

**Westdale Homeowners Association**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 25, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by the President, Jerry Hornof, virtually, on the ZOOM platform.

Present were: 73 participants. Participants included Los Angeles City Council representatives 11<sup>th</sup> District Council Member Mike Bonin and 11<sup>th</sup> District Mar Vista Field Deputy Shany Ebadi; Los Angeles Police Department representatives Senior Lead Officer Karwon Villery, Sargent Brian Cook, and Sargent Jeff Lovich; Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Mar Vista Recreation Center Director Andres De La Hoya; and Mar Vista Community Council Zone 3 Director Andrew Marton.

**Opening Comments – Jerry Hornof**

Jerry began by thanking all who were able to join the meeting. He stated his disappointment that again this year we were meeting virtually which made it difficult to share cookies and other snacks. He acknowledged how challenging the last year has been for all of us as we lived into this year's theme of "Together in Hope". He stated how much he has appreciated taking courses online through the Santa Monica College Emeritus school. He noted that in his Shakespeare class they are studying Shakespeare's Sonnets. Although the Sonnets were published in 1609 most historians believe they were written in the early 1600's during the plague years. Shakespeare being an actor and playwright wrote the Sonnets as a source of income during a period when London theaters were shuttered. It reminds us that we can still achieve successes even under a trying circumstances. A clear success in Westdale has been the curbside tree plantings organized and directed by George Oswald and Molly Selvin. George and Molly working with block captains and our neighbors on Butler and Coolidge Avenues have identified and scheduled replacement of trees that have died since the original plantings in 1947. The environmental benefits of these efforts will be realized now and in decades to come.

**Invited Speakers**

The first group to speak were representatives of the Los Angeles Police Department. Our Senior Lead Officer Karwon Villery was joined by Sargent Brian Cook and Sargent Jeff Lovich. Jerry acknowledged on behalf of Westdale Homeowners Association our appreciation for their efforts and successes in protecting and serving our community. The officers provided a brief summary of crime statistics in our neighborhood. In general crime in our Westdale neighborhood continues to be low. In broad categories like Violent Crime and Property Crime, the incidents were approximately 25% lower in 2021 compared to 2020. (As a note the website <https://www.lapdonline.org/statistical-data/> provides an excellent summary). They appreciated the efforts made by our community and our Block Captain Program in reporting suspicious activities and crimes. The officers fielded questions. One question asked about morale in the Pacific Division in light of COVID, funding, staffing, and protests. The officers acknowledged that maintaining positive morale has been difficult. They noted that funding has been restored and they are looking forward to new officers graduating from the academy and joining the force. They emphasized that in almost all cases our community has been positive and they feel

appreciated. Another question had to do with homelessness and their role. The officers explained that homelessness was a complicated issue. Although they enforce any criminal activity, dealing with encampments and personal belongings (property) of the homeless came under the jurisdiction of the City Sanitation Department. The last question dealt with bicycle thefts. The officers reminded us of the need for people to register their bicycles so that officers can bring charges when stolen bicycles are found.

The second speaker was 11<sup>th</sup> District Council Member Mike Bonin. He began his comments by introducing our new Mar Vista/Del Rey Field Deputy Shany Ebadi. Shany replaces Vishesh Anand who has taken the position of West Area Representative for Mayor Eric Garcetti's Office. Mike then presented Los Angeles City Award Certificates to George Oswald and Molly Selvin for their "Contributions towards beautifying the Westdale neighborhood. By identifying the need to restore our tree canopy, inventorying appropriate replanting sites, and organizing neighbors to provide continual care, Westdale residents and visitors will enjoy new trees for years to come. Thank you for your time and dedication in helping to move Los Angeles forward".

Council Member Bonin began his prepared remarks talking about COVID-19 impacts. He talked about the severe impacts on city services. He also discussed the impacts on staffing due to funding, retirements, and hiring limitations. City staff and government processes have continued to work remotely to reduce the risk of COVID exposure. Mike also mentioned the Los Angeles Al Fresco program which aims to help local businesses reopen safely, and allow customers and employees to maintain physical distancing by temporarily relaxing the rules that regulate outdoor dining. Council Member Bonin next spoke about transportation actions affecting our community. He spoke about the traffic light signal improvements including left-hand turn signals. He also talked about the LANow on demand shared-ride service that provides transportation services in our neighborhood. Planning was discussed next. Mike discussed the need to move from a "project by project" planning model to a more thorough and thoughtful neighborhood planning model. The Los Angeles City Planning Department is in the process of updating the City's 35 Community Plans, which guide policy and land use in Los Angeles's neighborhoods. The City updates the Community Plans periodically to reflect changes in the areas they govern, ensuring the plans remain effective tools for guiding growth and development. The Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey plan update is in development and information and comments can be found at <https://planning.lacity.org/>. Our Westdale neighborhood is generally not impacted. The one area was an upgrade in development along Sawtelle Blvd which at this time will only occur along the eastside (405 freeway side) of Sawtelle Blvd. The final topic that Mike discussed was homelessness. He acknowledged it is the biggest crisis facing Los Angeles. We are at a critical intersection point with an estimate of 5 homeless people/day dying. Council Member Bonin outlined three options for moving forward. The 1<sup>st</sup> was the status quo which no one is advocating for doing. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is achieving housing for all with the inclusion of needed services. This recognizes the reality that everyone wins when people are housed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> option was to "tell people where they cannot go". Generally this results in homeless people moving from place to place in a "Whac-A-Mole" model. It also further involves the Los Angeles Police Department in the homeless crisis. Mike outlined the model for a housing first initiative. He referenced the success of moving approximately 200 people from Venice Beach and 90 people from Westchester Recreation Center to housing. This involved using resources provided by the Federal and County government to fund a long term housing voucher program. This needs to be coupled with conversions of hotels and additional apartments being made available to accept these vouchers. This approach would represent available housing without necessitating new construction. Recognizing that a majority of the questions would involve the homeless crisis, Mike ended his prepared remarks and opened the floor to questions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> question was a question about how Senate Bill 9 and Senate Bill 10 impact Los Angeles neighborhoods. Senate Bill 9 also known as the California Housing Opportunity and More

Efficiency (HOME) Act, is a state bill that requires cities to allow one additional residential unit onto parcels zoned for single-dwelling units. Senate Bill 10 provides that local agencies may adopt an ordinance to allow up to 10 dwelling units on any parcel if the parcel is within a transit-rich area. Mike answered by explaining that California recognizes that there is a shortage of housing inventory. There was also a frustration at the state level with what was perceived as blocking construction of housing in local municipalities. There is clearly the need to get more housing in “job rich” areas. Mike noted that teachers, medical staff, and many other mid-level positions are required to commute an hour or more to find housing they can afford. We clearly need more working class housing in our community. The 2<sup>nd</sup> question was how quickly could a housing first model be implemented? Mike acknowledged that the COVID pandemic has impacted how quickly housing can be made available. He noted that permanent support housing with wrap-around services was a slow development. However, only about 20% of the unhoused need that degree of services. The remaining 80% of the unhoused could be accommodated quickly if the city and county would fully commit to a housing first option. The 3<sup>rd</sup> question asked about support for a rental registry and the immediate issues associated with emergency housing vouchers often described as a “golden ticket to nowhere”. Mike agreed a rental registry (listing of available rentals) was needed for both accountability and transparency. Currently the vouchers are in many cases not useful because vacant apartments are not being made available. The 4<sup>th</sup> question was why not establish shelters? Mike stated that many east coast cities such as New York City, Philadelphia, and others have a right to shelter and have established shelters. Unfortunately, although these shelters get the unhoused “out of sight”, they have been a failure in that the conditions are detestable and those in the shelters seldom are on a trajectory to get out of the shelter into housing. The pandemic has also complicated the warehouse shelter model. Finally, financial studies indicate the shelters are not cheaper than placing homeless in rentals in most situations. The final question was about the demographics of the homeless. There has been rumors that many of the homeless are not from Los Angeles or California. Mike indicated that studies have shown that 80% of the homeless in Los Angeles became homeless in California. Continuing on the demographics, African Americans make up 8-9% of the Los Angeles population but 30% of the homeless population. There are also high numbers of seniors and youth who are homeless. Mike concluded his comments by noting that it is a myth to say that many of the homeless are housing/service resistant. That was not the experience when they approached what was thought to be a very resistant homeless population at Venice Beach. People chose housing when offered housing that met their needs (could accommodate being married, having children, having pets). Mike suggested that perhaps the more appropriate approach is “what is wrong with our communication and connecting of what is needed to what is being offered.”

The third speaker was Mar Vista Recreation Center Director Andres De La Hoya. Andres indicated that due to the Omicron surge indoor and outdoor sports that involve close contact (like basketball) are on hold until February 7<sup>th</sup>. Although some of the families have dropped out due to the delay, there are still over 250 participants in the 5-15 year old age groups planning to participate. Other park activities include pre-school (ages 3-5), arts, clay-creation, and piano. He encouraged people to visit the Mar Vista Recreation center webpage at <https://www.laparks.org> for class and registration information. Andres discussed that the park is refurbishing the grass field on the east side of the park (east of the gym and west of the tennis courts). This will also include the baseball diamonds. The work has begun and will continue until the end of April (weather cooperating). The area is surrounded by a fixed fence during the construction time to protect the grounds and equipment. The fields and grass will be ready for spring baseball and softball. There will be new tree plantings along the north wall of the park. These plantings will occur after the refurbishing project is completed. Andres noted that the Park Forest Department, along with support from Windward School, are implementing the reforestation of the park

canopy. Please notify park staff if you see people violating the closed area. Mar Vista Recreation Center will be a COVID-19 test center. The station is set up between the pool and the hockey rink and is available Sunday's and Monday's from 9am-4pm. The planned Spring sports activities will include soccer, softball, baseball, girls' volleyball, and co-Rec volleyball. Please contact the office (310-398-5982) or see the webpage for registration information. Adult hockey will be starting in March. Finally, Andres advised patrons to be careful of their belongings especially near the outdoor basketball courts. There have been a series of thefts from the belongings of players who set items down near the courts as they played. Andres closing comments were to enjoy the park.

Our fourth speaker was our Mar Vista Community Council (MVCC) Zone 3 Director Andrew Marton. Andrew indicated that part of his inspiration to run for the MVCC Director position was his love and appreciation for Mar Vista Recreation Center which is a part of Zone 3. He said that an important role of the MVCC was to gather input and participation from the community as they developed and advanced Community Impact Statements (CIS). A Community Impact Statement is an official statement or position adopted by a neighborhood council on issues pending before the City's decision makers. He encouraged people to attend MVCC meetings and participate in the public comment portion of the meetings. The meetings are currently being held virtually on Zoom. He noted you can also provide electronic input through the MVCC website. The website (<https://www.marvista.org/>) contains the calendar of meetings and other community related information. Andrew chairs the Public Health & Safety (PH&S) and Homeless Committee. The committee promotes stakeholder input concerning PH&S and homeless issues in our community. The Committee encourages involvement, provides relevant information and resources, acts as advocate and liaison, and supports viable and equitable solutions. In February the committee will host Armando Hogan, Deputy Chief LAFD, to speak on projects relating to PH&S/Homeless. In March the committee will host Vishesh Anand, West Area Representative for Mayor Eric Garcetti's Office. Andrew concluded by encouraging Westdale members to communicate and participate in MVCC activities.

### **Westdale Homeowners Association Updates**

The next item of the meeting was the treasurer's report prepared by our Treasurer Jay Swerdlow.

Overall, our Financial Position remains very healthy.

General - \$7,917 + Money Market - \$10,652 = Total General Funds Available - \$18,569

Emergency Response Team (ERT) - \$8,586

Certificate of Deposit (Matures May 2022) - \$25,938

Total All Accounts - \$53,093

All Invoices submitted have been paid.

Debbie Kaplan provided the real estate report. It is still a strong seller's market with neighborhood homes selling for between \$1.52M and \$3.6M. All indications are that the market prices will continue to climb. Debbie also cautioned homeowners to be aware of cracked sidewalks in front of their property. Notifying the city regarding unsafe sidewalks is very important. It is very easy to do by visiting <https://safesidewalks.lacity.org/> . Finally, Debbie

asked homeowners to please cutback any trees or shrubbery that overhang the sidewalks and impedes walking safely.

### **Closing Remarks**

Jerry closed the meeting by stating the 2022 theme – Reimagining Westdale. Reimagining captures the idea of thinking about or considering in a new and creative way. Our Westdale community is changing. We have new families moving into the neighborhood, we see home renovations, changes in transportation, reforestation, and of course new ways of connecting both virtually and in person. We all need to reimagine Westdale to make sure our shared vision is realized as we move forward as a vibrant community. Please participate and engage with organizations like the Westdale Homeowners Association, Mar Vista Community Council, and groups like Neighbors4Neighbors in making our neighborhood more connected, welcoming, and supportive of each other.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Jerry Hornof*  
Acting Secretary