



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 2023

ANNUAL MEETING

You Can't Rain Us Out

Surprise showers did not prevent more than 50 members from attending our annual meeting on October 15. The rain just made for a cozier event, as people gathered together on the Adobe's porch and under a pop-up tent, enjoying mocktails and food from **Gio's** and getting to know their neighbors. City Council members **Paula Devine** and **Dan Brotman** attended.

As usual, the meeting featured a Year in Review, including the organization's proposed name change, proposed design review changes, state housing legislation, and of course a historic district update.

The HOA Board voted to begin the process of changing our name from "Homeowners Association" to "Neighborhood Association." We think "neighborhood" better captures our priorities and values.

The Verdugo Woodlands West Tree Committee works to ensure that the City protects its urban canopy and enforces the strong regulations that protect indigenous trees like oaks and sycamores as well as trees planted in the public right of way. The Tree Committee got the Sustainability Commission to agendaize a review of the city's policies and enforcement procedures. Glendale has lost thousands of trees in the past decade. While Glendale has set aside substantially more money for planting, the unnecessary loss of mature trees needs to stop. Glendale must make sure to maintain trees once they are in the ground.

In August the new Director of Community Development **Bradley Calvert** proposed making major changes to design review, including exempting even very large additions at the



rear of a property from design review, which would mean no public notice even to immediate neighbors. This policy would be a disaster in hillside areas where the rears of buildings are often highly visible. In the past, changes to design review involved conversations with various stakeholders including neighborhood groups. This time the new director got all his "public" input from eleven developers. Fortunately, we saw the agenda item and were able to lambast the process and the recommendations made to Council and offer comments to shape the discussion. **Paula Devine, Dan Brotman, and Ardy Kassakhian** supported our positions.

The city's lack of transparency has gotten significantly worse.

The state legislature approved more laws that impact our neighborhoods. There was nothing so dramatic as last year's SB 9, which incentivizes even more corporate and hedge-fund ownership of single-family homes, in that parcels can be divided in two, the existing home can be demolished, and four units can go in where there was only one before, without public notice or design review. However, the state did amend its ADU laws yet again. The worst change is new height limits. The height limit was 16'; now ADUs that are attached to a residence can be up to 25 feet. Glendale is revising its ordinance, and we will be making suggestions, including adapting the design standards the City created for SB 9 projects to ADUs. Unlike SB 9 lot splits, which are disallowed in historic districts, ADUs can be built in historic districts, but the City has more control over them.

The HOA Board will be watching these issues and more during the upcoming year, and you bet you will hear all about it at the Adobe in October 2023!

**FOR MEMBERSHIP
INFORMATION, CONTACT**

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Patrick Masihi
Joanna Pringle

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Pam Elyea
Domenico Ingenito
Victor Mazzone
Rick Stern

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Christine Saucedo, Membership
Amy Yazzetta, Events

From the Editor

In the last two editions of *The Woodlands Grapevine*, Editors **Amy Yazzetta** and **Cathy Jurca** remarked how hot and dry it was as they penned their columns.

As of this February writing, the situation is vastly different. Many of us rejoice that several inches of much-needed rain have arrived, but we simultaneously acknowledge the damages and inconveniences that these storms have wrought. Droughts and deluges create problems in spite of adjusting our maintenance. Our goal is to support each other in managing whatever challenges come our way.

Speaking of rain, it was an unexpected guest at our annual meeting on October 15. Nevertheless, several dozen intrepid members were good sports who showed up for the meeting that was adapted on the fly to deliver brunch, beverages, socializing, and the business meeting. We even had a soggy 50/50 drawing, which was won by **Marsha Wong**.

The annual meeting is covered on other pages, but I am pleased to report that members voted to elect **Patrick Masihi** as a new board member and to re-elect incumbents **Annet Arakelian**, **Loretta De Lange**, and **Joanna Pringle**, all for 2-year terms. The Nominating Committee **Dave Cole**, **Cathy Jurca**, and **Marcia Hanford** had presented these names to the Board, which approved presenting this slate to the membership.

Many thanks to departing Board member **Amy Yazzetta** who will continue to be involved with the association as a committee member.

Last fall, the board appointed **Domenico Ingenito** and **Victor Mazzone** and reappointed **Pam Elyea** for 2-year terms to the Associate Board.

The complete leadership lineup is in the masthead at the left. See what a great group this is? Let us know if you want to participate in committees or other volunteer opportunities this year. Email us at vwwhoa@gmail.com

We look forward to a varied and eventful year of civic engagement and social enjoyment. And best of all, seeing each other more frequently!

Marcia Hanford

Another Woodlands House Listed on Glendale Register of Historic Resources

The latest property to be locally recognized for its architectural significance is the **Sherman and Henrietta Ford House** on Mira Vista Drive, in the eastern part of our Woodlands neighborhood.

Built in 1936 on a small, irregularly shaped lot, the Ford House packs a lot of punch into its 1,153 square feet. Described as “an excellent and highly intact example of a modestly-scaled Tudor Revival-style residence,” the house features a steeply pitched cross gable roof with flared eaves and exposed rafter tails. Exterior materials include half timbering, stucco, horizontal wood clapboard, and brick. Other distinctive features include striking leaded-glass windows with a small diamond pattern, multi-light



wood windows, and the original wood-paneled door. The house and detached garage were designed and built by **John Frith**, who also did homes for the “rich and famous” including **Fred Astaire** and **Humphrey Bogart**.

We congratulate the owner of this exceptional home and are thrilled he has taken steps

to protect it for the future. We hope that other Woodlands residents are inspired to nominate their historic homes to the Glendale Register; listed properties are eligible for substantial property tax benefits as a valuable incentive to preserving them.

Richard Shaw



Richard at our Wine Tasting, June 2022. Photo by Rick Stern.

We are sorry to report that longtime Woodlander and former VWWHOA Board Member **Richard Shaw** passed away in November.

He had tackled health issues while admirably participating in neighborhood events. We will miss him and his memories of the Woodlands from the 45 years he lived here with his late wife and two boys. Our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

“The location of the Verdugo Woodlands West and the location of my house are special. I have unique views of the three mountain ranges: San Rafael Hills, Verdugos, and San Gabriels. I live in the middle of an urban forest, surrounded and dwarfed by mature Oaks, Pines and Sycamores. I appreciate the wide variety of architectural house styles and the people and animals that live in and around them. Some of the animals have disappeared (Raccoons) and some new ones have appeared (Bears). How fortunate we are.” — Richard Shaw

Tree Walk

On September 17, Verdugo Woodlanders joined Glendale City Arborist Technician **Katherine Williams** for a tour of some special trees in our neighborhood.

Neighbors met at the Catalina Verdugo Adobe, home of the Oak of Peace. Although time has felled this historic oak, its remains mark the spot of **General Andres Pico**'s camp before he surrendered to **General John C. Fremont**. Here was drafted the Treaty of Cahuenga in 1847, which ended the conflict between the United States and Mexico over the southwest territory.



The tree walk covered a little over half a mile in the neighborhood, connecting tree species by their country of origin, along with some of the layered California history that many of these “species trends” represent.

Under Williams’s direction we learned about the need to preserve our indigenous oak and sycamore trees so they can support wildlife, ensuring

their ability to thrive. Maintaining the indigenous trees in our neighborhood is a duty and obligation we gladly embrace for the blessing of living in our beautiful Verdugo Woodlands.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Join us today!

Join instantly at vwwhoa.org

Or return this form along 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 maintaining property values
- > Keeps you up to date with regular notifications, newsletters and vwwhoa.org website
- > Hosts Annual Meeting and Brunch, a Summer Wine Tasting and other fun events to deepen your connection to your neighborhood

Pass this newsletter along to a neighbor and please invite them to join you as a VWWHOA member!

Welcome!

Welcome to the following new and returning Woodlanders, representing
Blanchard, Bonita, Camulos, Country Club Drive, Del Valle, Don Carlos, Glorietta, Hermosita, Hiawatha, Mira Vista, Niodrara

Virginia and Larry Bierman • Ano (Anahid) Fekete • Macaria Flores • Anita Gabrielian

Pat and Jerry Hawkins • Aida and Vahe Hayrikian • Jill Hilts • Peggy Lichtart • Nayiri and Chris Pilikyan

Eliana and Mark Rademacher • Shelly and Allan Schroth • Martha Sensel and Joel Schwartz • Victoria Sofro

Miriam and John Stryzik • Pearl Tanabe Tokuda • Sally Towne • Rosy and Ara Yeretsian • Kris Young

KEEPING UP WITH YOUR HOA

Are you receiving email messages from VWWHOA? Our Join It software notifies you when dues are due, but VWWHOA also sends occasional broadcast emails. This is the only way to communicate with you between newsletters.

We are sensitive about not overloading your Inbox. But topics such as the April 2022 Candidate Forum, the wildfire protection meeting in July, September's Tree Walk, and City topics like the Verdugo Wash Visioning Project are time sensitive and can't wait for the presses.

By the way, one of our messages last spring reported a sighting of grazing goats doing fire clearance. Email recipients could immediately witness these amazing creatures at work. This was the second year for this pilot project, which the City implemented due to efforts by VWWHOA Associate Board member **Rick Stern**.

If you are not receiving email messages, you are missing out. Please contact us at vwwhoa@gmail.com and we'll let you know how our emails can reach you.

MY GLENDALE APP

Do you have the MyGlendale app on your device? It's free at the Google Play Store and the Apple Store. Or you can use it online by keying in this string:

glendaleca.gov/residents/how-do-i/contact-the-city/report-a-problem-online

Use it to notify the City about a broad array of problems,

including code violations, overgrown vegetation, abandoned vehicles, burned out street lights, water leaks, broken sidewalks, and much more. The app creates a "paper trail" to track the status of your reports. Photos can be uploaded when you make the report. It's efficient and, from what we've been told, quite effective.

OUT OF SIGHT?



Neighbors frequently comment that trash bins left out after 8 pm on collection day are not only eyesores but they block visibility and occupy precious parking spaces. If health or mobility issues make moving the bins difficult for you, apply for the free Container Assistance Program by calling Public Works at **818 548 3916**.

3 C'S: CATALYTIC CONVERTER CRISIS

The proliferation of catalytic converter thefts is not letting up. Each heist is so quick, even if law enforcement can immediately respond the crooks are gone. If it's not possible to garage a vehicle, please research your best options. These include pulling into the driveway as much as possible, etching the license plate number onto the converter, and covering the converter with some sort of cage. Do a deeper dive to mitigate your risk, as replacements for some vehicles are not readily available. Check with your insurance company to know your coverage and for more preventive suggestions.

WE ♥ WOODLANDS WILDLIFE

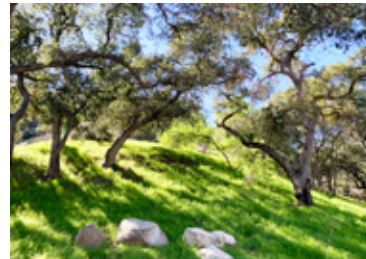


After last year's dry winter and long hot summer left little to eat in our hills, a mama bear and her hungry cubs came food hunting on Bonita and Wabasso early in the morning of November 8.

ECO INFO

Clean, Safe, Reliable Energy

In 2017 our electric provider, Glendale Water & Power, proposed a 260 megawatt (MW) all-gas replacement for the old Grayson plant, which needs to be retired by the end of this year. The system GWP proposed would have run 24 hours a day, seven days a week during summer months. According to the City's environmental analysis, the project would have increased Glendale's CO₂ emissions in an amount equal to adding 90,000 cars to Glendale's roads. It would have also increased a host of other harmful air pollutants.



The plan alarmed climate activist and economics professor **Dan Brotman**, a Woodlands resident and VWWHOA member. To push the City to find a better a solution, he founded the **Glendale Environmental Coalition** and organized hundreds of equally concerned Glendale residents. It took more than five years, but in December, the City approved a scaled down plan comprising 55 MWs of gas generation, to be held as reserves and used only in rare instances—an 80% reduction in installed gas capacity and well over 90% based on actual run time. This radically reduces the amount of air pollution we would have suffered otherwise.

Thanks also to Dan's efforts and Glendale Environmental Coalition's sustained advocacy, the City is now pursuing several clean energy projects. Foremost is getting Glendale up to speed with the rest of California on solar energy. Only 2.5% of Glendale households have solar versus around 10% of households in many other parts of the state.

Glendale Solar Solution is a suite of policies proposed by Glendale Environmental Coalition to get Glendale to that 10% level. It calls for new incentives. It streamlines and simplifies the

process of installing solar and battery storage. Importantly, it targets the biggest incentives and subsidies to lower-income customers, people living in the most polluted areas, and multifamily and rental properties.

As our summers are getting hotter faster than anyone imagined, and recurring fires put the transmission lines that carry imported

power at greater risk of disruption, increased solar and storage is critical — not only to reduce our air pollution and climate impact, but reduce our dependency on transmission.

A newly released study by the US Energy Information Administration showed that while 2021 recorded the third highest rate of total annual electric power outages since 2013, state markets with a high rate of rooftop solar adoption have been shown to have the shortest timeframe for recovery from outages and higher grid resiliency.

At the December 6, 2022 City Council meeting, consulting firm EcoMotion reported that Glendale could install as much as 100 MW of clean energy with a combination of distributed energy resources, better "demand-response" and energy efficiency programs, a new model for a virtual power plant, and other programs. A plan for installing solar and batteries on municipal sites will come before the City Council in March. Achieving the Glendale Solar Solution's 10% goal might generate an additional 75 MW of clean local energy for Glendale. Combined with other promising projects, that could offset much if not all of the City's need for fossil-fuel generation.

You can stand up for clean, safe, reliable, local energy by signing on as supporter of the Glendale Solar Solution at the Glendale Environmental Coalition website: gec.eco

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Deer enjoying the fresh grass above Polaris and Branta. Spotted by Stephen O'Bryan last month.



Don't miss out!
See inside.

Historic District Update and Walking Tour

In our Fall 2022 newsletter we noted that the City is in the process of simplifying and streamlining the historic district designation process. The City Council has recognized that the process is significantly more onerous than in neighboring communities, sometimes taking as long as five years, even though historic district efforts have proved popular with residents.

The Council commented on changes proposed by staff, which among others would eliminate duplicative public meetings (there are at least eight under the current ordinance!). Staff will bring a revised ordinance first to the Planning Commission and then for a final vote by the City Council, which we hope will take place in the next few months. Once the designation process is set, the application for the Woodlands historic district will move forward. First stop will be a review by the Historic Preservation Commission, which will decide whether the neighborhood appears to qualify as a historic district. If so, it will recommend that a historic resources consultant be hired by the city to do a survey of the area.

We are preparing a walking tour of the proposed district. We hope, in fact, to put together two tours; the first to cover the area south of El Rito, and the second for streets to the

north. We hope that you will join us to learn more about the rich architectural history of our neighborhood and about some of the residents and architects associated with it. Dates and times will be announced by email. (See article on page 5 about receiving our emails.)

LEND A HAND?

Get involved! Email us at vwwhoa@gmail.com to learn more about these and other fun opportunities.

Wine Tasting: Our annual wine tasting resumed in 2022 after a two-year hiatus. Those who attended had a grand time, even if they preferred non-alcoholic beverages. A committee is being formed to plan this year's gathering, and fresh ideas and helpers are welcome.

Research: Volunteers working on the Historic District walking tours might need help with researching building styles, previous owners, and builders. You'll be given materials and instructions, so knowledge or experience are not required.