



Long Road to Smooth Streets

BY JAMES BALES, TRANSPORTATION CHAIR



Rowena Avenue now sports a silky smooth surface and shiny semi-straight lines after repaving.

In early June, 2004, Councilmember LaBonge requested the Board step into action to immediately identify and prioritize 2 miles of roadway that was in dire need of re-paving. The Board convened what has become our Transportation Committee to study our neighborhood's streets. Within two weeks the Committee walked and drove the streets in our district, reported and discussed their findings and came to a resolution, which the Board supported,

recommending the re-surfacing of portions of 13 of our streets filled with potholes and cracks along with suggestions for re-paving 12 additional areas. Because of the severe budget crisis much street re-paving work has been suspended. However, we are happy to report that the Board's recommendations for re-paving Tracy Street (between St. George Street and Talmadge Street), Rowena Avenue (between Hyperion Avenue and St. George Street) and Edgemont Street (north of Los Feliz Boulevard) have been accomplished with much more to be done in the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

To see all the streets listed, please go to our web site, www.ggpnc.org. You can see all the work the Transportation committee has done and may want to join in our efforts.

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No Restaurant at the Observatory

BY BERNADETTE SOTER, CHAIR, PROS COMMITTEE

In March 2004, our community learned that the City was considering a plan to establish a privately owned luxury restaurant near the Griffith Observatory in Griffith Park, on the site of the defunct snack bar made famous in the film, "The Terminator." A preliminary feasibility study had been made that proposed two ambitious, highly visible configurations: 1) A 6000 sq. ft., 220 seat facility with cantilevered deck. 2) A 10,000 sq. ft., 220 seat facility with a cantilevered deck and a lower level banquet hall. The study also proposed that the City pay \$2.5 million to \$4.5 million to finance the restaurant's construction, with the operator eventually returning the funds from its profits.

The Parks, River and Open Space Committee (PROS) of the GGPNC joined forces with the Hollywood United Neighborhood Council, the Atwater Village Neighborhood Council, the Los

Feliz Improvement Association, the Oaks Homeowners Association, the Sierra Club and numerous friends' groups, neighbors and park-users to voice our objections to the plan. This involved meetings, personal communications and correspondence with the Recreation and Parks Commission and CD4 Councilmember Tom LaBonge.

Our reasons for opposing the plan were numerous: the irrevocable loss of open space, noise and light pollution issues, particulate damage to Observatory telescopes from grilling, liquor service at the top of mountain roads, woefully inadequate parking, taxpayer-subsidized competition with existing restaurants, objection to the idea being put forth independent of the Griffith Park Master Plan process, and our fundamental disagreement with prioritizing money and resources for such a purpose in the middle of a Citywide budget crisis.

(continued on page 4)

The Pros and Cons of Inclusionary Zoning

BY KURT RADEMAEKERS, CHAIR, GGPNC AD HOC COMMITTEE ON INCLUSIONARY ZONING

The Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (IZO) is a proposal before the City Council that attempts to address the affordable housing crisis in the Los Angeles. It would require every new apartment or condo development to include some units offered to qualified middle- or low-income people at reduced rents or purchase prices. As an incentive to developers, it would allow taller buildings, more housing on less land and require only one parking space per unit.

City representatives argue the IZO would reduce traffic and on street parking by encouraging development along transportation corridors. But, given the inconvenience of public transportation, and the availability of cheap cars, it's difficult to imagine a family not owning a second car, which it would have to park on our already crowded streets.

Studies on the IZO's in other cities show mixed results. Some say IZO's effectively provide more housing for middle- and low-

income people. Others say that the ordinances chase developers out of the city and drive up the price of housing for everyone. Who do you believe?

A common objection to the IZO is that it applies a "one-size-fits-all" solution throughout the City.

In some neighborhoods the IZO would work. The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, for example, reports that residential projects on Cherokee Avenue and Carlton Way are currently limited to two stories even though four- and five-story buildings surround them.

On the other hand, the single-family neighborhoods north and south of Sunset Boulevard in Silver Lake all qualify for six-story inclusionary developments. The Silver Lake Neighborhood Council points out that additional density on the narrow hillside streets would worsen parking problems and create a public danger by further limiting the ability of fire engines

to reach these neighborhoods.

Another common objection to the IZO is that it strips neighborhood stakeholders of any ability to provide input about the size, location or appropriateness of an inclusionary housing development, which undermines the ability of Neighborhood Councils to make government more responsive to local needs possibly having a calamitous effect on the quality of life and the character of their communities. Yet developers claim the IZO is too restrictive for profitable development.

Most people agree that housing in Los Angeles is a problem—affordable or otherwise. The City has already implemented a number of affordable housing programs. Crafting a solution that provides incentives to developers and that protects the interests of neighborhoods will require collaboration among all stakeholders.

Please join our Planning, Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee, which meets every second Wednesday of the month.

The Largest River Cleanup in the Country

For the second year in a row, the PROS (Parks, River & Open Space) Committee of the GGPNC, in coordination with the Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR), brought hundreds of volunteers to the Los Feliz Bridge in Griffith Park to clean up the river, making this event the biggest river cleanup in the U.S.

On the first day of the event May 6, 2005, 300 local students and teachers met at Fletcher Drive by the River and learned more about its issues while they helped with the cleanup. The event's second day began at 7:45 am. The City of Los Angeles Recreation & Parks Department set up the banquet tables and chairs from which we dispensed hospitality and engaged in outreach. Numerous volunteers of the neighborhood Councils and PROS Committee set up donated donuts, cookies, water,



PHOTO Kathryn Louyse

coffee, and other drinks. Prizes, donated by local businesses, were given to the volunteers. The volunteers were Disney VoluntEARS, classes from all grades of local schools, Councilmember Tom LaBonge and members of his staff, as well as scores of individuals, groups, families. Everyone did a terrific job of cleaning up our precious river.

A marvelous time was had by all.

The PROS Committee wishes to thank the following supporters:

Generous Contributors: Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA), Hollywood United NC, Greater Griffith Park NC, and the Atwater Village Chamber of Commerce and Neighborhood Council.

Generous Donors: Albertsons Market, Autry National Center, Cap N' Cork Junior Market, Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Department of Water and Power, Gelson's, Hillhurst Liquor, NatureMart, Robeks Juice, Soap Plant/Wacko, Subway Sandwiches & Salads, Yuca's, and donuts courtesy of Louis Alvarado. Due to restriction on space all other acknowledgements will be made at another time. Please forgive any omission.

And, of course, the Friends of the Los Angeles River for making the event possible.

Saved From The Nicks Of Time BY BRUCE CARROLL

In July, 2003, the GGPNC took its first step into historic preservation when it urged that a dilapidated 100 year old house at 1749 Harvard Blvd. be saved from the bulldozers. The house had been the final home of onetime Mayor James Toberman who replaced L.A.'s last Latino mayor in 1872. The house was saved by being declared a city cultural heritage monument, which allowed time for Fran Offenhauser, now President of Hollywood Heritage, to purchase and renovated the house at a cost of over \$1.5 million.

At a ceremony in April, 2005, Councilmember Tom LaBonge honored Offenhauser and David Monks, who brought the house's plight to public attention and contacted the GGPNC. Monks, who used to live across the street, now proudly rents one of four apartments in the historic house.

RIGHT: Toberman House in July, 2003 on the verge of demolition.



LEFT: Toberman House restoration ceremony April 2005. The home's savior Fran Offenhauser gets an award from Councilmember LaBonge as did Dave Monks (2nd row left). GGPNC VP for Outreach, Nora Mosqueda, looks on approvingly from over LaBonge's left shoulder.

Permit Parking: We Say Yea and Nay

The question of permit parking, where residents pay the city for the privilege of exclusive use of the curbs at certain times, is often contentious. The GGPNC has dealt with two proposals with differing outcomes.

We said yes when a resident of the 1500 block of Rosalia Road (around the corner from the Vista Theater) came to the GGPNC's Transportation Committee in the Spring of 2004 with a request that something be done to relieve the residents of that street of older, mostly apartment houses from the loss of street parking due to the change in the programming of the Vista from second-run films to first-run blockbusters.

The committee worked with her and other residents, the vast majority of whom joined, in petitioning the City's Department of Transportation for restrictions on parking during the hours most heavily used by patrons of the Vista. The Committee had a meeting attended by nearly two dozen residents and the owner of the Vista, who agreed the situation was unreasonable for the residents and that parking restrictions were reasonable if limited to the one street.

The full GGPNC Board, after hearing from Rosalia residents, supported their request, as did Councilmember LaBonge. After a lengthy review by the City's DOT the matter now goes to the City Council for action in hopes the restrictions could become effective later this year.

As part of the plan DOT would place meters allowing for 4-hour parking on Virgil Place between Sunset Boulevard and DeLongpre, which is now used for "long-term parking," so as to free up this space for patrons of the Vista and other night-time businesses in the area. Removing red from some of the curbs on Hillhurst may open up additional street parking. If this is not enough the Vista ownership may be encouraged to obtain off-street parking from one or more parking areas in the immediate vicinity. The committee was greatly helped by the efforts of Councilmember LaBonge's deputies Rory Fitzpatrick and Matthew Levy.

In the other case, the GGPNC's meeting room was filled with angry residents from the three blocks east of Western Avenue and south of Franklin Avenue. That's an area with

many older apartment buildings that don't come close to meeting today's parking standards...so residents told troubling tales of hard times trying to park near home. Some residents north of Franklin, an area of larger single family homes, had petitioned the city to restrict overnight parking on their blocks...complaining some parkers even blocked their driveways. After hearing from both sides, and city officials in charge of the permit parking program, the GGPNC came down on the side of those in need of parking and officially went on record saying "no" to the imposition of permit parking for the blocks north of Franklin.

As with all issues, the GGPNC tries to look at all sides and come up with the best solution. Sometimes it's a yes sometimes it's a no. Past GGPNC surveys have shown that parking is a number one concern in our area whether it's in the business district or at home. And clearly there are no simple one-size-fits-all answers. As always we'd love to hear your ideas. Check our web site www.ggpnc.org for our next meeting.

Frosty Reaction to High Walls

BY BRUCE CARROLL

“Good fences make good neighbors” is perhaps poet Robert Frost’s most repeated line. But the first line of that poem, “Mending Wall,” is, “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.” That something is the City of LA, if the wall, fence or hedge in front of your property is over 3½ feet high. The GGPNC has supported that limit and been successful in opposing over-in-height walls.

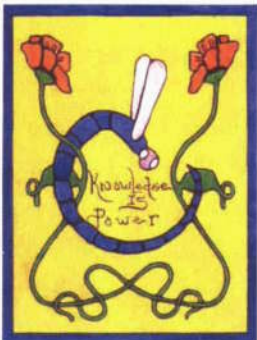
Those on the other side of the fence say they need a high wall, fence or hedge for security or privacy, but the city’s police and fire departments argue that high barriers in front of

your property actually diminish your safety by making it easier for crooks to conceal their activities and harder for firefighters and paramedics to gain quick access in an emergency.

But it also comes down to the community question of; do high fences make good neighborhoods? Or do they send a fearful fortress image often seen in third world countries? A full reading of Frost’s poem reveals he didn’t have a high opinion of his neighbor’s view that “good fences make good neighbors.” Which side are you on? We want to know.

King of Arts

Thomas Starr King Middle School proudly showed off its murals and mosaics at the “Celebration of Art” event held on campus last spring. It was a positive and uplifting event with over 50 community members from Los Feliz, Franklin Hills and Silver Lake participating.



Everyone’s efforts to beautify and improve the school with restored historic art, painted murals and

The mural, “Knowledge is Power,” by artist Robert Rodriguez was one of the celebrated works on the King campus.

tile mosaic murals, as well as renewed landscaping were celebrated. Also on the tour was a classroom filled with student work ranging from imovies, digital animation, robotics, poetry, history projects of elaborate mazes, and math projects of triangular pieced kites. The students and their teachers proudly displayed and demonstrated their work.

Councilmembers LaBonge and Garcetti participated and distributed L.A. City Council Certificates of Appreciation to all participating local artists as well as members of local groups, including then GGPNC Education chair, Mary Rodriguez for their hard work in making the campus a feast for the eyes as well as the mind.

DOWN THE DRAIN WITH STANDING WATER

Now that the West Nile Virus has reappeared in Los Angeles, we all need to periodically check our property and streets to make sure there’s no standing water that can breed the mosquitoes that carry the virus.

The Hoover Street Stairwell Mural

BY JACQUELINE KERR, CHAIR
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

In June 2004 “Hoover Walk” at the Hoover Street Stairwell was dedicated as a Los Angeles Historical Landmark. Constructed in 1923, the “Walk” is the stairwell that rises in two flights of stairs from the northern end of 1600 N. Hoover Street to culminate above in the middle of the 4300 Block of Prospect Avenue.

The three part stairwell is used daily by students of all ages and elderly neighbors. Over the decades, the porous concrete steps began crumbling and the walls were constantly covered with Graffiti. Utility wires directly overhead on Prospect dangled with tennis shoes, indicating drug sales were available nearby. With constant assistance from Jeanne Chang and now Matt Levy, the present CD4 field representative, the stairwell has undergone the safety repairs requested by Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds and Jacqueline Kerr as well as other needed renovations.

Even with rain damage immediately adjacent to the Stairwell, plans for beautification and landscaping go forward.

A triptych mural, “The Rite of Culture” designed by noted muralist, Ricardo Mendoza, will be painted and installed with the new skin technique on the three retaining walls of the Stairwell. The Mural is fully funded by the Neighborhood Matching Fund and the GGPNC.

The Neighborhood Improvement Committee is working on other beautification projects including the Los Feliz Steps and the Myra Street Mural. The committee is always looking for people who have ideas as to how to improve the Neighborhood.

No Restaurant at the Observatory *(continued from page 1)*

Happily, we were heard. The Recreation and Parks Department discontinued its planning for the restaurant and in the letter informing us of the decision, our coalition was thanked for its thoughtful response.

As of this printing, unhappily, we have found that the Griffith Park Master Plan still contains a provision for a restaurant in the park. We will, of course, vigilantly oppose any resurrection of these plans.

Meet/Join the GGPNC Board of Directors

While all you stakeholders make up the GGPNC, the job of corralling and driving forward your community concerns and interests is the task of the 19 member board of directors. The vast majority are area residents. In the working world they've found success as realtors, reporters, labor leaders, lawyers, landlords, bureaucrats and business execs. But they've also found time to push dreams of a bettered community closer to realization.

The GGPNC Board of Directors has 19 members. Ten are elected by all stakeholders to represent specific districts (see map on back page or online at www.ggpnc.org) where the board member may live, do business or have some other tie. The other nine board members are selected by the board to insure the it hears varied voices. There are seats designated for those who are active and want to foster the interests of the business, cultural,

educational, recreational and religious communities within the GGPNC.

Right now the board is evenly split between women and men, with one vacant seat. If you'd like to tackle some of the tasks touched on in this newsletter, or better yet, have even better ideas to better the community, please contact the GGPNC about filling that open seat... call, write, e-mail, or come to a meeting. It feels good to get involved.

Councilmember Tom LaBonge joins most of the GGPNC Board of Directors for a "class photo" after swearing-in the newly elected and appointed members at the November 2004 GGPNC meeting. From left to right: Ron Weinstein, Planning/Zoning chair; Joe Cisneros, Rose Marin, Education chair; Merlyn Henandez; Philip Gasteier; Rosemary DeMonte (peeking from behind Tom Labonge's broad shoulders); Richard Spicer; Councilmember LaBonge; James Balesh, Transportation chair; Nora Mosqueda, VP Outreach; Jonathon Kaplan, VP Administration; Jacqueline Kerr, Neighborhood Improvement chair; Nyla Arslanian, Cultural chair; Lisa Sergi (resigned); Charley Mims, President; (towering above the group), Shana Murphy; Bruce Carroll, Webmaster. Missing are: Cheryl Johnson, Kerry Hunnewell and Molly Rysman. If you see any of us please say hi.



GGPNC Gathering Gripes, Possibilities, Neighborhood Concerns

Think of your GGPNC as a young tree. The seed was planted by the new City Charter. Over the last three years we have started to grow. Even borne a few fruits as mentioned in this newsletter. But to flourish, trees need sunshine, water and fertilizer...and that's your part (no were not seeking bags of manure).

Your knowledge, experiences and insight that shed light on neighborhood problems are the sunshine. Your flow of energy to help us identify and satisfy neighborhood needs is like the water that will keep us from withering. Your enthusiasm, expertise and new ideas are the fertilizer that will help us grow stronger and produce a bountiful crop of progress for our neighborhood.

Please share with us your quick responses (longer ones are always welcome too) to the following questions. And let us know how we can keep in touch as we grow stronger and spread our branches to touch your concerns in the community.

What needs fixing? (traffic, crime, parking, homeless etc.)

What's just fine?

What's the most important thing GGPNC can do to help improve the neighborhood?

Name

Address

City Zip Phone

E-mail

Interests

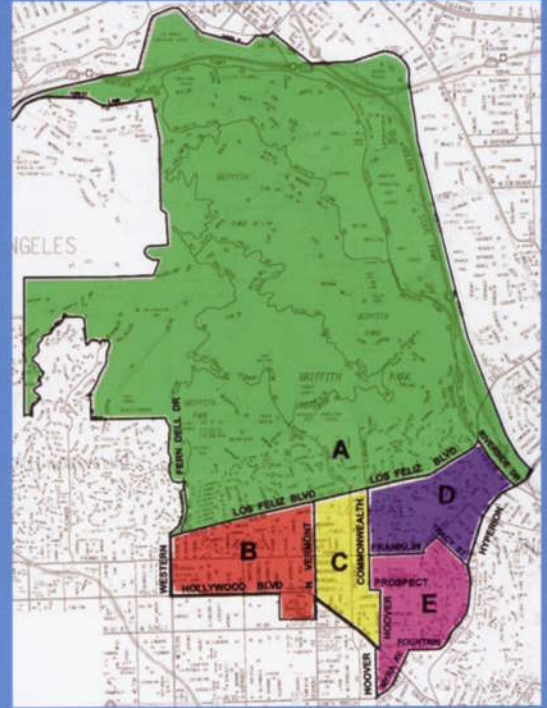


Mail to: GGPNC
P.O. Box 27003
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Or send e-mail to ggpnc@ggpnc.org. Thanks for your participation!

What is the GGPNC?

If you live, work, study, pray or play in the Los Feliz/Franklin Hills/ East Hollywood/Griffith Park area, we are your neighbors. We, the members of the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council, want to know you so we can help each other. Neighborhood Councils were conceived by the new City of Los Angeles Charter to bridge the distance between City Hall and the rest of us. Our goal is to gather your ideas, wants, needs and solutions to better our community and then let the departments, agencies and politicians who run things know what Greater Griffith Parkers want. The City is also obligated to inform us when plans for changes in our community are on the drawing boards. To reach us, write to GGPNC, P.O. Box 27003, Los Angeles, CA 90027, call us at 323-908-6054 or e-mail us at ggpnc@ggpnc.org. You can also explore our web site at www.ggpnc.org for upcoming board and committee meeting agendas and minutes, plus other information about our neighborhoods.



GGPNC Election District Map available online at www.ggpnc.org



Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council

Your Neighborhood. Your Voice. Your Council.

P.O. Box 27003 / Los Angeles, CA 90027