



WHHO Newsletter

October, 2021

Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization

P.O. Box 6368, Woodland Hills, CA 91365 |

www.whho.com

WHHO General Meeting

This Wednesday October 27,

7:30 PM:

John Popoch

Deputy Chief of Staff-CD-3

&

Jeff Jacobberger

Legislative Deputy-CD-3

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

The “behind-the-scenes” information on what the Council office is proposing and why, and what you don’t know about what’s going on at City Hall.

The WHHO has invited the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Legislative Deputy of the CD-3 Council office to pull back the curtains and discuss the reasoning for some of the proposals emanating out of the CD-3 office, and to update what’s going on with redistricting and homelessness.

The WHHO’s Webinar meeting begins at 7:30 P.M., and it is critical you register and attend

What’s going on in our Council District that you don’t know--but need to know before it’s too late.

There’s a whole lot going on in City government that you don’t know about—and what you don’t

know could change your home, your lifestyle, your neighborhood and possibly even your bank account. And not necessarily for the better.

That’s why the WHHO has invited two of the key CD-3 deputies for Councilman Bob Blumenfield to pull back the curtains on some of the actions and proposals that they are recommending and changes they are planning for. The WHHO will have CD-3 Deputy Chief of Staff John Popoch and Legislative Deputy Jeff Jacobberger discussing some of the most critical issues that are causing Woodland Hills residents and businesses to pull out their hair when confronting things like the rampant homelessness, the redistricting circus that is slicing and dicing Woodland Hills into three of four new fiefdoms, and the onslaught of housing proposals for the both the homeless and for people with lower-paying jobs.

According to WHHO President John Walker, the discussions Wednesday evening will attempt to pull aside the curtains to let voters see and understand how the sausage is really made.

“There is an awful lot to talk about and a lot of air that needs to be cleared,” Walker stated. He specifically noted that some of the most impactful and potentially harmful issues have only come to a head recently and that the vast majority of LA residents have no idea of the things that are being decided in the next month that will dramatically impact their lives.

He pointed to the City Council redistricting melee that is currently being fought that may have Pierce College and its adjacent neighborhoods being moved out of the CD-3 and moved into another Council

District. “Why?” Walker asked. “We’ll no one is really sure what the real reasons are.” Walker added that there is also a battle going on for “ownership” of Warner Center with two current Council members fighting Blumenfield for control of Woodland Hills’ key commercial, entertainment and residential center.

“I’d say a majority of the people living in our Council District have no idea of some of the inane ideas that are being proposed for carving up Woodland Hills,” Walker continued. “The newspapers and news media have done a lousy job of covering this critical issue, and I think most people would be flabbergasted to hear that some of our area’s key landmarks—and residential neighborhoods—could be traded off and put under the auspices of a different Councilperson who has no idea of the role something like Pierce or Warner Center plays in the makeup of the Woodland Hills area.”

While redistricting for City Council districts may be one of the largest battles being fought, there is also the redistricting for the LAUSD school board seats that is also being adjudicated—and which the LA City Council must also sign off on.

Plus homelessness continues to be a roiling issue and several steps have been taken and numerous proposals have been made to get that under control. “We’re going to see if we can get some clarity from our two guests Wednesday,” Walker said, pointing out that Municipal Code 41.18 and an ordinance introduced by Councilman Blumenfield are still not fully understood by the general public. RV encampments will also be discussed as well as Councilman Blumenfield’s recent proposal to have the City of LA finance ADUs for homeless individuals and Blumenfield’s proposal for a Self-Help and Recovery Exchange (SHARE) collaborative housing project.

The WHHO General Meeting Zoom Webinar will start on-line at 7:30 PM, and to gain access to Wednesday’s WHHO Webinar, simply go to the WHHO website (www.whho.com) and register there.

Questions can be entered on the Q&A feature of Zoom and will be passed on to the guests.

LA City Council Redistricting turns into an epic battle for territories and treasures worthy of 12th Century barons and warlords.

The idea was simple: Every 10 years—using the latest US Census data for population shifts and age, race, and financial concentrations—the boundaries of LA’s 15 City Council Districts would be “adjusted” to assure that each Council District didn’t have too great a concentration of one group or another, and that there would be an overall “balance” and homogeneity to America’s second largest city. Areas and neighborhoods were not supposed to be split up into different Council Districts, and there was supposed to be some sort of congruity between the communities and neighborhoods in each CD.

In fact, the idea was to have an “independent” Committee weigh the Census changes and gather input from the communities, so that all the necessary adjustments could be made fairly, logically and peacefully.

Then, someone had the idea of using political appointees and former elected officials serve as the “independent” Committee members and...Welcome to the European Dark Ages, circa 1253 AD.

Not only did the Redistricting Committee have a massive outreach failure where most meeting were only attended by a handful of the public, but the Committee members chose to ignore virtually all of the adjustments and changes submitted by the public, but instead hired “specialists” to recommend changes—and then promptly ignored most of their offerings.

What they brewed up was instead a map designated as K 2.5 that virtually scrambled every Council District in the Valley, and disenfranchised three

sitting LA City Council members. Their K 2.5 proposal:

Here are just a few of the factors that the Woodland Hill Homeowners Organization believes make map K 2.5 unworkable:

- CD 3 loses Canoga Park, Winnetka, and Reseda, but still keeping Tarzana.
- CD 3 becomes 16.6 miles wide—from the edge of Studio City on the east to Calabasas on the west.
- Warner Center is in 2 Districts and effects 3 different Districts.
- Warner Center alone will gain 10,000 to 20,000 in population in the next 10 years when this CD3 deviation is already almost +12,000 larger than other Districts which dilutes CD 3 votes.
- 75-80% of Ventura Boulevard is in one district affecting the membership of the Ventura/Cahuenga Plan Review Board.
- NCs along Ventura Boulevard have different goals that are split east and west by the 405 Freeway.
- Woodland Hills and Valley Glen/Valley Village have little common economic interests.
- The new CD district (4 or 2) will have minimal interest in Warner Center—yet could have ruinous impacts on it.
- Map splits too many Neighborhood Councils.
- Would make CD 3 spread out and would not serve all citizens well.
- CD3 would lose Pierce College and portions of the neighboring residential areas to the south of it. These areas would now be separated from their neighbors and be in the Council District with Canoga Park neighborhoods more than 2/3 of a mile away.

The good news is, the K 2.5 suggested map was assailed by virtually every San Fernando Valley Councilmember. The bad news is, each

Councilperson could add a hand-selected “champion” to represent their interests, and the K 2.5 proposed map went from awful to something that many have called “moronic.” The Committee member for Paul Kerkorian decided he needed Pierce College and the surrounding neighborhoods moved into his district. Another Council member decided that having a hunk of Warner Center would be nice and tried to carve off a piece for that Council District. And yet another suggestion was to literally split Woodland in half, east to west with the bottom half joining Tarzana, Encino, and Sherman Oaks into a 16.5 mile Council District.

So, where do we currently stand? We don’t. The Redistricting Commission voted 15-6 to accept the “Final Map” that had Piece College moving to another Council District, and then sent it to the full City Council for approval.

But last week, City Council President Nury Martinez publicly trashed the Final Map within hours of the Final Vote on the map boundaries, saying it needs reworking”. She added that there are “drastic changes” to political boundaries that “threaten to widen the divides between communities.”

The draft of the final report is supposed to be available online to the public early in the week. But now it's almost certain the "final map" will be altered at City Hall in the coming weeks, so no one is really sure what will be placed in front of the sitting City Council members (minus Mark Ridley Thomas) for a vote that will cement official City Council Districts for the next 10 years.

LAUSD School Board Districts also being redistricted. But so far, decisions are worse than ever for Woodland Hills schools.

While the LA City Council redistricting battle wages on, the legally required redistricting for the LAUSD School Board has been almost secretive. The focus on adjusting boundaries has been concentrated on LA’s east side where District 2 and District 5 have been

waging a war for territory. The two Districts that cover West Valley schools—District 3 and District 4—have almost been ignored. Especially the requests from hundreds of residents in the Valley to have District 4 (Nick Melvoin) terminate at Mulholland, and have all of the schools south of that in Encino, Tarzana and Woodland Hills be combined in Area 3 (Scott Schmerelson) so that the Valley would have a true West Valley District instead of sharing one with schools in West LA, Pacific Palisades, Hollywood and Brentwood.

But, instead those pleas from parents, teachers and homeowners, have been ignored and the proposed redistricting map has expanded Area 4 to engulf even more Woodland Hills schools. Clean-up of homeless encampments and RV sites begins. But “Whack-A-Mole” continues as encampments and garbage return.

The Corbin underpass. The Ventura Target store. Bowlero. And a half dozen other West Valley sites have been cleared of tents and RVs, the sidewalks and streets power washed and sanitized, trash removed, and “beautified” for what else: the return of the tents, RVs, old mattresses and garbage, etc., etc., etc.

After a halt due to the Covid outbreak, the CARE+ cleanups that Councilman Bob Blumenfield had pushed for finally returned. With the recent passage of the revised 41.18 law, which he co-authored, councilmembers can now make certain eligible streets and sidewalks ‘off limits’ to encampment. Those eligible areas include locations within 500 feet of sensitive use areas like schools and daycares, critical underpasses, and areas that have resulted in documented crime problems. Also, areas within 1000 feet of homeless shelters/housing are eligible.

The CD-3 Council District was able to include all those sites because of the number of available beds and rooms for the homeless at City paid for hotels, shelters and tiny home communities. Once there were enough beds and legitimate shelter sites that could be offered, the cleanup crews could come back and thoroughly clean and disinfect the former

encampment sites. Part of the plan is to make those sites “off-limits” after they are cleaned, but that has not gone into effect yet. That’s why at many of the cleaned locations, the homeless have managed to find their way back and reestablish tents and other shelters.

The main difference between the CARE+ program and the 41.18 ordinance is that with CARE+ clean ups, un-housed people can come back to the area where they were encamped when the area is cleaned. With 41.18 ordinance, once the outreach is conducted and people are given a choice to accept appropriate shelter or move elsewhere, that area becomes off-limits for encampments

In case you missed last meeting:

New Topanga Police Captain Todd Hankel and Senior Lead Office Sean Dinse: “We don’t have a housing problem—we have a drug and mental illness problem.”

At the September WHHO General Meeting, two of the most prominent LAPD officer in the West Valley discussed crime in the Woodland Hills area and then took on the issue of crimes and incidents occurring in and near the large homeless encampments in the area.

Capt. Todd Hankel who recently took over command of the Topanga Division noted that the LAPD is only having “minimal problems with gangs in the area,” but that he and his officers were frustrated with the early release laws that are now in effect which puts many convicted back on the streets almost as soon as they’ve been apprehended for crimes like robbery, breaking and entering, and other offenses. He stated that this is a problem for the judicial system to solve and that the police have to just deal with the existing laws until they get changed.

Senior Lead Officer Sean Dinse agreed and noted that much of the crime in the West Valley was drug related. “I think you can point to the manufacture, sale and use of methamphetamines along with a slew of other man made drugs that are behind many of the problems we are seeing today for thefts, property loss and other crimes,” he stated. Today, these manufactured drugs are so much easier to obtain than cocaine or heroin were just a few years ago.”

Both Captain Hankel and SLO Dinse agreed that mental illness was another significant factor in many of the crimes we are seeing in the area. They noted that there are really no places they can send the mentally ill because most of the long-term facilities were closed down during the Reagan administration. They said that as soon as they take anyone in to be evaluated and treated for mental illness, they are almost immediately released back on the street.

Those observations dovetailed into a discussion about how LAPD is trying to deal with the homeless situation. “To be perfectly honest about this, we actually don’t have a housing problem with these people—we have a drug and mental illness problem,” Captain Hankel emphasized. “The City and numerous social services have found sufficient lodgings and built enough living quarters that the vast majority of the homeless in the West Valley actually have a place to shelter that isn’t in a tent on the sidewalk or in an RV. The problem is, many of these people simply don’t want to take that offer of more permanent housing because they don’t want to have to follow any rules or be responsible for a living site.”

SLO Dinse quickly added that even many of the homeless who they are able to convince to move into a hotel room or use bridge housing, quickly leave the provided housing and move back into tents, RVs, lean-tos, or cars because they want “complete freedom” and want to live where they want to live.

“Most of this is rooted in drug use, and there is also a lot of mental instability that comes into play,” Dinse observed. The truth of the matter is exactly what Captain Hankel said in the first place—Woodland

Hills doesn’t have a housing crisis when it comes to the homeless, we have a drug and mental illness problem. And until the legislators in Sacramento and in the County and City offices accept that fact, then the LAPD has its hands tied and there is very little that we can do to legally rectify the situation. Once the lawmakers start to solve the drug and mental illness problems, then you see the homeless encampments start going away.”

For only \$25 a year-- have a bigger say in what is going on in your neighborhood.

It only costs a little over \$2 a month to enroll your entire household as members of the Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization. That small investment gives you an ear to the issues impacting your community and a bigger say in what you think should be done. To enroll, download an application at whho.com, or fill out an application at one of our community meetings. And now, you can even pay for your membership using Paypal.

WHHO Officers & Directors for 2020:

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Vice-President: Dennis DiBiase - (818) 346-9567

Vice-President: Marty Lipkin - (818) 999-4340

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