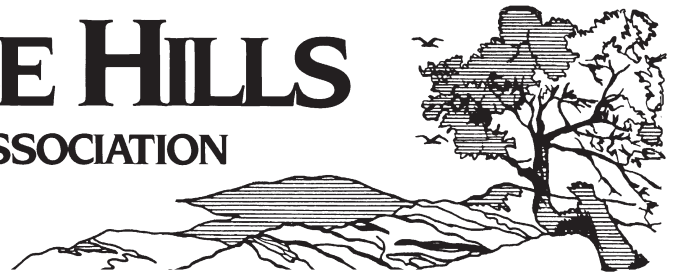


P. O. Box 4913
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TEMPLE HILLS

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



www.lagunatemplehills.com
laguna.thca@gmail.com

Winter 2016
Volume 44, Issue No. 1

ANNUAL MEETING AND PARTY

Tentative date:
Saturday, May 7

*Place to be announced with
details in our next newsletter*



Big excitement on San Remo recently! We had a sudden thunderstorm and our neighbor's tree was hit by lightning. Set it on fire. Fortunately many of us were home, so we could call the Fire Department before it became a major issue. Sound was incredible when it hit. And the flash was indescribable! The other very fortunate thing is that the neighbors had a pine tree that had died some time ago, so was an absolute tinderbox, right by the palm. The good news — they had had it removed. Yikes! Could have been a real disaster. This fire had progressed to the shrubbery below the palm. Very prompt firemen. The photo shows the firemen in the final phases of the incident.
— Anne Stringer

Temple Hills Pathways and Open Space

One of THCA's long-term objectives for the community is to improve pedestrian circulation options and create public open space such as trails and parks. As most residents know, the original subdivision plans for the Temple Hills community set aside public trails and space for a Temple Hills Park. Although the land for these improvements was officially dedicated to the County even before the City existed, the original plans for the subdivision were, to a large extent, ignored by the City over the years after the City inherited the dedicated land from the County.

The need to improve pedestrian circulation and open spaces is now greater than ever since the entire Temple Hills area is now almost fully built out. For example, each year the State ranks California cities on measures of safety. Interestingly, Laguna Beach ranks as the very worst city for our size for pedestrian safety. Not just in the lower 10%, but **absolutely last**. Temple Hills Drive is, of course, a significant part of the pedestrian circulation and safety issue in Laguna Beach.

Regarding open space, there are parts of the Temple Hills community that are over a two-mile round-trip walk to the nearest park, beach, or school playground. Most cities in the state, including the cities immediately adjoining Laguna Beach, would consider that completely unacceptable. Interestingly, the City allowed the land dedicated as the Temple Hills Park to slip into private hands decades ago by not exerting the legal dedication made on that public open space. It was a big step in the wrong direction.

Toni Iseman remarked at the October City Council meeting that in all her years in Laguna and on the Council she had never witnessed the outflow of letters, more than a hundred of them, favoring retaining of our historical network of pathways. Thank you, Temple Hills supporters, for your good efforts!

If we are going to have a pedestrian-friendly city with common open-space to enjoy, then we need pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with neighborhood parks. Pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and parks is something that our elected representatives must set as a priority, or it won't happen. We will continue to have a community that is only accessible by cars, and have our children and adult walkers try to compete with the cars on the streets since there is no place for them to walk, play, and gather.

THCA's stand is that we start this process by having the City join with the community to study the needs of pedestrian circulation and open space in this community. Together, we then develop a plan by finding new or better pedestrian routes, or adjusting existing routes as needed and find open space to create a neighborhood park.

SUMMARY OF WHERE WE ARE

Earlier this year, neighbors to one of the public right-of-ways in Temple hills petitioned the city to abandon the right-of-way so they can increase their own lot sizes. THCA opposed this action as yet another step in the wrong direction.

In October, our City Council officially abandoned land that was dedicated to the City as a pedestrian walkway. The vote was 3 to 1. Kelly Boyd had to recuse himself since he lives next to walkway path that was abandoned. Tony Iseman voted to keep the pathway while the other council people supported abandoning it. We have always been encouraged by Councilperson Iseman's concerns and support for the concept of improving the communities throughout Laguna.

During the City Council hearing, the majority of speakers opposed abandonment. The City Council heard from Temple Hills residents, former City planning commissioners, and leaders from other organizations throughout town. One City Councilperson noted that this issue created more interest and more emails opposing abandonment than any other City Council issue in recent history.

GOING FORWARD

In addition to the strong support from Toni Iseman, Rob Zur Schmiede, Steve

(Continued on page 3.)

Downtown Specific Plan Review Continues

Development of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) began in 1985 to address concerns of residents that the area was rapidly changing with fast-turnover, tourist-oriented businesses replacing resident-serving businesses. The fear was that the Downtown was becoming homogenized and thus losing the charm and character that separates it from typical downtowns in the rest of Orange County.

The original work on developing the DSP was done by a citizens' advisory committee consisting of members from many of the local community groups. The committee submitted their final recommendations to the Planning Commission in 1988. The Commission submitted their revised version to the City Council one year later. The DSP was formally adopted by the City Council in 1989.

The DSP has been amended several times to reflect changing economic conditions and to clarify definitions, rules and conditions. The last amendment was in 2008.

In 2012, the Planning Commission began a comprehensive review of the DSP to determine if revisions were needed. A series of public workshops was held to discuss the various aspects of the DSP. In 2013, the Commission asked the City Council to hire a consultant to assist in updating the Plan by providing recommendations on economic and aesthetic concerns. The Council concurred and the City issued a request for proposals to interested planning firms. The list of responding firms was narrowed to three and in early 2014 the firm of MIG was hired.

MIG began work on recommendations in July 2014. The original intent was for a 15-month project with the final report due by mid-September 2015. In February 2015, the City Council extended the time period by asking for designs on demonstration projects, including the addition of parklets on Forest and Ocean. The current expected completion date is late March 2016.

MIG has held several public meetings and workshops. Key findings and recommendations were made at two joint City Council – Planning Commission study sessions held in August and December. The initial meeting was to summarize key findings and preliminary recommendation for discussion; the second meeting was focused on economic analyses and recommendations.

Many of the preliminary recommendations at the August meeting involved maintaining existing policies, including acknowledgment that the Downtown has many positive features that other cities admire. Recommended modifications were stated to be those to enhance the existing character. Those recommendations that seemed to gather support from the Council, Commission, and community members included: enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access, enhancing alleyways, adding *(Continued on page 4.)*

Our May 16, 2015, Annual Meeting and Party



Councilmember Toni Iseman and chair Becky Jones in background at our annual meeting

Ginger and Bruce Virga at the San Remo Bloc Party last spring



Annual party at the Andersons. Great food and all enjoyed. Thank you Judy Anderson!



Annual meeting May 16, 2015



The CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT / DESIGN REVIEW BOARD will hold a public hearing in the City Council Chambers, located in City Hall at 505 Forest Avenue to consider **DESIGN REVIEW 15-2544, COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 15-2238 AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** for the:

**Temple Hills Drive Sidewalk from Dunning Drive to Palm Drive
1217-1737 Temple Hills Drive**

SAID PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD: **Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. NO FURTHER PUBLIC NOTICE WILL BE GIVEN.**

Project Description: The Public Works Department requests design review and a coastal development permit to construct new sidewalk improvements in the R-1 (Residential Low Density) zone. Design review is required for sidewalks, curbs and grading within the public right-of-way.



TEMPLE HILLS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Steering Committee 2015-2016

- Judith Anderson..... Social
- Steve Baker..... Group 1
- Bob Borthwick*..... Planning
- Fran Chilcote*..... Secretary and Membership
- Ron Chilcote*..... Coordinator and Newsletter
- Jamie and Stephen Crawford School Issues
- Dennis Eastman..... Undergrounding
- Anne Frank*..... Newsletter/Archive/Group 6
- Scott Herdman..... Group 2
- Ron Hirsch..... Neighborhood projects
- Becky Jones... Planning & Neighborhood Groups
- Charlotte Masarik..... Village Issues
- Carol Nilson*..... Transportation
- Carol Olson Walkways
- Patti Oshlund..... Group 5
- David Raber*..... Website & Group 4
- Verna Rollinger*..... City Affairs
- Lorna Shaw*..... Membership and Group 2
- Anne Stringer*..... Treasurer and Membership
- Dave and Joanne Trotter Groups 3 & 4
- Dave Walker Undergrounding and Traffic
- John Walker Group 5
- Robin Walker Design Review and Party Com

*Board Members

Honorary Members

Recognized for long-term service and commitment to Temple Hills

- Joe Baker
- Jan Hall
- Jim Hall
- Doug and Rhonda Kim
- Ben Teschner
- Mary Lou Teschner
- Kurt Topik
- Estelle Warner
- Grant Wetzel
- Marian Whitney

Neighborhood Groups

Temple Hills is broken into six neighborhood areas. Group Leaders focus on issues and problems if and when they occur.

Temple Hills Pathways and Open Space, continued from page 1

Dicterow, and Bob Whalen indicated support for putting City focus and attention on THCA concern about pedestrian circulation, public open space, and safety in Temple Hills. As part of the abandonment motion, Toni and Rob agreed to sponsor a task force of citizens who want to work on these goals.

In that sense, we have a significant opportunity here to improve our community that we might not otherwise have, or ever have again in the future. There are, of course, no guarantees that anything will ever come of this, but right now we are optimistic that this will finally lead to turning the corner on improving pedestrian circulation and open space in the community. It may be the best opportunity we ever have to help improve the area where we live and that we love.

JOINING IN THE NEXT PHASE

We owe it to ourselves and to the City Council sponsors of this effort to meet, discuss, research, prioritize, and make an effort to establish a consensus for the plans we propose for Temple Hills. If you have input and suggestions that would be helpful, please contact THCA at laguna.thca@gmail.com. — David Raber ☺

What you can do to help THCA

Let us know who your new neighbors are so that we can include them in our mailing. Even though every house should get a newsletter, often it is addressed to the old owner and “resident.” We would like to be more friendly by addressing it to the new owner. The City is unable to provide us these records in a timely manner so hearing from you would help us out.

The THCA newsletter is always happy to receive news and photos that might be of interest to the community.

Please contact THCA at laguna.thca@gmail.com. ☺

Come Join Us!

The Temple Hills Community Association, since our founding in 1972, has worked to improve the quality of life on our streets and in our neighborhoods, to help neighbors get to know one another, to help them interact with the City when property issues and neighborhood concerns arise, and to join together to address the bigger issues that affect us as a community.

Over the years, working together as a community,

- we've prevented Temple Hills Drive from becoming a major regional thoroughfare joining with major streets in Aliso Viejo,
- encouraged the acquisition of hillside open space and the establishment of mini-parks,
- worked to facilitate safe pedestrian options,
- fought out-of-scale development and subdivisions,
- facilitated undergrounding in those areas of the hill where a majority of residents approved
- provided a community voice to the City
- fostered a tradition of great neighborhood parties.

Are there any problems in your neighborhood? We'd like to know. What are your interests? Would you like to become more involved? There are opportunities on the Steering Committee and the Neighborhood Groups.

Come join with us.

THCA Membership for 2016

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Dues 2016 (\$20 per household) = \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

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Downtown, continued from page 2

wayfinding signage, and improving transit.

Several of the preliminary recommendations were not as well received, including: moving the library to another site (to be determined later) and converting the space to a park, replace the gas station on the south corner of Broadway and Coast Highway with a mixed-use development, building an underground parking structure in the residential area between Cliff and Lower Cliff Drive, adding more retail uses to Ocean Avenue, and converting Ocean Avenue back to a two-way street for the entire length. Of note was that, except for the mention of the gas station, no other recommendations were made to possible improvement to Coast Highway.

The second joint session also had some recommendations on which there was board agreement and others that caused considerable concern, particularly among the community members in attendance. Areas of agreement included: adding incentives to encourage resident-serving businesses, developing a building maintenance ordinance, and simplifying the permitting process.

The most controversial recommendation was the suggestion to add “alcohol + one” uses, basically a business that could serve beer and wine in addition to another use. Several speakers commented that there are sufficient alcohol-serving businesses in the Downtown and more are not needed.

A general concern was with recommendations that

suggested changing existing policies without delineating the extent of those changes. For example, modifications to the policies on formula-based businesses, controlling the mix of food and retail businesses, controlling noise, and controlling entertainment were suggested, but no details were given on what the new policies would entail.

A broader concern was with the scope of the presentation. The focus of the presentation was almost entirely on two streets, Forest and Ocean Avenues. Left out of this retail economic analysis were Coast Highway and Broadway. This omission is troubling since both of these streets provide the entrances to the Downtown and their success is vital to the rest of the area. Of particular interest are the futures of the Central Bluffs (the businesses on the ocean side of Coast Highway between the Hotel Laguna and Legion) and the Arts District (the area between the intersection of Broadway and Forest up to the Boys and Girls Club). Both of these areas are likely to see significant development opportunities in the near future and need to be considered.

As the two joint study sessions have shown, citizen participation is critical in ensuring that all aspects of all recommendations are fully vetted. At this point, the MIG consultants still do not seem to have a full understanding of the fabric of our city; we all need to be involved to ensure that our Downtown retains its village character and serves residents as well as tourists.

The next joint City Council – Planning Commission

study session will focus on parking and is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27, at City Hall at 6 p.m. For more information, check out the city website at http://www.lagunabeachcity.net/cityhall/cd/planning/mjrplanginitv/downtown_specific_plan_amendment/default.htm.

— Norm Grossman

[For many years Norm Grossman served as a Planning Commissioner for Laguna Beach. We appreciate his assessment of the review of the downtown specific plan, of interest to us in Temple Hills.] ♡

Gains and Losses

The THCA made a big gain this year with Anne Stringer joining its ranks and becoming its new treasurer and taking on the job of keeping track of the address records for the newsletter. We were so happy to have her join us. Unfortunately, Anne experienced a great loss when her partner Rick Haney passed away December first of a massive heart attack. They had just recently returned from a happy vacation in Europe, visiting friends who also reside in our Temple Hills neighborhood. Thank you friends for being such good neighbors!

I always looked forward to seeing Anne and Rick at the Saturday farmer’s market, and now that opportunity is gone. As will others who knew him, we mourn his loss.

— Fran Chilcote ♡