



Verdugo Woodlands West
Homeowners Association

THE WOODLANDS GRAPEVINE

MISSION To preserve the low-profile, single-family character and unique aesthetics of the Verdugo Woodlands, and provide a forum for discussion of civic issues that may affect our neighborhood and its residents.

Winter 2021

Verdugo Park Council Aborts Plans for Major Renovation

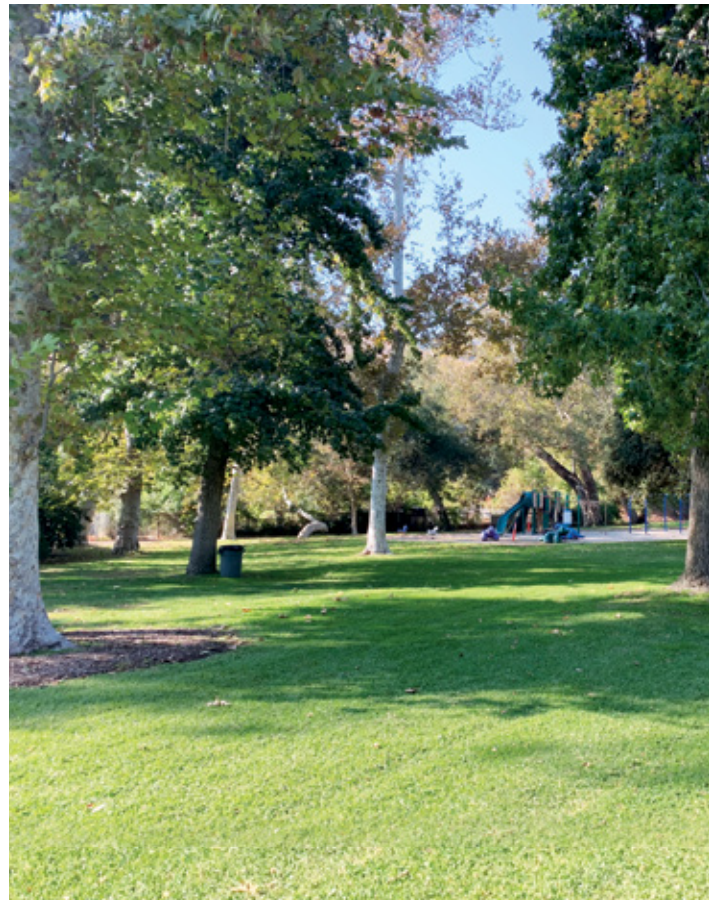
On December 8, the City Council voted against the latest plan to “upgrade” the north end of Verdugo Park. Verdugo Park is the most popular park in Glendale, and the north end is beloved by people all over the city for its open green space and sycamore and oak trees. The VWWHOA contacted the Council once again to express our opposition.

As you may recall, over two years ago Council rejected a proposed plan to replace green space with exercise stations, a new large parking lot and a turnaround area for vehicles after nearby residents and other park users complained. Council also asked that the city staff scale back plans for a huge new playground to avoid impacts to trees and the removal of excessive amounts of turf.

Surprisingly, the city staff returned to Council in December with three playground options that were strikingly similar to the concept rejected by Council two years before. Only one of the three options mentioned its square footage— 10,000 square feet across three separate play areas, and the entire footprint of the project would have been far larger. Each of the playgrounds involved copious amounts of plastic. The height of the structures and the proposed canopies would have radically transformed the bucolic character of the park.

Mayor Vrej Agajanian did not even let staff make a presentation. He noted that the Council had already rejected this idea, and **Ara Najarian** and **Dan Brotman** chimed in to agree. They echoed a point that the VWWHOA first made two years ago and reiterated in December: most of the \$3.3 million budget for these proposed changes to Verdugo Park comes almost entirely from development impact fees. Virtually all of these fees have been generated in south Glendale, which has truly felt the impact of development and has a serious dearth of park space. That money should be used to acquire land in south Glendale to help mitigate the impacts of all those new condominium and apartment buildings.

It would be great if the City could find the money to upgrade the restrooms and the picnic facilities in Verdugo Park. And the playground could use sprucing up. But above all the City needs to make sure resources are distributed equitably so that every Glendale neighborhood has the benefit of reduced air pollution, the cooler summer temperatures, and the measurable physical and psychological benefits we get from the beautiful greenspace of Verdugo Park.



Elena Ledford, In Memoriam



It is with sorrow that we inform our members of Elena Ledford's passing. Elena grew up in the Woodlands and returned to the neighborhood a few years ago from North Carolina. She loved walking our tree-lined streets, so many of you may have seen her enjoying the neighborhood.

Elena was a social worker and worked for the last three years at Union Station Homeless Services in Pasadena. The VWWHOA Board made a donation to this valuable organization in Elena's name, to honor her good work there and her desire to contribute to a better world.

Elena is survived by her parents Rick and Leslie Gavin, sister and brother-in-law Meredith and Rocco Barbaro and daughter Violet. Her colleagues at Union Station have set up a webpage for donations on behalf of Elena's daughter: gofundme.com/elenaledford.

We find it very touching, and a wonderful tribute to Elena's own generosity and kind spirit, that over 500 people have donated, including many neighbors.

FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION, CONTACT

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From the Editor

2020 was a heartbreaker. On so many levels. It was sometimes hard to find things to be thankful for during the annual fall season of gratitude.

I would like to express my gratitude here for my fellow board members. They work hard and manage to have fun, all year long, even while wearing masks or meeting over zoom. They do so for one goal: to make the Woodlands a good neighborhood. We strive to ensure it remains a beautiful place where people want to live, stroll, meet their neighbors and build a community.

Some of our hard work this year includes numerous upgrades to our infrastructure. I am sure you have all noticed the wonderful redesign of our newsletters. Our website will be getting a new look too: please check it out at wwwhoa.org. We are also implementing new membership software that will streamline processing renewals and new memberships and make paying dues easier. Your HOA is building for the future.

Putting on a virtual annual meeting this year was a delightful challenge. Given the toll the pandemic has taken on local businesses, we decided to give back to them. Rather than soliciting donations, we purchased gift certificates from businesses that have donated to our organization in the past and raffled those off instead. We urge you to join us in supporting them: **Casa Córdoba, Froyolife Yogurt, John Sparr Tavern, Novin Herbs & Spices, Once Upon a Time Bookstore, Town Kitchen & Grill and Vendome Wine & Spirits.**

The article on the annual meeting will cover some of the other things we accomplished, despite everything, in 2020. Here's to a successful, happy and healthy 2021 for us all.

Cathy Jurca
Board Member

Up Close and Personal

Annual Meeting over Zoom

On October 24, some 65 old and new members joined their neighbors in the standard mode of sociability, 2020-style — a Zoom meeting. This format created a challenge. How to create a feeling of neighborliness and community when we could not physically be together?

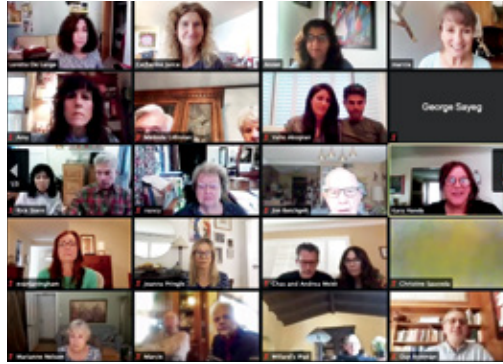
It turns out, it wasn't that hard. We couldn't eat together, but we ate well.

Annet Arakelian, Loretta DeLange, Marcia Hanford, Joanna Pringle, and Rick Stern organized and delivered bags with refreshments, including the makings for mimosas and fresh breakfast scones and baklava prepared by local Woodlands home businesses **A Moveable Feast LA** and **Baklava Bar**. Instead of the usual 50/50 lottery, members received a California Lottery Scratchier (sadly, no reports of sudden fortunes). The Board also provided a packet of native wildflower seeds in the hope that, come spring, our neighborhood will be ablaze in colorful, butterfly- and hummingbird-friendly plants. What better way to show a Woodlands spirit?

The Board said good-bye to long-time colleague **Alice Villaseñor** and welcomed new Board Member **Amy Yazzetta**, our long-time Event Committee Chair, as well as new Associate Board Member **Pam Elyea**. Current members **Arakelian, DeLange** and **Pringle** were re-elected to the Board. Thanks to all for their past and future service.

Cathy Jurca provided an annual report of our activities, noting that 2020 began very well, with a successful City Council candidates forum, co-sponsored by the Dads' Club. Candidates answered questions about development and design review in neighborhoods; overdevelopment downtown; building a greener Glendale; transportation infrastructure, and other matters. **Dan Brotman** (a Woodlands resident and HOA member who attended the annual meeting), **Paula Devine** and **Ardy Kassakhian** won the election, and all seemed attentive to the concerns of the neighborhoods. The Board has routinely been in touch with them.

And then the world fell apart. We suspended two planned events, the annual wine tasting in May, and a neighborhood play and party at Antaeus Theatre in July, which we enjoyed so much last year. But we continued the work of monitoring development projects to try to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood and weighing in on other issues that affect the Woodlands. You will read about two of these issues — ADUs and proposed changes to Verdugo Park — in separate articles.



The HOA has been working with the city on street lighting. GWP began changing to blue light LEDs, which are blinding and disruptive to the sleep of residents and harmful to nocturnal wildlife. They have suspended the replacements until they can find warmer energy-efficient bulbs.

A big part of our energy goes to monitoring the condition of the trees that make the Woodlands the

Woodlands. Unfortunately, some recent unpermitted work has butchered some protected native trees. Please do what you can to protect our woodlands. A permit is required for all but the most minor trimming. Please email us at vwwhoa@gmail.com if you have questions about when a permit is required. If you see tree work going on that concerns you, call Public Works at **818-548-3950**.

Some of the biggest threats to our neighborhood are from the State of California. We find that we increasingly need to weigh in on these matters, and you will have to do so too. Last year SB 50, which would have allowed four-plexes to be built on virtually every single-family lot in the state, rose from the dead in 2020 as SB 1120, which would have allowed every single-family lot over 2400 square feet to be split in half, and then a duplex to be built on each half. Different law, same end result. And don't forget the ADUs!

The Niodrara Drive Historic District would have been *exempt*; we are delighted that the State is finally starting to protect historic districts from these zoning changes.

Our HOA took a leading role in fighting SB 1120, which failed, but only at the very last minute, on procedural grounds. It will be back. Please watch for emails from us urging you to write to **Senator Portantino** and **Assemblywoman Friedman**. They absolutely need to hear from you.

Finally, let there be goats! Woodlands residents are increasingly worried about wildfires. The nature of these fires has changed dramatically as a result of climate change, and our ability to protect ourselves has become more complex. Associate Board member Rick Stern has been exploring a simple, even pastoral, aid to our efforts: hiring a herd of goats to eat the brush in the spring before it turns to tinder. We are working to get the fire department onboard for this effective, low tech, and incredibly environmentally friendly solution to one of our wildfire concerns.

That's only some of the news from 2020. We have to believe that 2021 will bring better times and more opportunities to gather in person with you.

Woodlands Architecture
The Cat Slide Roof



The Verdugo Woodlands is a historic neighborhood with the architecture to match. We have decided to start highlighting distinctive architectural features of our lovely homes.

We begin with a house on Capistrano that has one of the editor's favorites — the cat slide roof. Can't you just see a cat climbing to the top of that roof gable and then sliding down the long side and off into the garden? More precisely, a "cat slide roof" refers to any portion of a roof that extends below the general eave line; often it is curved. You can see in the photo to the left that the cat slide nestles an attractive gateway to the rear yard.

Can you spot these other fine examples and find more in your neck of our Verdugo Woodlands?



Do you wonder about any of the architecture — or trees and fauna — that combined with location make our Woodlands such a fabulous place to live?

We welcome your questions and photos at vwwhoa@gmail.com

City Adopts Revised ADU Ordinance

Every time California legislators pass new laws forcing cities to handle Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in ever more narrowly prescribed ways, Glendale updates its ordinance. Glendale must do so in order to ensure it includes the standards the State still allows it to impose on their construction.

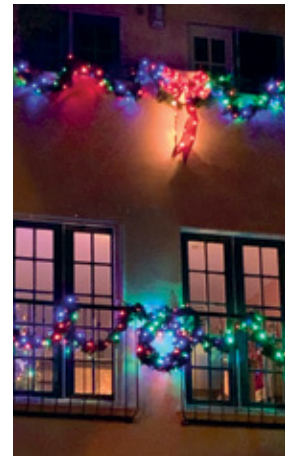
The City Council and staff have been very responsive to residents' concerns about the endless string of ADU bills. They have worked hard to implement state-mandated changes as thoughtfully as possible.

As part of the latest round, Council approved two changes that will improve the appearance of ADUs and may decrease potential impacts on neighbors. Remember, there is no design review for ADUs, state legislators apparently having decided that a thoughtful approach to design is a luxury we can all live without. Property owners will no longer be allowed to build an ADU on top of a one-story garage, and the size of balconies,

porches and patios for ADUs and JADUs (junior ADUs, 500 square feet and under) will now be limited. Some owners were building disproportionately large exterior features because the generous square-footage maximums do not apply to those areas.

The VWWHOA wrote to ask Council to approve these changes, and we are grateful they did. We also asked them to reject a proposed change that would allow ADUs to be constructed between the primary residence and the street on through lots (lots with two street frontages). With some 270 ADUs in process in Glendale, and the City chronically short-staffed, it seemed the last thing the City should do was make it easier to build ADUs in places where they are most likely to have visual impacts on neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, this change was rejected 3-2, with **Dan Brotman** and **Ara Najarian** supporting our position.



Thank-you to the neighbors, whose decorations Loretta DeLange and Rick Stern photographed, and the many other neighbors who went all out to brighten the holidays!

Please pass on this newsletter to your neighbors and ask them to join you as VWWHOA members to protect and preserve Verdugo Woodlands West. Only \$30 a year.

Join us today!

Please join at **vwwhoa.org**

Or return this form with a \$30 check payable to:
VWWHOA, P.O. Box 343, Verdugo City, CA 91046

Email _____ *VWWHOA will not share your information*

Name _____

Address _____

Cell _____ Home Phone _____

Your Priorities _____

As needed, would you be willing to attend occasional City Council or Design Review Board meetings to show support for the position that the Association has taken? Yes No

Comments and/or Suggestions _____

Since 1994, the Verdugo Woodlands West Homeowners Association has preserved the single-family characteristics and aesthetics that make our neighborhood beautiful and unique. Together with your support, our HOA:

- Represents Verdugo Woodlands West before the City Council, Design Review Board and at various City departments
- Provides a forum for discussion of civic issues that directly affect us
- Represents Verdugo Woodlands West at the Glendale Homeowners Coordinating Council
- Focuses on protecting our trees, hillsides, parks, and air quality, preserving our historic architecture, and increasing property values
- Keeps you up to date with regular notifications, newsletters and **vwwhoa.org** website
- Hosts an Annual Meeting and Brunch, a Summer Wine Tasting and other fun events to deepen your connection to your neighborhood



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Verdugo Woodlands West Homeowners Association

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What's happening to your park?
See page 1

Eco Info

Support a Local Ecosystem by Planting Native Wildflowers

One of the great local treasures is the Theodore Payne Foundation. Tucked in the hills of Sun Valley, since 1960 this nursery and educational center has promoted the legacy of botanist **Theodore Payne**, a transplant (get it?!) from England who dedicated much of his career to planting and promoting native California species.

If you attended the virtual annual meeting, you received a seed packet of a variety of native wildflowers that includes poetic specimens like Farewell to Spring, Goldfields, Tidy Tips and Arroyo Lupine. It's not too late to plant them for a spring show!



California has stunning native plants, and we urge residents to incorporate more of them in their gardens. They provide food and shelter for many species of birds, butterflies and other pollinators. Once established, they need, on average, 80 percent less water than non-native species. They do well in our local soil with no need for amendments, and they are more resistant to

pests than non-natives, because the plants and the insects have co-evolved.

Instructions for planting came with the seeds. If you missed out, TPF sells seeds and all manner of fantastic plants in person and online at theodorepayne.org
