

# The Bridge

Neighborhood Council

# Valley Village

Neighborhood Council Valley Village • P.O. Box 4703 • Valley Village, California 91617 • [www.myValleyVillage.com](http://www.myValleyVillage.com)

First Quarter 2008 Vol. 4 – Issue 1

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

*The Bridge* is the voice of the Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV). Its mission is to inform stakeholders about issues and activities, to report on the news that may affect Valley Village and to provide information about opportunities for stakeholders to volunteer.

The name *The Bridge* was chosen to illustrate the relationship between City Hall and Valley Village. Our goal is to know what is happening at City Hall and to be sure our representatives in City Hall know what is happening in Valley Village.

## RECORD TURNOUT AT ELECTION

*by Ginny Hatfield*

Stakeholders in Valley Village turned out in record numbers on October 17<sup>th</sup> for the fourth annual general election of the Neighborhood Council Valley Village Board of Directors. Seven board seats were up for election and one vacant seat was being filled due to a resignation.

Major get out the vote efforts by the candidates as well as contentious issues relating to the neighborhood characterization study (AKA mansionization) resulted in a vote topping 1,000. People were waiting on line to vote outside Colfax School auditorium prior to the 4:00 pm poll opening, and the traffic remained heavy right up until the closing at 8:00 pm. A dedicated team of two dozen volunteers was on hand to handle the crowds and then count the votes. The results were definitive with wide margins separating the candidates. No official challenges were lodged, and the Independent Election Administrator notified the successful candidates that night.

Neighborhood Council Valley Village has managed to increase voter participation in the last two elections, and 2007 saw the doubling of the turnout. Congratulations to all! We have set an enviable record among neighborhood councils and we will continue to do so with your support and participation.

Thank you Valley Village and welcome your newly elected Board members:

Paul Hatfield	At-Large	Suzanne Lewis	Renter
Richard Gauthier	Business Owner	Steven Stokes	Renter
Andrew Sacher	Business Owner	Tony Braswell	Renter
Annalisa Engelbach	Business Owner	David Engelbach	Community Organization

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## WEBSITE REDESIGNED

*by Tony Braswell*

Neighborhood Council Valley Village unveiled their new website on December 1. Stakeholders can log onto [www.myvalleyvillage.com](http://www.myvalleyvillage.com) and find a greatly expanded resource of information, city contacts and facts about Valley Village.

The new site was designed to provide stakeholders with more comprehensive information that is easier to find and use. “We spent a great deal of time working with members of the community to help create a site that does more for Valley Village,” said Tony Braswell, chair of the Communications Committee. One of the great features of the new site is the inclusion of historical data and photography about Valley Village. While the new site is operational, it is just the first phase of our expanded outreach. Next up is a computerized Neighborhood Watch map that will facilitate collaboration between NCVV, Valley Village Homeowners Association and other interested parties to make the Valley Village Neighborhood Watch program the best in Los Angeles.

LuNell Gilliland, member of the Communications Committee, was quick to recognize the support of Chick Cicarelli, who established the original NCVV site, and has been the volunteer Webmaster for the past three years. “Chick developed the first site, and was instrumental in helping us build our Internet communications to where we are today.” Braswell added, “the new site is still a work in progress, but we’re excited that it’s finally here.”

## BOARD SPECIAL ELECTION

*by Ginny Hatfield*

Due to a recent resignation by one of our Board members, NCVV will be holding a special election in January to fill the Homeowner Representative seat that has been vacated. The announcement was made at the December 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, and the election will take place prior to the regularly scheduled Board meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30pm to 7:30pm at Colfax Elementary School.

Stakeholders who wish to run for this seat must complete the candidate filing form and submit it along with proof of homeowner status (property tax bill, deed of trust, mortgage payment, etc.). Applications with documentation must be filed by 5:00 pm, January 18<sup>th</sup> and sent to Election Chair NCVV, PO Box 4703, Valley Village, CA 91617 or email [ncvvelections@yahoo.com](mailto:ncvvelections@yahoo.com).

The ballot will list only those names submitted with appropriate documentation by the filing deadline and the election will not include write-in candidates. The successful candidate will assume the remainder of the Homeowner term of office, which will be up for election in October 2008.

Further information and forms can be found on [myvalleyvillage.com](http://myvalleyvillage.com) or by contacting Election Chair, Ginny Hatfield, 818-985-1579.

**Board Meeting Every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday  
Colfax School**

## SPECIFIC PLAN AT RISK AGAIN

*by Reiner & Sanchez*

Valley Village stakeholders have expressed concern about SB1818 (State Senate Bill). This bill is intended to address the need for affordable housing, however it supersedes individual community and neighborhood specific plans throughout the state. In Valley Village, it would override the Valley Village Specific Plan, allowing developers to override the 36-foot height limit as well as landscape and open space requirements. Off-street parking space would be drastically reduced.

The need for affordable housing should be addressed; however families at every economic level want to live where there is adequate infrastructure to provide space to breathe, utilities, schools, parks, and where traffic is not a nightmare.

As passed by the State legislature it would destroy all local controls of multiple-unit construction. To apply the same criteria to the entire state of California promises to be a bureaucratic disaster. The City Council has the authority to take action that would bring SB1818 into agreement with the character of city neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Council Valley Village wants to know your opinion. Come to the next board meeting, visit the website to email, or call 818-759-8204.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The Telephone Utility Tax

In February, Los Angeles residents will vote on a controversial proposition to replace the telephone utility tax. In its typical disingenuous fashion, City Hall is touting the proposition as a 10% decrease in the tax because the new tax rate would be 9%, not 10% as it is today. Nothing is further from the truth. Recent court cases, including appeals, have ruled that this tax is illegal and must be repealed. The proposition would re-characterize the tax in a manner that would circumvent the law. If the proposition is defeated, the entire 10% tax will be eliminated.

The problem goes beyond that. The proposed tax increases the scope of the current one. While the current version is limited to cell phones and landlines, the new one will look to expand the tax to other electronic transmissions. So much for a “10% reduction.”

The City Council and the Mayor will use scare tactics in their attempt to pass this proposition. They will threaten to close libraries, cut back on street sweeping, delay street repairs, etc. The lost tax revenue amounts to about 6% of the City’s budget. There will be cutbacks, but they do not have to touch core services. I know of no organization that does not have at least 5% of highly discretionary costs buried in its budget. The potential loss of this revenue has been known for a long time, yet the City failed to take proactive measures to reduce costs in a controlled, programmatic manner and build a reserve. If anything, it ratified generous wage increases and did nothing to suspend or cut non-essential services. At the November meeting of the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils, I asked a City representative why measures were not taken to deal with this last year. She replied that the City was hoping they would not lose the tax revenue. I explained to her that no one should ever prepare a budget based on hope. Apparently, the City Council and Mayor are incapable of exercising fiscal discipline, so we must force them to perform their jobs.

My position is not about whether we need a new tax, a replacement tax or no tax. We live in a dynamic city with changing needs. It is not unreasonable to explore new sources of revenues. However, before we green light a tax measure, we must demand proof that all other cost cutting measures are thoroughly explored and their impacts communicated to the public. We must hold our elected officials fiscally accountable.

Paul Hatfield

(Editor’s note: Paul Hatfield is Treasurer of the NCVV Board and CPA)

### Questionable Lot Size

The property at 11476 Huston was bought by a speculator who applied for permission to split the 90-foot by 130-foot lot into two lots, with a 50 and a 40-foot frontage. The zoning administrator of the city denied that request pointing out repeatedly that a 40-foot lot was not in keeping with the Valley Village neighborhood.

In February 2007, the owner offered the existing house on a 60-foot by 130-foot lot for sale, leaving an empty 30-foot by 130 foot “lot”. Now the owner has applied for a building permit for a 24-foot wide house on a 30-foot lot. The city is not clear on whether this is a legal lot, however, they are allowing the application for a building permit.

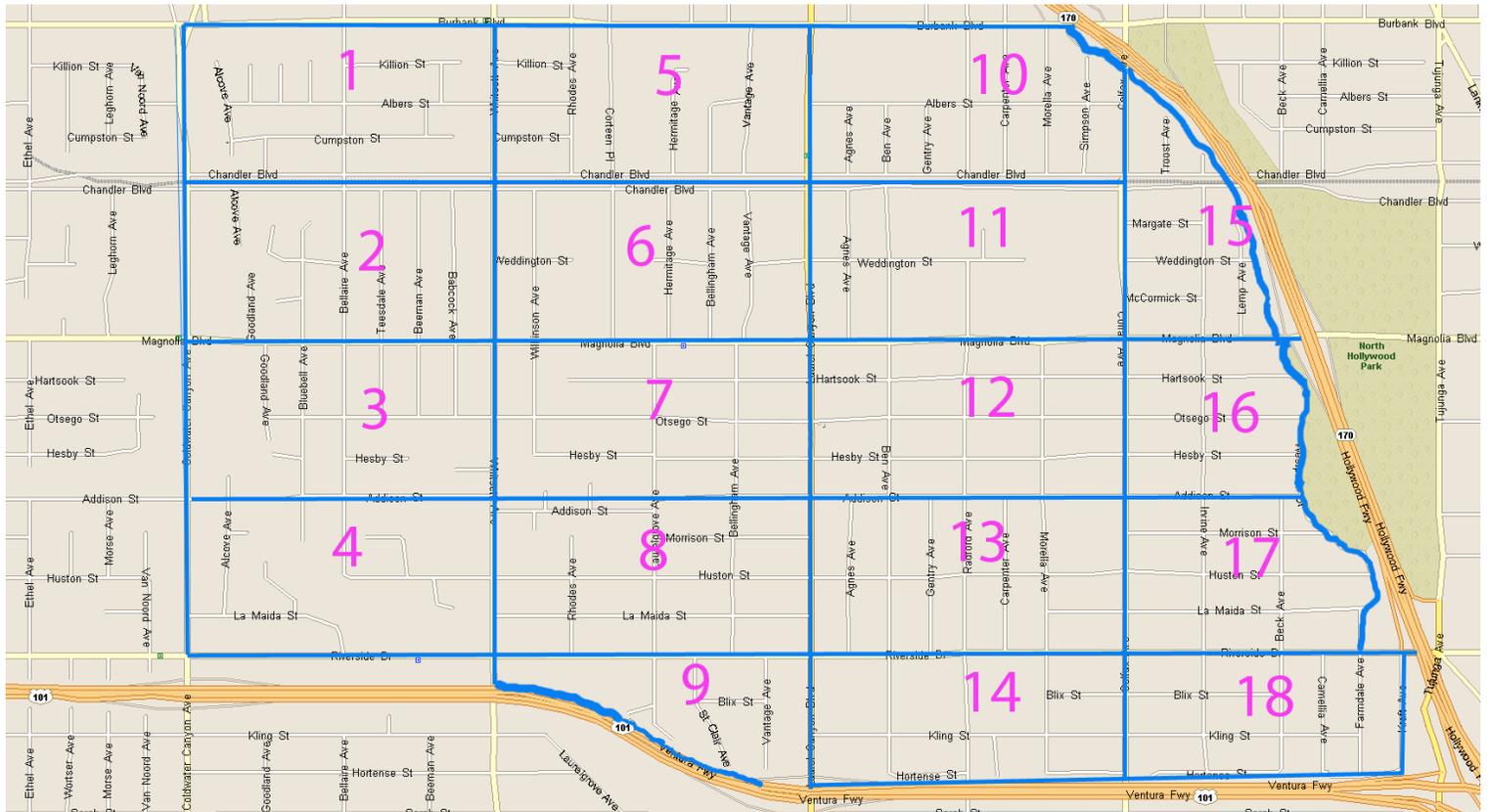
Residents on Huston Street are showing their concern, and Neighborhood Council Valley Village and the Valley Village Homeowners Association have agreed that this issue is a bad precedent for the neighborhood. Letters and phone calls should be made now to: City Planning Department, 201 No. Figueroa St., 4<sup>th</sup> floor Los Angeles, CA 90012, 213-482-7077 or 818-374-5074. Also, contact Councilmember Wendy Greuel’s Office at 818-755-7676.

If you would like to assist the neighbors on Huston Street call me, Lory Oberg at 818-763-3226.

**Letters to the Editor are welcomed. *The Bridge* reserves the right to select and edit letters submitted.**

# REENERGING NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

*by Reiner and Sanchez*



Map of Valley Village showing the 18 Neighborhood Watch Districts

Almost everyone agrees that Neighborhood Watch is a good program. It provides the police department with helpful information about what is going on in the neighborhood. At its best, when well organized with alert residents, it discourages criminal activity. It also serves as an excellent first response system in all kinds of emergencies and natural disasters.

Neighborhood Council Valley Village and the Valley Village Homeowners Association are working together to reenergize the Neighborhood Watch program. We are seeking 18 district representatives (see the map above). Each representative will then act as liaison for the block captains within his or her district and help organize this district into a viable Neighborhood Watch group. We hope that a NW member from each district will attend one of the monthly public meetings for Neighborhood Watch that the Los Angeles Police Department conducts. This way no one person has to attend more than one meeting per year but they would be responsible for informing NW members in their district, via their District Representative, about the crime information discussed. This could easily be accomplished via email. The goal is to create a strong system of communication and pro-active involvement to keep Valley Village safe.

Consider becoming part of Neighborhood Watch.

District Representatives and Block Captains are needed in each district. For information contact:

Neighborhood Council Valley Village: 818-759-8204

Valley Village Homeowners Association: 818-506-5158

## MOTIONS OF INTEREST

*By Tony Braswell*

### September 2007

A condominium project on Ben Avenue was presented for approval by Planning and Land Use. The motion was approved 10-0-1.

A motion was made by Mr. Lautman to recognize women and men in Valley Village who serve in the armed forces of the United States. The motion was amended to encourage schools to participate in this important opportunity to recognize our service personnel, and ask City Council member offices to recognize participating students and schools for their support. The amended motion was approved 11-0-0.

### October 2007

NCVV will send a letter of support endorsing Supervisor Yaroslavsky's position on SB1818. Planning and Land Use presented for approval a request to send a letter of support endorsing Supervisor Yaroslavsky's position on SB1818. The motion was approved 10-0-0.

A motion was forwarded from Planning and Land Use stating that Neighborhood Council Valley Village opposes the development of a 30' lot at 11476 Hesby Street based on the current municipal code that restricts development of any lot of less than 50', and based on precedent this project would set for the rest of Valley Village. The motion was approved 10-0-0.

Neighborhood Council Valley Village approves as presented the project at 5048 Laurel Canyon, with agreed recommendations for landscaping. The motion was approved 10-0-0.

### November 2007

No motions

## ANOTHER FEE TO WATCH

*by Peter Sanchez*

City Councilmember Tom La Bonge of the Fourth District has made a proposal to assess a countywide \$52 per parcel fee to fund mass transportation. The fee (or tax), as proposed, would require support from all cities within Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and voter approval. Councilmember Wendy Greuel (one of Valley Village's councilmembers – District Two) agreed that long-term transit planning is necessary. She added that money and plans have to be in place in order to obtain state and federal funding.

## OBSERVED IN THE VILLAGE

*by Breice Reiner*

Traffic: ► Four way stop signs are proliferating, appearing at many residential intersections.

► Left Turn Arrows are now installed at Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Riverside Drive

► North Hollywood High is getting a traffic signal at Colfax Avenue and Weddington Street to mitigate the congestion as students and cars fill the same space at 3 pm daily.

► Multiple construction projects on Magnolia Boulevard impact traffic for local residents and businesses.

Graffiti: ► Graffiti plagues construction sites and blank walls in Valley Village.

## **NCVV BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**AT LARGE:** Paul Hatfield

**BUSINESS:** Annalisa Engelbach  
Richard Gauthier  
Andrew Sacher

**COMMUNITY ORG.:** David Engelbach

**CULTURAL:** Yacov Freedman

**EDUCATION:** Mona Riss

**FAITH BASED:** Joshua Levy

**HOMEOWNERS:** Dorothy Apple  
Greg O'Connor  
Open

**RENTERS** Tony Braswell  
Suzanne Lewis  
Steven Stokes

**SENIOR ORG.:** Ginny Hatfield

**STUDENT:** Philip Schaeffer

*Editorial Staff: Editor – Breice Reiner  
Publisher – Peter Sanchez  
Proofreader – Stuart Simen*

**Board Meetings are held the fourth  
Wednesday of the Month  
6:30pm to 9:00pm**

**Colfax School Auditorium  
11724 Addison Street**

**The next three meetings are:  
January 23, 2008  
February 27, 2008  
March 26, 2008**



*Connecting Valley Village with City Hall*

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