



"To preserve and enhance the unique village character of Laguna Beach."

Newsletter

THE VILLAGE LAGUNA NEWSLETTER • FEBRUARY 2005 • ESTABLISHED 1971

February 28 Membership Meeting

Experts to Advise on Ways to Preserve Inner Open Space

City Manager Ken Frank, Laguna Greenbelt President Elisabeth Brown, the Trust for Public Land's Scott Ferguson and Temple Hills Community Association board member Ron Chilcote will discuss issues surrounding the preservation of inner open space at the February 28 Village Laguna membership meeting.

SPACE THAT IS OPEN MAY OR MAY NOT BE OPEN SPACE

In neighborhoods throughout Laguna Beach there is undeveloped land that appears to be open space. Some of it is in fact open space, but other land is undeveloped parcels owned by speculators who one day hope to build on their property. There are several municipal code requirements that these owners need to meet before they can build, including access from a public right-of-way at a grade no greater than 15%. Construction technology continues to advance, and therefore parcels that were once considered unbuildable can now meet the code and be developed.

PRESERVING UNDEVELOPED AREAS

Come learn about this issue and what the City and other groups may be able to do to preserve these undeveloped areas. Ken Frank will present information about possible acquisition strategies that may be available. Elisabeth Brown will discuss the implications for greenbelt and wilderness areas. Scott Ferguson will discuss the mechanics of acquiring and preserving open space. Ron Chilcote will share the concerns of neighbors living near these parcels.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 28

We'll meet in the Wells Fargo Bank 3d Floor Community Room on Monday, February 28, at 7 p.m. ≈



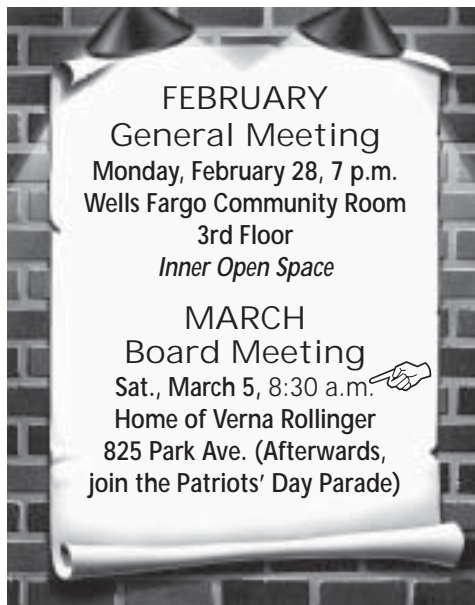
Some of Village Laguna's '04 parade contingent

March with Village Laguna in March 5 Patriots' Day Parade


Keep the charm! Join members of Village Laguna in the 39th annual Patriots' Day Parade on March 5. The theme is "America's Heroes," and many community organizations will participate. Members had a terrific time walking and riding in the parade last year. VL's message remains "Keep the Charm," celebrating Laguna's unique village character and our mission to preserve and enhance it. VL's "walking float" will feature members of all ages—some pushing strollers—carrying posters of cottages, open space, the rocket slide and other images of the Laguna Beach we all want to

keep. Please contact Doug Reilly at 494-4137 or reillyd@cox.net if you plan to march!

The parade begins at 11 a.m., but VL's entry is number 87 (we've moved up five places since last year) and so our contingent will not start marching until at least noon. Members and friends should gather at the high school parking lot at Park Avenue and Short Street no later than noon, wearing white shirts and jeans. Look for the Village Laguna banner. The parade proceeds down Park Avenue, turns right on Gleneyre Street and right on Forest Avenue, and ends just past City Hall (2/3-mile). Band, novelty, and float awards will be presented after the parade at the Art-A-Fair grounds where food and drinks will be available for sale at Tivoli Too! ≈



FEBRUARY
General Meeting
Monday, February 28, 7 p.m.
Wells Fargo Community Room
3rd Floor
Inner Open Space

MARCH
Board Meeting
Sat., March 5, 8:30 a.m. 
Home of Verna Rollinger
825 Park Ave. (Afterwards,
join the Patriots' Day Parade)

February, 2005

President's Message



By Doug Reilly

MANSIONIZATION AND PARKING

A drumbeat of complaints about mansionization and parking impacts has been heard at a series of meetings over the past few weeks.

DESIGN REVIEW ISSUES

The Design Review Task Force met to hear from neighborhood residents and association representatives about problems with the design review process and suggestions for solving them. Neighborhoods from all across the City were represented, including some that we don't usually hear from, such as Irvine Cove. There was near unanimity in urging the adoption of specific plans or zoning overlays that would set strict guidelines for each neighborhood. Some felt that this could be done on a sub-area basis, while others argued for a citywide program to help neighborhoods adopt design guidelines that would ultimately be approved by the Planning Commission and the City Council. One key issue will be identifying neighborhood boundaries, particularly at their edges.

PARKING

A City Council subcommittee of Councilmembers Jane Egly and Steve Dicterow has met twice to deal with parking issues that emerged during the hearings on the redevelopment of the Pottery Shack. The first meeting allowed residents and business owners to express their frustration about the lack of parking in the area. The second was a brainstorming session that identified specific problems and potential solutions. The meetings were another example of how effective workshops can be if they involve councilmembers, staff and interested members of the public in a free-wheeling discussion format. The next step is to investigate and narrow the solutions. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2 at 5 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

LAND USE

Finally, the Planning Commission is holding workshops on the revision of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, which sets forth the community's long-range development goals, related public policies and the tasks involved in their implementation. The current element and the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan provide a good basis for the revision. Once again, there was near unanimity among those attending the February 16 workshop focusing on issues that some form of neighborhood design guidelines needed to be put in place to stop further mansionization.

DESIGN REVIEW/PLANNING MEETING

The Planning Commission and the Design Review Board will hold a joint meeting on February 23 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers to review how the anti-mansionization measures are working. I hope to see you there! ≈



Stakes outline the "dip house" on Glenneyre St., between Caliope and Bluebird Canyon

Dip House Update

The City Council has postponed for 60 days any decision on the proposal for a house at 1530 Glenneyre Street, in the middle of Bluebird Canyon, to permit negotiations on the purchase of the property by the City. All attempts by the applicant to win approval of plans for a house there have been turned down by the Design Review Board and the Council on appeal of DRB decisions. The two-month hiatus will end April 6. ≈

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Boardmember e-mail addresses are available on our website: villagelaguna.org.

Council Gives Montage Parking Lot a Two-Year Extension, with Conditions

Jane Egly's appeal of the conditional use permit for the Montage parking lot on the Coast Highway ended in a 3-2 vote (with Egly and Iseman opposed) approving the permit. The Council did take the unusual step of limiting the permit to two years and placed a number of new conditions on the approval.

The hearing of the appeal brought to light the fact that the Montage is leasing space at the South Coast Medical Center to park some 140 employee cars on busy weekends and that employees are continuing to park in the shopping center lot and in the neighborhoods. Concerns were also raised about traffic hazards connected with the new lot design. Since the resort has been unable to purchase the strip of land at the south end of the property, cars would have to enter and exit at the north end without a traffic signal to facilitate left turns.



To receive any further extension, the Montage will be required to demonstrate that its employees are not parking anywhere except in designated lots and not occupying any other business's required parking spaces. It will also have to participate in good faith in discussions with the City regarding a permanent solution to the resort's parking problem. The landscaping improvements proposed will not be required in the interim. ≈

Stakes outline the house proposed at 3355 Alta Laguna Boulevard opposite Alta Laguna Park



Alta Laguna Project Appealed to Council

A 6,000-square-foot house proposed for the northernmost site on the Alta Laguna cul-de-sac—immediately opposite the park and adjacent to the mini-park—was rejected unanimously by the Design Review Board on January 27. Judging the loss of public views a matter of concern to the whole community, Village Laguna supports the Top of the World Neighborhood Association in its opposition to the project. Neighbors argued and Board members agreed that the house was far too high and wide for this sensitive site and that the low profile of the newly completed house next door demonstrates that a substantial house can be built on the lot while preserving public views. Rather than modify his proposal, the applicant requested the vote that would move the project to the Council level. The appeal is to be heard March 1. ≈

Renew Your Membership Now!

Annual membership dues were payable in January. If the membership date on your address label is 1/1/05 or earlier, please clip the payment coupon in this newsletter and mail it with your check today.

Join Village Laguna! Pay annual dues of only \$20 per member or \$35 per family and receive our informative monthly newsletter, attend fun parties, stay informed at our monthly meetings, participate in our annual Charm House Tour, and support local city and school board candidates. (If you are already a member, check your membership status on your mailing label. For example, 1/1/2005 means your membership expired in January of this year.)

If you would like to join Village Laguna or if you need to renew, please clip and return this form with your check. If you are already a member, why not share this application with a friend or neighbor?

Name(s) _____ Phone # _____

Street Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

I would like to volunteer for _____

I have enclosed my check in the amount of \$ _____ (\$20/person, \$35/family)

Mail to: Village Laguna, P. O. Box 1309, Laguna Beach, CA 92652



P. O. Box 1309
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Ways to Preserve Inner Open Space

Monday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m.

Design Review Board Looks At Heisler Park Renovation Plans

Concept plans for the repair and renovation of Heisler Park received scrutiny and comment by the Design Review Board on January 27. Staff announced that the idea of a seawall has been abandoned in favor of a retaining wall at the top of the receding slope.

A proposal to move the restrooms closer to the street was rejected in deference to neighbors' concerns. Board members stressed that they were looking for a low-key approach to the esthetic changes, with restroom architecture, path widths and park furniture to be close to what exists there now. This is *Heisler Park*, they said, and Treasure Island Park should not be the model. ≈

Greenbelt Annual Meeting to Feature Historic Aliso Canyon Slide Show

A slide show on Aliso Canyon produced 30 years ago by a team of volunteer activists will be the centerpiece of the Laguna Greenbelt's annual meeting on Thursday, February 24. Presenting the program will be Bob Borthwick, who helped create the slide show, and Ron Yeo, a former

County planning commissioner and the leader of the study team, which suggested environmental guidelines for the County to protect the Aliso Creek corridor from further channelization and development. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Woman's Club, 286 St. Ann's Drive, and the public is welcome. ≈

Save Aliso Canyon Website Launched

The Voices of Wilderness Coalition, formed to oppose the golf-course development in Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, has established a website entitled savealisocanyon.org. Supervisor Tom Wilson's formal rejection of the Montage's proposal last week was very welcome news, but the site continues to be worth a visit. Members are encouraged to view the photos, maps and comments there, order a window sticker that says "Save Aliso Canyon—Again," and add their names to the growing list of opponents of the proposal. ≈

City Opens Up Parking for Farmers' Market Patrons

To reduce congestion in the Lumberyard lot during the weekly Farmers' Market, the City is now permitting public parking in the City employees' parking lot until noon on Saturdays. ≈