts of our Secretary, combined with a less contentious board election process, will bring these costs back down to historical levels in 2006. You can help by providing the CHHA with your e-mail address if you have e-mail access.

Insurance. Insurance costs averaged 5.3% of our association's expenditures from 2000-2004, and they reached 9% of our costs in 2005. Insurance expenses are the most rapidly rising of our association's costs; they have tripled since 2000. While we expect the rate of increase of insurance costs to moderate in the coming years, these rising, required expenditures underscore the importance of increasing the number of our dues paying households.

Surveys and Other Costs. Building Surveys, Accounting, Bank Charges, Dues, Office Supplies, Storage, and Taxes were 10.1% of our expenses from 2000-2004, and they fell to 7.9% of our expenses in 2005. Almost half of this money goes to support the efforts of the Code Compliance committee. The committee commissions building surveys in an attempt to ensure that the new construction in our neighborhood complies with all city codes, particularly those regulating home height and setbacks.

Capital Improvements & Contributions. Capital Improvements and Contributions averaged 8.4% of our association's spending from 2000-2004, but these worthy expenditures fell to 1% of our spending by 2005, caught in the squeeze between rising required costs, like insurance, and less than 50% dues participation. Think of all we could accomplish if just 75% of our member households sent in their modest contribution of \$35!

□ by *Michael Beugg*, Treasurer

❖ *Traffic Topics* ❖

The Cheviot Hills Homeowners' Association, as always, has been active and involved over the last several months in traffic matters impacting Cheviot Hills.

Motor Avenue. Last year our City Council office proposed several modifications in traffic patterns on Motor Avenue at or close to Pico Boulevard – modifications that were presented as enhancing traffic flow and reducing waiting times at the intersection of Motor and Pico. The CHHA objected to those changes, and CHHA and residents expressed their concerns about the changes to the Council office and ultimately to the Traffic Committee of the City Council itself. The proposal was modified in response to neighborhood concerns, and, in the end, the City Council approved the addition of a second right turn lane from northbound Motor to eastbound Pico.



COUNCILMEMBER WEISS MEETS WITH BOARD PRESIDENT KEVIN HUGHES AND TRAFFIC CO-CHAIRS GREG PULIS & ROBERT SIMON

Responding to neighborhood concerns, *Councilmember Weiss* directed the Department of Transportation to monitor

traffic on Motor Avenue and certain side streets flowing into Motor Avenue before and after implementation of the change to determine whether the change has an impact on traffic through our neighborhood. DOT took these measurements in the second week of February. The changes authorized by the City Council will now be implemented and follow-up monitoring by DOT will then take place.

To report an abandoned vehicle, call the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (213) 485-4184 with:

- 1) License Plate Number***
- 2) Make and model***
- 3) Exact location of vehicle***

Century City. Development of large new structures in Century City has been proceeding over the last year with the expansion of the Westfield Century City mall, the addition of a new office building on the Fox Studio lot (at the corner of Pico and Avenue of the Stars), and with the building of the new office structure at 2200 Avenue of the Stars (former site of the ABC Entertainment Center and Shubert Theatre). Traffic from commuting to and from the 2200 Avenue of the Stars building may become evident once the structure is occupied late this year. The Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (“NTMP”) will hopefully blunt the impact of this development on residential traffic by keeping commuter traffic out of our neighborhood and at reduced levels.

TRAFFIC (cont'd)

The NTMP for our community is already partially in place, with stop signs, metered traffic signals and bump outs all designed to reduce the flow of traffic through the neighborhood and to maintain traffic speeds at a safe level. The second implementation phase of the NTMP, or "Phase II," is scheduled to begin this year and will result in construction of median islands in selected locations through our neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods, again designed to control traffic and to maintain both speeds and volume at reasonable levels in the face of increased commuter pressure to and from Century City. Hopefully by year-end, the NTMP will be fully implemented, and we will see the results of this comprehensive traffic management scheme.

Further development in Century City is currently being proposed in the form of two large new projects, both of which plan for high-rise condominiums along Avenue of the Stars. One project proposes two large condominium towers and a loft building at 10131 Constellation Boulevard at the corner of Avenue of the Stars and Constellation Boulevard, where a low-rise City National Bank building, a restaurant/night club and open space currently are located.

The CHHA, working with other area neighborhood associations, has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Review for this project and has written letters of comment, including a letter from CHHA's lawyer, to the City raising critical concerns about the contemplated project and its impact on

traffic, city services and other issues for Cheviot Hills and the broader community. We shall see how this situation evolves.

A second new development in Century City is the proposed tearing down of the old (or not so old) St. Regis Hotel at 2055 Avenue of the Stars and its replacement with a significantly larger luxury condominium high-rise with some retail services and with a private club component. The CHHA has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report for this project and has, again, submitted letters raising concerns about the possible impacts of this project on our community and the Westside community in general. Again, we wait for the response of the City and the developers to the concerns raised.

In sum there has been a great deal going on in the world of traffic as it impacts Cheviot Hills. Stay tuned for new developments, and stay careful and safe in driving around our neighborhood and beyond.

□ by *Greg Pulis and Robert Simon*

If you would like the Crime Blog e-mailed to you on a regular basis, please e-mail CheviotHills@aol.com and put "Add me to Crime Blog List" in the subject line.

For an online copy of this newsletter (with color!) go to <http://cheviotHills.org/homeowner.htm>

CODE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

That's an odd name, what does it do?

Well, our committee, which is comprised of five neighbors, tries to make sure that construction in Cheviot Hills is done according to the Building Code and other applicable laws.

Why would we need a committee to do that, doesn't everyone build in accordance with the law? The simple answer is "No." While many do, there are some developers and homeowners who do not.

During the rather brief time that the Code Compliance Committee has existed, we have responded to several neighbors' inquiries each month. Some have raised questions regarding work being performed on Sundays, side setbacks, height restrictions, underground garages, fences that are too high and the like.

We have always responded quickly. When we knew the answer, we gave it promptly. When we did not, we were able to obtain it from Building & Safety, with which we have built a very nice working relationship.

Sometimes, we have found that the builder was doing something wrong. This

has lead to stop orders, changes, and other relief. In some cases, we have found that nothing was wrong. However, the neighbor who raised the issue, although disappointed, was glad to get the right answer.

One of the issues on which we have been working is the increasing prevalence of "McMansions." Sometimes, they are out of Code and changes get made. However, often they are in compliance with the rules. This has led the Committee to explore ways in which the rules might be altered so that we can make sure that Cheviot continues to maintain that special something. Right now, we don't have the answer to this important issue. Nevertheless, we are working closely with Building & Safety, and *Councilmember Weiss'* office to try to develop one. Stay tuned.

The only way that the Code Compliance Committee can serve the neighborhood is if it learns of problems at the earliest possible time. Therefore, if you are asked by a builder to sign a variance allowing him to build something that is not in keeping with the Building Code, or you see something that just doesn't look right, contact a member of the Committee.

□ by *Jeffrey A. Berman*

The Cheviot Hills News is published by the *Cheviot Hills Homeowners Association*, Post Office Box 64458, Los Angeles, California 90064-0458. Board: *Steve Andelin, Stacy Antler, Carol Bahoric, Pam Bentz, Michael Beugg, Jeff Berman, Peter Glassman, Alisa Griner, Kevin Hughes* (president), *Abby Kuppin, Tony Padilla, Greg Pulis* (vice president), *Scott Schomer, Robert Simon, and Jonathan Weiss* (secretary). Editor for this issue: *Jonathan Weiss*. Contributors: *Sandy Abramowitz, Jeff Berman, Michael Beugg, Alisa Griner, Tony Padilla, Greg Pulis, Robert Simon, and Jonathan Weiss*.

And the nominees are:

The Cheviot Hills Homeowners' Association Board submits the following Association members as candidates for election at the March 29, 2006 general meeting: *Steve Andelin* of Rossbury Pl., *Stacy Antler* of Rossbury Pl., *Carol Bahoric* of McConnell Dr., *Jeff Berman* of Dunleer Dr., *Michael Beugg* (treasurer) of Dunleer Dr., *Peter Glassman* of Gilmerton Ave., *Alisa Griner* of Patricia Ave., *Mark Huberman* of Haddington Dr., *Kevin Hughes* (president) of Haddington Dr., *Kurt Kroner* of Troon Ave., *Anthony "Tony" Padilla* of Northvale Rd., *Greg Pulis* (vice-president) of Dunleer Dr., *Scott Schomer* of Cheviot Dr., *Robert Simon* of Manning Ave. , *Jonathan Weiss* (secretary) of Troon Ave. Due to space limitations here, Candidates' personal statements are posted at <http://cheviot hills.org/Noms.htm>. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Winter in Cheviot Hills

Saucer Magnolias grace this backyard in the Cheviot Hills tract. Already mature in 1970, they may be part of the original landscaping from the late 1940s.



Christmas Delight