



WHHO Newsletter

January 2021

Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization
P.O. Box 6368, Woodland Hills, CA 91365 |
www.whho.com

WHHO General Meeting

Tonight, Wednesday January 27,
7:30 PM

**Webinar Virtual Meeting – Register to take
part by going to www.whho.com**

District-3 Councilman Bob Blumenfield

A very important meeting that will cover many of the most pressing issues impacting the Woodland Hills community and the West Valley area. Councilman Blumenfield offers insights and explanations into City, State and LAUSD legislation and programs that could make significant changes to your home, and to your neighborhood and lifestyle.

This Wednesday, 7:30 PM: The State of Our Community— Councilman Bob Blumenfield on the homelessness crisis, LAPD Funding and Topanga Station, neighborhood-destroying State legislation and much more.

This Wednesday, January 27, the WHHO has invited Councilman Bob Blumenfield to deliver his annual “State of the Community” presentation and touch on some of the multiplying issues that could or will

impact your home, your neighborhood, your lifestyle and the entire West Valley.

The WHHO General Meeting Zoom Webinar will start on-line at 7:30 PM, and you can pose questions to be asked by posting them on the WHHO website, or on the Q&A tabs of the Zoom Webinar link once the meeting starts. To gain access to tonight’s WHHO Webinar, simply go to the WHHO website (www.whho.com) and register there. (We suggest that you keep questions short and refrain from adding commentary.)

One of the hottest issues will focus on the homelessness situation in the Valley and his attempts to solve part of the situation by working with a Federal Judge to move individuals in encampments under the 101 Freeway to safer indoor shelters. He’ll also discuss his program that has resulted in purchasing several local motels with 127 rooms that are now being converted to homeless housing, as well as his plans to establish locations for two “Cabin Communities” with 125 Tiny Homes that are due to open later this spring.

Last November, Councilman Blumenfield joined with four other LA City Council members to propose a motion to amend parts of the Municipal Code to make them consistent with various court rulings, which would allow the City Council to designate specific locations near freeways, housing, storage units and other facilities currently illegally occupied by homeless persons, prohibit sitting, sleeping, lying and the storage of personal property on those sites, and moving those people to safer shelters and rooms near that location. He also asked for the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council to support the Community Impact Statement backing this legislation.

That brought an onslaught of protests, picketers and demonstrators from groups supposedly looking out for the rights of homeless, who marched in front of Blumenfield’s home and also disrupted the Neighborhood Council Board meeting as well as several City Council meetings in an effort to let the homeless continue erecting tents and building shelters under over-passes that blocked sidewalks and created unsanitary waste issues. However, the pressure these groups have exerted on several other Council members has resulted in an alternate motion to stop clean-up of all encampments until 800+ beds/rooms can be provided for immediate use.

The WHHO has asked the Councilman to discuss several other projects that address the homelessness issue, including future plans for purchasing additional old hotel properties in his District, bridge housing projects and a safe parking lots program.

Other possible issues are the Re-imagine Public Safety program, Affordable and Workforce housing in new Warner Center projects, protecting our school sites from being sold to or traded with outside developers and being preserved for educational uses only, and possible changes to the Ventura Blvd. / Cahuenga Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan.

Rumors about the LAPD’s Topanga Station being closed or facing cuts are causing concern.

There has been a persistent rumor that the City is planning on eliminating the West Valley’s Topanga Station or significantly cutting staff due to mounting financial concerns over the City’s budget shortfalls and the financial impacts of Covid-19 measures which are drying up significant revenue sources.

CD-3 Councilman Bob Blumenfield has stated that at this time, the rumors are false and that he would do everything in his power to prevent station closures and ensure first responders have the resources to keep communities safe.

The Councilman has three LAPD Stations in his District and recognizes that the West Valley has always seen a shortage of police offices and squad cars due to the LAPD’s staffing needs in more crime-impacted areas of the City, and the increasing cost of pensions and overtime. “I think it’s important to understand what is and isn’t happening with regard to the Police budget and other City Departments budgets,” the Councilman stated and understand how the current economic crisis is affecting every facet of service Los Angeles offers to its residents and businesses.”

While the Councilman stopped short of promising that the LAPD Topanga Station wouldn’t be impacted by possible cuts necessitated by the \$675 million deficit LA faces, he has pledged to fight against suggestions to lay off over 900 LAPD officers. Blumenfield stated, “I’ve asked the City’s Chief Administrative Officer to search for alternative cuts, and to limit even the possibility of layoffs to far fewer officers.”

LAUSD being evasive on future of three of our area school properties. So WHHO files a legal request for documents.

The three imperiled West Valley school sites at the former Oso St. Elementary, Collins St. Elementary and Highlander Elementary are in greater danger than even before as Mark Hovatter, Chief Facilities Executive continues his crusade to classify them as “assets” for sale (or trade) and not protect them for educational purposes only.

“The WHHO has filed a formal request for information under the California Public Records Act,” stated WHHO President John Walker. “We are seeking information and records regarding the demographics study referenced by Mr. Hovatter at the meeting with the Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization, last October 2019, and subsequently referenced at the November 2020 LAUSD board

meeting, during his report on The Employee Housing Initiative.

Walker noted that under their plan to “Realign Resources,” the LAUSD hierarchy has made a determination to declare properties surplus and adopt Resolution of Intent to Sell. Walker pointed out that the LAUSD properties to be impacted are not yet determined for the West Valley, but that an LAUSD chart labeled “Proposed Sites for Potential Employee Housing Developments” shows that the three properties including Oso St. (7.09 acres) Highlander (7.2 acres) and Collins St, (6.56 acres) are the three largest sites for possible development.

It should be pointed out that the LAUSD document does note that “adoption of the proposal does not require that the Board proceed with the sale of the properties”

But Shelly Schwartz, who heads the WHHO’s Education Committee, notes that State laws may allow school districts to bypass some restrictions and possibly “trade” properties with developers. “That means that if the LAUSD thinks other sites are more advantageous for building LAUSD employee housing, they can legally make a trade with a developer who owns that property, and the developer can claim one of the Woodland Hills or West Hills sites to build whatever he envisions.” If Sacramento passes one of the new housing bills making its way through the Legislature, it could mean far greater density (apartments / townhomes/ reduced-size homes) being built in the middle of well-established single family neighborhoods.

“We want to see the thinking that has gone into listing the three West Valley school sites as ‘surplus’ even after we have shown Mr. Hovatter that there will be a need to build new school facilities on those sites due to the thousands of new apartments already being built in the area with thousands more to follow in the near future,” Walker stated. “Plus, many of today’s homeowners have aged in place and will probably be looking to move and down-size out of the area. The LAUSD hierarchy has said that they can

accommodate any surge of new students by plunking a bunch of temporary classroom trailers down on the play areas of some other area schools. At WHHO, we have already looked into the feasibility of doing that and we say ‘NO!’. Communities and neighborhoods deserve ‘REAL SCHOOLS’ and not trailers, and no bussing to outlying areas. The LAUSD’s current thinking devalues the learning environment for future area school children, and diminishes the lifestyles and property values of our neighborhoods.”

Councilman Koretz proposes resolution opposing devastating SB-9 bill, and WHHO supports his efforts.

The dangerous and ill-conceived State Senate Bill SB-9 that would allow “By-right building and lot splits” for residential construction without meeting existing zoning regulations and removing City oversight, is being challenged by a proposition being presented to the LA City Council by Councilman Paul Koretz. The WHHO Board has made a previous determination to oppose such legislation that attempted to remove our local control over zoning and development. As a result, the WHHO Board will likely support Koretz’s measure at the next Board WHHO Board Meeting and a letter urging all LA Council Members to support the resolution should follow that will urge our State Senators and Assemblymen to reject it outright.

The proposed WHHO letter strongly urges the L.A. City Council to lobby the State Legislature against its passage, and states that SB 9 is just a repackaged SB 1120, which crushes single-family zoning in California.

WHHO feels strongly that It is your duty to protect your constituents from such ill-conceived legislation. SB 9 encourages land speculation as the more homes that can be built on a site, the more valuable that site becomes to large land developers.

Rather than adding affordable housing stock, this bill adds more market rate housing and adds significant infrastructure problems on communities. Clearly this bill opens up all of California to a speculation frenzy and blanketing the state with the same one-size-fits-all approach is just wrong.

The proposed WHHO letter further states State Senate Bill 9:

- Eliminates public hearings and public notice and only require administrative, ministerial review;
- Provides ministerial approval of a parcel map of four or fewer parcels;
- Undermines the Subdivision Map Act which now vests the authority to regulate and control the design and improvement of subdivisions by the legislative body of a local agency;
- Overrides local zoning, in effect eliminating single-family zoning in the city and statewide;
- Disregards the zoning limitations that homeowners statewide relied upon when making their home purchase decision;
- Reduces parking requirements and eliminate parking within ½ mile of transit; and
- Does not require that any of the units created be affordable, so fails to address the City’s and the State’s most pressing need for low and very low income housing.

The WHHO believes SB 9 is a State overreach.—it is Sacramento putting Wall Street and the Real Estate Industry in control of our housing policy, which is like putting Philip Morris in charge of our tobacco policy. To solve affordable housing the WHHO believes anti-speculation policies would be a much better approach than development bills disguised as affordable housing bills.

The letter continues, stating that communities across L.A. City and L.A. County lack affordable, subsidized, housing, yet this bill doesn’t solve that problem at all. It is a purely market-rate solution. WE believe this bill is a catalyst to further gentrification as many residents currently facing displacement pressure will not be able to benefit from this trickle-

down housing approach. When you allow for only market rate and luxury housing to be built the surrounding housing cost goes up, not the other way around.

The WHHO believes that out-of town legislators must not be allowed to impose local zoning preferences since they know little about our communities.

In closing, the WHHO thanks Councilmember Koretz for standing up for all renters and homeowners, and working to find workable solutions to housing in our neighborhoods that are justified and verifiable.

Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council Election registration ends February 16.

The Candidate filing period for three (3) of the WHWCNC Area Board seats is now open and ends on Tuesday, February 16. The three Areas to be decided in a May 4 election are Areas #2 (Warner Center area), Area #4 (west of Woodlake/ north of the 101 Freeway), Area #6 (south of the 101/east of Topanga/west of DeSoto), and the At-Large Representative.

The seats that will be open in the three NC Areas are for the Residential representative, the Business Representative and for the Community-based Organization Representative (CBO). The At-Large Representative can qualify from any of those designations, and can live, work or be a member of a CBO anywhere in the Woodland Hills-Warner Center boundaries.

Terms are four years, and to run for an office, you will have to file with EmpowerLA.org/elections. Complete rules and details for filing are listed there. Neighborhood Council Board meetings are held every month and the various NC Committees like Community Outreach, Safety, Education, Governance, Plum and others hold meeting either

once or twice every month. The Neighborhood Council is an advisory organization.

Two major mixed use project being proposed for Fry’s site and Anthem-Blue Cross site in Warner Center,

Two of the largest remaining tracts in Warner Center now have proposals to construct mixed-use projects on them: The District apartments and hotel on the old Fry’s site at 6100 Canoga Ave., and new hotel and remake of the Anthem tower into an up-scale residential apartment building.

The plan for the Fry’s site proposes a 12-story hotel building on Canoga, flanked by the 8-story towers of two massive residential/Work-Live buildings that have sections ranging from the 8-story towers down to 7 and 6-story sections. Overall, there would be 880 Market-Rate apartments and 342 Work/Live units divided between the two residential buildings. There would be a small “bodega” in one of the buildings, but the required commercial space would be left to the Work/Live units.

Overall, the WHWC Neighborhood Council PLUM Committee members requested that the developer of the Fry’s site take a new look at some of the issues discussed by the PLUM members, especially on connectivity, building size and placement, and pedestrian and traffic flow.

The initial concept for the project located on the old Anthem-Blue Cross site consists of a “remake” of the existing Anthem tower into up-scale apartments, plus the construction of a new hotel (approx. 12 stories) and a grocery store. The concept was unveiled at a “courtesy presentation” at the January 21 WHWC Neighborhood Council PLUM meeting and many of the specific details were not revealed at that time. However, it appears that the combined project will take up about 1/3 of the existing Anthem-Blue Cross site, and Anthem will retain the rest of the site to try and sell off additional pieces.

But, the initial artist renderings showed the existing Anthem building with some cosmetic changes to the exterior and the high-rise hotel with a “fanned-out” base structure.

The Anthem site project was shown in rough idea forms and the developer was trying to gauge how the WHWC PLUM Committee thought fit into the 2035 WC Plan and with the community’s needs. The entire presentation was broadcast to the public watching the meeting and a replay should be available through the Woodland Hills Neighborhood Council website.

Re-Imagine Ventura Boulevard is about to start the first leg of its journey to reality.

After a long, arduous 3-year journey with lots of detours and stops, one of the most important transportation routes in the City is about to take the first few steps to getting a new look. Re-imagine Ventura Boulevard is about to commence some of the initial work that has been planned, argued, changed and re-planned by the City, the Specific Plan oversight board, businesses and residents in the section between Shoup and Royer.

According to Jeff Jacobberger, the Legislative Deputy for Council District-3, The City has approved the first series of improvements for the Re-Imagine project. He stated that the overall concept was to give the western-most stretch of Ventura Boulevard more of a “neighborhood” feel by adding parking, slowing speeds, promoting pedestrian ventures, and making the thoroughfare more welcoming and safer.,

Two of the most visible changes will be the elimination of one of the three lanes of traffic in certain areas and re-stripping the parking spaces for angled, tail-in first parking, plus the addition of a new traffic signal at the corner of Royer and Ventura. The new, diagonal parking is projected to add approximately 20 additional spaces in an area that needs additional spaces for shops and restaurants. The traffic light at Royer will help mitigate excessive

speeding at that end of Ventura, and allow pedestrians safe passage across the Boulevard.

Studies conducted for the project showed that neither of the first two changes will add congestion and will add safety. Both DOT and the Fire Department have also approved the changes. A study also noted that slanted/diagonal parking promoted safety since drivers pulling out of the spaces will have a clear vision of on-coming traffic and bicycles.

In the next phases of the Re-imagine plan, new landscaping will be addressed and additional changes to the extremely wide median will be addressed. A number of City Departments have already voiced their objections to raising the curbs of the median and planting the center with shrubs and trees, so alternate solutions are being pursued,

Jacobberger noted that an upgraded crosswalk at Ponce will be added, but he didn't have any specifics if it might be one with flashing yellow crossing lights. He also stated that rubber tire-stops will be added to curbs in areas with angled parking to prevent cars from backing into the curbs and possibly going onto the sidewalk.

Two new members have joined the WHHO Board.

At the last WHHO virtual General Meeting, the WHHO membership voted to add two new members to the Board: Ari Coine and Bobbie Wasserman. Both have been involved in neighborhood and community projects and have dedicated themselves to helping make Woodland Hills an increasingly desirable place to live.

“We are very pleased to add these two, high-energy, resourceful members to our Board,” said WHHO President John Walker. “As many members have seen, the WHHO leadership is getting younger, more involved and even more responsive to the community’s needs and goals.”

The WHHO needs You to be part of us and share your ideas.

The Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization holds forums on critical issues impacting your home, your lifestyle, your neighborhood and this community. We actively lobby City and State decision makers on your behalf. Our in-person meetings are free and open to all and during the pandemic we've made our virtual meetings available to everyone. But, it does cost money to run Zoom meetings during the pandemic and file paperwork on behalf of the community.

So, if you believe that the WHHO is providing a valuable public service in addressing some of the most critical issues impacting you and your neighborhood, and hosting the City and State officials who answer your most pressing questions, then we invite you to step up and become an *official* member of the Woodland Hills Homeowner Organization.

It is only \$25 a year for an *entire household* to belong, and your membership goes helps cover Zoom meeting expenses, as well as for taxes, insurance and other legally required fees. There are no paid positions on the WHHO. So, please become an official WHHO member today. You'll find an Application on our web site, www.whho.com. We look forward to having you part of our family.

WHHO Officers & Directors for 2020:

President: John Walker - (818) 719-9181

Vice-President: Dennis DiBiase

Vice-President: Marty Lipkin

Treasurer: Silvia Anthony Murley

Secretary: Nancy Porter

Board Members at Large:

Armen Hovanessian; Shelly Schwartz; Aaron

Williams; Ari Coine; and Bobbie Wasserman.

Founder Emeritus - Shirley Blessing & Pat Patton

Founder (In Memorium): Gordon Murley

Co-Founder (In Memorium): Herb Madsen

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