

TEMPLE HILLS

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Fall 2007
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P. O. Box 4913
Laguna Beach
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www.thca.info

Thank You Temple Hills!

Many thanks to all of you who came to the fabulous party and annual meeting. It was the best ever, due to the organized effort especially of Rhonda Kinn. We appreciated the opportunity to be in the fabulous home of Kirk and Mary Kate who so graciously hosted. The food was delicious, so too the drink. And the meeting was interesting and covered many things, with Mayor Toni Iseman presenting some new ideas that caught our interest. We were also honored with the presence of Mayor Pro Tem Jane Egly and Betsy Jenkins of the School Board.

Thanks to Doug who cooked the salmon, to Jim who chaired the meeting, Fran, Joe, Dave and Richard who presented brief reports, and Becky who addressed a planning question; to Fran and Barbara, Verna, and Lorna at the table, Mary Lou for the coffee; and to all the others who participated and helped out with desserts and wine. We covered our expenses with dues and party donations of close to a couple thousand dollars, and our dues-paying membership is approaching 200 homes.

We are grateful to Elaine Merz who will take over the treasurer's position, relieving Fran of the heavy load she has carried since Fritz left us for a job in Atlanta. Chris Reed would like to work with us in removal of invasive plants such as pampa grass. Pat O'Brien promises to rejoin us in the near future. Robin Pierson will write profiles of interesting Temple Hills people for the newsletter. Carolyn Wright is ready (with Dorothea) to renew the pathways project. Please let us know of others who would be willing to volunteer.

There is renewed energy and a move forward to reach the goals we set earlier in the year. Please let us know if you want to help us. ♻️

Local Merchants Pitch In

Olive's is an "Oil & Vinegar Tasting Gallery" featured in Stylistic Intervention, located at 381 Forest Avenue. Bob and Julie Brawner are the owners who so generously donated the delicious olive oil and vinegar we enjoyed at our THCA annual party. The store just recently opened, and I understand everyone is really loving it.

A big "Thanks" to Sid and Claire Fanarof, owners of Z Pizza in South Laguna. Unfortunately, Sid and Claire weren't able to attend the party; however, they donated two of the biggest and most delicious appetizer pizzas. If you missed out (they went soooooo quickly), I suggest you try Z Pizza next time you have that pizza craving. You will be delighted you did.

And appreciation to Linda Pix, owner of Stems Fabulous Flowers in Laguna, who generously discounted a beautiful arrangement of fall flowers to dress the table for our party. One of our neighbors, Kathy DeLangis, contributed to the flowers and delivered them to the Saunders's home.

— Rhonda Kinn



Fran Chilcote and new treasurer, Elaine Merz, and Steve Merz



Lorna Shaw and Verna Rollingar



Party scene in beautiful Saunders home • Kirk and Mary Kate Saunders, Debbie and Jeff Mulligan • Doug and Rhonda Kinn, Party Coordinator

Annual Meeting Report 2006-2007

The Annual Meeting on October 28, 2006, was attended by some 80 residents, followed by a very successful party with dinner and refreshments organized by Rhonda Kinn with Doug Kinn, Barbara Rathbun, Fran Chilcote and many others. Approximately 140 persons attended this event.

The forum at City Hall on October 16, 2006, was a success with attendance of more than 60 persons and a healthy discussion of issues affecting Temple Hills and Top of the World. Our questions were published in the last issue of this newsletter, and many of them were dealt with during the session by the four candidates for City Council: Kelly Boyd, Toni Iseman, Elisabeth Pearson-Schneider and Verna Rollinger. Temple Hills author and activist, Marion Jacobs, moderated the session. Dave and Jackie Walker organized refreshments. The forum was jointly sponsored by THCA and the Top of the World Neighborhood Association.

School Board members appeared at the end of the forum and submitted answers to THCA questions that appeared on our web site and in our newsletter.

The Steering Committee met on January 13, 2007, and reappointed as officers: president (Ron Chilcote), secretary (Fran Chilcote) and treasurer (Fritz Knauss); approved a Financial Report and Budget presented by Rich Linting (published in the winter-spring 2007 newsletter); approved a budget of \$1500 for the Annual Party and Annual Meeting for late September or early October 2007 (organized by Rhonda Kinn with others to be at the home of the Saunders on Rim Rock Canyon Drive).

Also reviewed and approved was a Land Use Priorities Report to focus on:

- Saving Rimrock Canyon, including a proposed large home off Temple Hills and near the water tank, potential large home at lower part of the canyon extending from Cerritos to Morningside, Juarez properties and our failed efforts to purchase through a conservation buyer
- Saving some or all of the lesser slope and open space above Park Canyon (complements the Betty Heckel Greenbelt Preserve on the north side) with an EIR for the Pike property project of three homes now before the Planning Commission
- Being attentive to a project at the end of Canyon View down to lower Temple Hills below.

- Continue work on traditional Pathways through the hill
- Seek to implement Temple Hills Drive pathway from upper water tank down to the walkway at the sharp bend
- Pursue a mini-park at the Water District property next to the Catholic church and opening up a path there or reopening the now closed path through the Catholic church along the fence
- Be aware of general land use issues & ordinance revisions
- Outside Temple Hills: Be vigilant about Big Bend in the canyon and the Village Entrance Project.

The Steering Committee reviewed Neighborhood Concerns and Priorities (based on meetings with group chairs):

1. Parking adjustments on side streets, especially on Terrace Way
2. Slow down traffic on side streets, use speed bumps, especially on lower Temple Hills
3. Lower speed limits on upper Temple Hills Drive, 15 miles per hour but no more than 25
4. Walkway along Temple Hills, above water tank to sharp turn and sidewalk
5. Secure open space above Park Avenue and in Rimrock Canyon
6. Walking trail through Rimrock if open space is secured
7. Explore Neighborhood Watch (assess what exists and determine needs)
8. Continue outreach to neighbors
9. Water tank mini-park and walk-through path by Catholic church
10. Finish undergrounding utilities on Temple Hills above San Remo.

The Steering Committee also noted the need to update and maintain the web site (www.thca.info). It approved the following schedule for the newsletter: Winter-Spring (February); Summer (September); Fall (November). It encouraged and approved Joe Baker's initiative to establish an emergency evacuation plan for Temple Hills. The first step is to find block captains for each street in coordination with the neighborhood groups and coordinators.

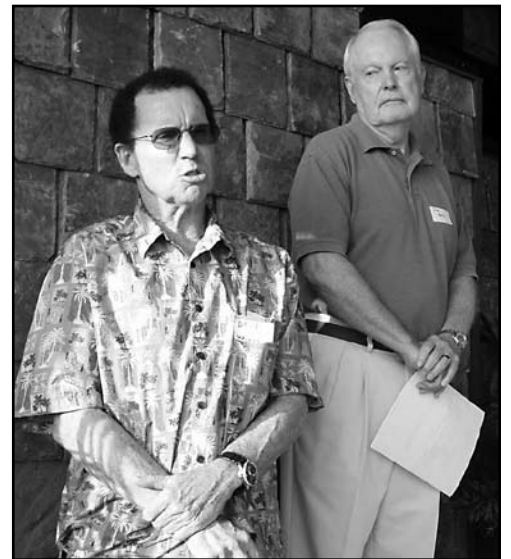
The committee met on May 13 at the Saunders as means of planning for the Annual Meeting and Party.

— The Steering Committee September 29, 2007

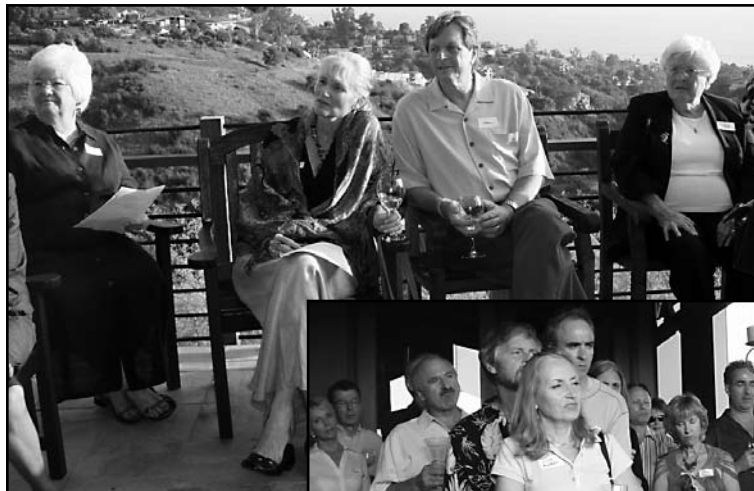
Treasurer's Report September 2007

THCA would like to thank Rich Linting who has served as treasurer over the past couple years. Our new treasurer in the spring of 2007, Fritz Knauss, almost immediately left Laguna and took a new job in Atlanta. I have served in the interim, but we now have a new treasurer, Elaine Merz. What follows is what has transpired since January first of this year: set up new account at Wells Fargo May 31 with Fran and Fritz as signatories and transferred \$4612.73 from U.S. Bank.

INCOME	
Dues.....	\$3865
Interest (June 1-Aug 31)	19
Party.....	<u>1930</u>
Total.....	\$5814
EXPENSES	
Graphics.....	\$280
Postage.....	932
Printing.....	896
Party.....	1662
Other.....	<u>224</u>
TOTAL	\$3994
Assets in Wells Fargo accounts as of	
September 26, 2007.....	\$5661.41
— Fran Chilcote	



Dave Walker and Chair Jim Hall at Annual Meeting



Becky Jones, Carol Olson, Neil Olson. Ruth Wetzel



Ben Teschner and others at Annual Meeting



Mayor Pro Tem Jane Egly and Judge Paul Egly

Pike Subdivision end of Thurston Drive

Conflicts Between the EIR and City Policies

The THCA Steering Committee has reviewed and unanimously approved the following statement below and has written to the Planning Commission as follows:

On behalf of the THCA Steering Committee, we write to express our deep concerns regarding our suggestions for what appear to be important but minor revisions of the EIR. We were disappointed at the meeting of October 3 by your apparent inattention to the careful analysis presented to you. The recommendations have been circulated to our full committee, which has unanimously reviewed and approved them and strongly recommends that at your hearing on November 7 you review each of them and consider their incorporation or revisions in the final EIR. Our community desires an accurate and fully useful EIR. We appreciate and respect the important work that you do, and we encourage you to look closely one more time and ensure that your decisions on this project will be based on a truly reliable and final EIR.

SUGGESTED REVISIONS

The EIR for 1770 Thurston Drive should not be certified until the issues discussed below are resolved.

Cumulative Impacts: The projects used to analyze the project's cumulative impacts are inappropriate choices. A better choice would be to look at hillside projects elsewhere in the City to see the cumulative effects on hillside area topography, habitats and resources. Also, the EIR should consider the impact on other dead-end streets in the City should the requested variance be granted.

Aesthetics: The assumption still remains that, based on an analysis of what has been built in other RH/P zones, the applicant has a right to build 4,000- to 8,000-sq.-ft. structures. The analysis on which this assumption is based may well be way off the mark since Thurston is largely in-fill development in a neighborhood of moderately sized homes, and the City is moving toward scaling back the size of new construction. As written, the EIR becomes an argument supporting Deign Review approval of 4,000- to 8,000-sq.-ft. houses. The Aesthetics section should include an entry reading: "All future residences proposed on the project site will be subject to discretionary approvals in regard to style, height, size and location within the individual lots and may require sight-line analysis from existing structures as part of the review process." The EIR makes the assumption that the construction of three large homes will have no effect on existing ocean views although no sight-line analysis from inside existing residences has been completed. It further concludes that such construction will blend into the neighborhood. Both assumptions should be reconsidered. The EIR's conclusion that development of the project would have a less-than-significant aesthetic impact cannot be justified without sight-line analysis from existing residences that overlook the project. It is absurd to assume that three new 8000-sq.-ft. residences built in close proximity to one another in a neighborhood of 1,800-sq.-ft. homes will have no visual impact!

Land Use and Planning: The EIR needs to reconsider the conclusion that the grading for the cul-de-sac and road extension meets RHP zoning requirements that structures be consistent with the underlying land form and requires that grading be minimized; 4,500 cubic yards of export and 360 feet of five-foot-high retaining walls is not consistent with the zone's provision that "Development proposals should minimize grading of hillside areas by encouraging designs which follow the natural grade while maintaining a building mass and scale that is sensitive to topography." The 360 feet of five-foot-high retaining walls result from the project's inconsistency with the zone's requirement that "Buildings and other improvements should be located on slopes of less than thirty percent." The intent of the policy is that the design of the project should minimize grading; the design of this project, which locates construction on 45% or greater slopes, does not meet this criterion.

Although the EIR establishes that the City use a method for determining the density yield of hillsides, it is obvious from all our concerns that a maximum density of three homes is excessive and at best only one home close in to the end of Thurston Drive is possible.

The EIR is incorrect when it asserts that the development is consistent with various open-space policies; serious conflicts with these policies remain unsatisfied: Open Space Policy 7K states, "Preserve as much as possible the natural character of the landscape (including coastal bluffs, hillsides and ridgelines)... to minimize impacts on soil mantle, vegetation cover, water resources..." The development as proposed does not concentrate construction and grading on slopes of 30 percent or less and so is not consistent with Open Space 14A. Further, there is no analysis as to whether the lots and/or the building sites can be accessed by 10-percent-or-less driveways without excessive grading. The design of the proposed project with 4,500 cubic yards of export and 360 feet of retaining walls is not consistent with Open Space policy 14F.

This policy also requires new construction and grading to be located in close proximity to preexisting development. The intent is to maximize the integrity of any open space that remains after development occurs; in order to preserve valuable habitat and water course areas as well as steep hillside slopes, the proposed building sites themselves should be located as close as possible to already developed areas (existing development on Thurston Drive and Temple Hills Drive) rather than being spread across the property as the subdivision request proposes.

Land Use Element Policy 10C discourages the approval of subdivisions that do not conform to design and zoning standard, and it discourages approval of any subdivision that proposed construction and grading on 45% slopes didn't locate the lots in close proximity to existing development, or intruded into a water course.

Thurston as Fire Lane and Fire Access: As argued by attorney Tim Carlyle, Thurston Drive is significantly impacted by a combination substandard roadway width and neighborhood parking on Thurston Drive that already prevents and will continue to prevent emergency vehicles from providing fire-protection services to the existing homes and the three additional proposed residential lots) and its nonconformance to the City General Plan Safety Element Policies IJ, IK and 1M. The EIR relies heavily on mitigation measures without consideration regarding the feasibility of such measures. Specifically, throughout the EIR, reliance is made upon the applicant being in the process of securing ownership of Thurston Drive. However, we are aware that the applicant is unable to purchase this easement and that it is not now for sale. It is further assumed that ownership of the street by the applicant will permit the elimination of parking on the street and thereby conform the street to City access standards regarding width and grade. We believe that the EIR should take into account the fact that Thurston Drive residents have been parking on Thurston Drive for a great period of time (the easement deed was recorded in 1949) and that such use over a period of time (in excess of five years) gives rise to substantial rights in the users. In short, the applicant's (or current owner's) unilateral right to now restrict such historic parking use is very unlikely. Thus the EIR fails to adequately address the feasibility of mitigation measures and should be revised accordingly 🐾

ATTENTION!

The Planning Commission will hold a hearing on **Wednesday, Nov. 7, 7 p.m.** to do a final review of the Environmental Impact Report on the Pike Subdivision (1770 Thurston Drive). If approved, the business will turn to the track map itself. This is a very important meeting for those concerned about this project. Please plan to attend.

Problems in the 1770 Thurston Subdivision

Slope Steepness: Grading will enhance the danger of slides. Existing uphill houses would be at added risk when the proposed lots are developed and residential landscaping watering/over-watering issues come into play.

Geology and Soils: Slippage of the earth is of great concern. The EIR states that rock and soil creep is already occurring. Clay is not stable. Disturbing natural states can promote land problems. The EIR notes a high to very high risk of erosion. It speaks of bedrock creep. One new home adjacent to the Pike property needed excavation down 60 feet before stable bedrock was found. The associated soil removal and re-compaction process took months to finish and involved much heavy equipment, noise and vibrations. The EIR mentions updated Geological Survey data that now includes a San Joaquin Hills blind thrust fault with associated significant magnitude earthquake probabilities. Who would be legally liable should the land slide? Would it be the City? Would it be the owner of Thurston Drive? Would it be the contractors who would build the proposed houses? Would it be the owners of the built homes? And where is the recent data to justify the geological analysis—the City has been unable to reveal it to me?

Impact on Open Space: The discussion does not sufficiently speak to the significance of the change this project would have on those of us living above the current open-space area. The proposed paved road and associated HUGE houses DO NOT fit into the neighborhood we moved into and have enjoyed, DO NOT fit into the Laguna that attracted us all. The two-story, up to 8000-square-foot structures are not in line with the much smaller, more modest, mostly one-story homes of our neighborhood. The DEIR also refers to a "Pre-existing dirt road." This "road" was only created relatively recently. It did not exist when my children were growing up! It came into being when the owner of the property bulldozed it without a permit. The City red-tagged that construction at that time and asked that the land be restored to its natural slope. It is only in the last year or so that the owner had someone hand dig most of it so as to show it as a road. Later, when seismic work was done, it was bulldozed in a few hundred feet from Thurston to allow entry for a large truck used in that work. This is no ROAD in any real sense! — Lorna Shaw 🐾

Wildlife Considerations

One of the most important impacts this development will have is the loss of the wildlife that takes its sustenance from this land. Many neighbors are unaware of the amount of wildlife in this area because they do not look directly down or into the property as we do; others who are not around in the early morning and late evening are also unaware. There is not a day that passes when we do not see a variety of small and large birds. The land in question is a favorite area for red-tail hawk that hunt small prey in the field (the field refers to the open acreage between Thurston Drive and the houses on San Remo). Hardly a day passes that we do not see a red-tail hawk (often trailed by what I assume is a raven). We also have kestrel that light on our pine tree (flocking it) and that

Wildlife, continued from page 3

hunt the field as well. We used to have owls, and often they would light on our roof; they also feed in the field below. Since the building of a large home at 2014 Donna Drive adjacent to the Thurston Drive project, we have not seen the owls but perhaps a few remain. On occasion there have been flocks of pigeons that settle in the field and then take flight in a beautiful winged formation; their presence also has been diminished. We have many deer in the area that nestle in the wash and at the foot of our yard (where some have been raised). In the springtime they come to feed on the green shoots and may be seen in the early morning and at dusk. In recent years we have seen as many as eight in one group. I enclose a picture taken in June. Frequently at night we hear the howl of coyotes. While temporarily residing in our house in the '90s, our biologist friend, Robert House, told us of bobcat that he saw stalking through the field. I have never studied these birds and animals, but they are native to this area and as more land becomes developed, they are pushed aside. I assume many of these animals are territorial, so I hate to think what happens when their territory is disturbed or eliminated. Three houses spread out over the field will protect nothing. More land needs to be dedicated to wildlife. This field may not be considered a "wildlife" corridor, but I would like to suggest that it might be a wildlife destination during certain times of the year.

I have perused the Draft Environmental Impact Report, and I would wish that more attention were given to habitat loss due to grading and fuel modification.

The contour of this field, with the proposed development of homes, will change the natural pattern of the land, and many of the view corridors significant to neighbors will be impacted as well. The beautiful natural funnel shape (or "V" slope) of the land will be changed, all the animals and birds will be impacted, probably to never return or, if they do, it will be in significantly reduced numbers, and most of what is natural to the area will be eliminated. It is sad to think all that is possible.

Of this land I would also like to express how lovely it is to look at from the area around Heisler Park and the coastline

around Main Beach. In the spring, when the mustard grows tall, it is a glorious view, and to suggest that the project "would have a less-than-significant aesthetic impact" is just short sighted. Those who are able to see and enjoy the beauty in the hills beyond our lovely coastline will be the losers.

— Fran Chilcote

Mansion Off Temple Hills Drive

Concern has been expressed by neighbors over a massive home planned through an easement off Temple Hills Drive. THCA opposed the project on the basis of its size and unstable geology. The City Council approved it, but added conditions and required a redesign of the driveway so that the development would not use a driveway at 1969 Temple Hills nor would it have access to presently undevelopable lands beyond in Rimrock Canyon. The developer's appeal of these conditions was denied by the Council on a 5-0 vote.

Invasive Pampas Grass

At first sight, the feathery spears of pampas grass give it considerable appeal as an attractive shrub. But once you know how invasive it can become, how it crowds out native plants, you will come to realize how important it is to remove it wherever possible. It is highly ranked on the County's list of undesirable invasive plants. It was planted around some of the water reservoirs of Temple Hills Drive and is now spreading down Rimrock Canyon. The problem is controllable if action is taken now. Otherwise, in 20 years it will be the dominant plant in the canyon -- just like it became in the Back Bay of Newport Beach. I would like to lead an eradication effort. Does anyone know if the City has ever faced this problem? Please contact me at chris.reed@ucr.edu with Pampas Grass in the subject line if you can help.

— Chris Reed

THCA 2008 MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Membership in the Temple Hills Community Association is Laguna's best bargain! Annual dues are \$20 per household (any lesser or greater amount is appreciated). Newsletters are mailed to every home in Temple Hills.

NAME (Please print) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

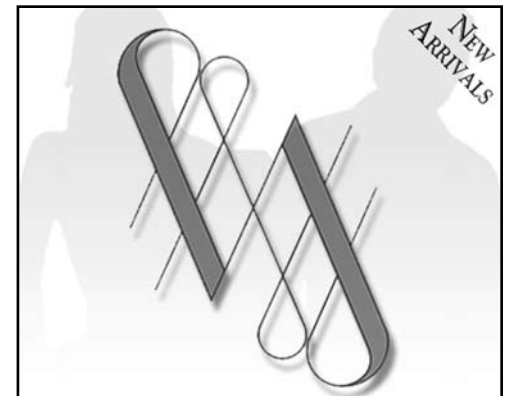
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