



SNAPSHOT

The Samarkand Neighborhood Association Newsletter



PO Box 3612, Santa Barbara, CA 93130-3612

Volume 2, Issue 2

June 2007

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Future Meeting Dates:

- June 21, 2007
- July 19, 2007
- August 16, 2007

Most meetings are on the third Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm.

Location: Samarkand Retirement Community (Mountain Room)

PLAN SANTA BARBARA-FEATURED GUESTS AT OUR JUNE MEETING

Plan Santa Barbara is our opportunity to shape the future of the City. Over the next two years, the City is sponsoring a broad-based public outreach process that will focus on future growth and development. They will be discussing, evaluating and adjusting the City's housing, transportation and environmental policies to best meet our community needs now and in the future.

City Representatives will be our guests at the June 21 Board/Membership meeting. They will give a presentation on the Plan Santa Barbara program and are hoping to hear from us all. What do you love about Santa Barbara? What are your hopes for the City's future? What are you most concerned about?

Please join us on June 21, 5:30PM, Samarkand Retirement Community Mountain Room.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION ORDINANCE UPDATE

In May the City Council approved updates to the NPO/Single Family Design guidelines. These updates are the result of extensive public input and compromise over the past three years. The result of these updates will be added assurance of appropriate aesthetics and compatibility in our neighborhoods. The newly established Single Family Design Board will take over the planning/permit process for single family homes.

The efforts and time of SNA and Allied Neighborhoods folks that helped make this a success are greatly appreciated!

BOARD ELECTIONS

It's election time for the 2007 Board of Directors.

Your ballot is attached to this Issue of SNAPSHOT.

Please vote by marking your choices and returning ballots as per instructions on the ballot.

We are on the web! <http://www.samarkandneighborhoodassociation.org>

“As the second Samarkand Neighborhood Association year comes to a close I'd like to thank our Board of Directors and all the Association members that contributed so much effort to making this a very productive and successful year. “

“We have a wonderful neighborhood that is conducive to walking. “

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

As the second Samarkand Neighborhood Association year comes to a close I'd like to thank our Board of Directors and all the Association members that contributed so much effort to making this a very productive and successful year. We promoted the approved passage of the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance update, finalized the process to Incorporate our association, hosted several informative and interesting guest presentations, and continued our working affiliation with the Allied Neighborhoods Association.

These are just a few of our accomplishments this past year.

In the year ahead the association will proceed with many ongoing projects and be creative at starting new initiatives for "Keeping Our Neighborhood a Great Place to Live". With input and energy from the membership the Samarkand Neighborhood Association will continue to preserve and enhance the quality of life in our wonderful area of Santa Barbara. I encourage members to take the initiative and vote in the Board elections before us.

PETER BASCH -

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We have a wonderful neighborhood that is conducive to walking. To make our neighborhood pedestrian friendly we need to notify the city of specific address's where dangerous tripping hazards exist. Those may be a previous fill of black top that has worn down or an area that hasn't been previously addressed. You may notify the city by 3 methods:

1. E-Mail: rfulmer@santabarbaracal.gov
2. Letter: Mr. Rick Fulmer
625 Laguna Street
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93102
3. Telephone: (805) 564-5394

Thank you for taking the time to improve the safety for everyone by contacting the city,

Your Neighbor,
Mrs. Arthea Hermann

Voice your opinion! Tell your neighbors what you think on important neighborhood and city issues.

Letters must be fewer than 250 words. We edit all submissions for length, clarity and other professional standards. We do not print letters that lack a civil tone, allege wrongdoing or involve consumer complaints. All letters must include the writer's

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Contact Us: staff@SamarkandNeighborhoodAssociation.org
SNA, P.O. Box 3612, Santa Barbara, CA 93130-3612

LETTERS (CONTINUED)

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address and phone number. We cannot acknowledge unpublished letters.

We only accept emails. Do not send attachments. Send letters to staff@samarkandneighborhoodassociation.org. Direct questions to John Calder (john@thecalders.org).

Your opinions can be valuable contributions to this newsletter.

“Your opinions can be valuable contributions to this newsletter.”

GRAFFITI ABATEMENT

By Darwin Holter

Let’s all do our part to keep our neighborhood beautiful! If you notice graffiti in our neighborhood please report it so we can get it removed.

The Graffiti Hotline phone number is: (805) 897-2513. You can call the Graffiti Hotline at anytime to report graffiti. Please provide the following information:

- Street name
- Nearest cross-street
- What type of structure has been hit by graffiti
- Color of structure
- Your name and phone number

If you are reporting graffiti in progress, please call the Santa Barbara Police Department at (805) 897-2600

We have provided a helpful article about graffiti removal on our website

“If you notice graffiti in our neighborhood please report it so we can get it removed.”

FEBRUARY MEETING SUMMARY

Guest Speakers:

None

Treasury

Since our last meeting, our balance has changed to \$1087.27, including a payment for the last newsletter for \$93.28.

Committees:

Zoning: Joyce reported no activity.

Allied Neighborhoods:

The current Allied focus is to revise the by-laws for the organization. Joe Guzzardi (Anna DeVore as an alternate) will continue to represent us at the Allied

meetings. Anyone from our association is welcome at the meetings. The meetings for Allied are in the Red Cross building on Alamar, on the third Mondays of the month at 7 p.m.

Allied has a new set of officers, and the Web site is being updated.

Anna reported on a couple of concerns for Allied with respect to development on Upper State. First, it has been reported among Allied members that there are some inconsistencies in the documents available for

public review for the Whole Foods projects and other Upper State development projects. Allied is also concerned about future costs in dealing with future responses to developers. Fund raising may be necessary to support a transparent development process for the Upper State Street area.

Charlie Stapleton shared that on January 26th the committee inquired of the City about the General Plan update. The committee was informed that

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The current Allied focus is to revise the by-laws for the organization.

FEBRUARY MEETING (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 3)

the update process has been without direction. Hopefully, there is a joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, that will give the Planning Commission staff direction for the process. Charlie shared that these meetings occur twice a year, and hopefully the process for the update will become clearer.

Unfinished Business Guest Speaker Suggestions/Arrangement Volunteers:

Suggestions were taken for speakers. A member of the Planning Commission might be a possibility. Joe Guzzardi was suggested as a speaker for disaster preparedness. Anna DeVore shared that she had thought to invite Matt Zuchowitz, the principal of Adams, but he has recently taken another position. Another possibility could be a representative of the Adams PTA.

Samarkand has a plan and coordinator for preparedness for the facility. The group suggested a presentation combining Joe Guzzardi and the Samarkand representative to discuss preparedness.

The group discussed changes in the Oak Park regulations and previous presentations by City law enforcement. Peter volun-

teered to investigate contacts in Parks and Recreation, and Judy will speak to our beat coordinator about a later presentation.

Terry noted that there is a new director at Samarkand. It might be wise to have him/her visit our group as well.

The group discussed a candidates forum. Three seats are up for reelection: Das Williams, Helene Schneider, and Brian Barnwell. This would be either in the September or the October meeting. It is important to have good attendance if we choose to host this.

Jack suggested inviting a representative from the News-Press. Travis Armstrong was suggested as a possibility, and the editorial position of the paper was discussed. It would increase the chances for publicity for our organization.

John DeVore suggested inviting specific members from Allied Neighborhoods who have expertise in specific areas of interest to our organization—Bill Barry, Judy Orias, and Ruscian.

New Business

Development Safety/ Security Committee:

Peter has been thinking about a committee on safety, security, and emergency planning. The idea would be to put information on the Web site re-

lated to these issues. Charlie noted that this would tie into the program ideas that we have generated for guest speakers.

The committee would just be a vehicle for relaying information. Jim Smith suggested that we look at what other neighborhood organizations have done. Darwin volunteered to help out, and Terry Johnson will check out Samarkand. John DeVore will ask about this at the next Allied meeting.

Anna DeVore once again noted the value of Neighborhood Watch programs. These programs require participation of individuals beyond the Board proper.

Charlie noted that the 400 people on 18 acres of Samarkand requires a plan and preparedness.

Other Business

Jack inquired about the recent open meeting by Cottage concerning progress with the renovation. No one attended the meeting, but it suggested another possibility for a presentation.

“Anna DeVore once again noted the value of Neighborhood Watch programs.”

APRIL MEETING SUMMARY

Guest Speakers:

- Gracie Huerta, SBFD Public Education Coordinator.
- Anthony Borgatello and Ricardo Castellanos from El Mercado Del Norte.
- The presentation by the SBFD was delayed by an emergency fire call.

Treasury

Jim reported a balance of \$1347.27.

Committees

Zoning:

There are no new official referrals, but at the corner of Vernon and Stanley it has been reported that someone is dumping trash in the area.

Allied Neighborhoods:

Anna reported that Allied has been working on passing new by-laws. Bill Mahan is working on an amendment to the City Charter to limit the height of buildings in the Pueblo Viejo area to 40 feet. Right now the height limit is 60 feet. Over the years, very few of the buildings were two story buildings. Mr. Mahan realized that there are many new buildings that will be going in over the next few years that will be over two to four stories.

(The original idea of the 40 foot limit was to control density and development in the downtown core, Pueblo Viejo. Residential

neighborhoods already have a lower height limit.) The importance of this is to control reasonable density and the character of development in Santa Barbara neighborhoods.

Old Business

El Mercado Del Norte:

Darwin Holter shared the issues related to the carnival that has been added to El Mercado Del Norte. The rides, noise, and repetitive music are oppressive to neighbors. Last year some things were “toned down,” but there are still issues. Darwin suggests that the carnival should be moved back near City College where it used to be. A member noted that the plan to eliminate the generator would not be implemented.

Peter shared that representatives from Old Spanish Days requested to attend a meeting this year, and would be arriving a bit later in the meeting. Anna shared information from last year: the carnival is supposed to offset fees for the nonprofit vendors, however there is no evidence that a fee increase would be an undue burden for the vendors. A fee increase might eliminate the need for such a larger, noisy carnival. Indeed, as it is, some of the vendors appear to be restaurants, not individual non-profit groups.

Anthony Borgatello and Ricardo Castellanos (new Marketplace Chair) arrived to speak to the group: Anthony has been on the board of directors for the last 8 years, and he was the Chair of Marketplaces last year. There were five issues that they attempted to address. Last year they attempted to ameliorate generators, parking, and other issues. They put a backdrop on the stage to control noise, and they took decibel readings (which turned out to be below City requirements). They relocated the generator near the hillside to ease its impact.

They worked with MTD and La Cumbre Plaza to shuttle people in and reduce traffic. The carnival worked cooperatively to make it a better experience. Mr. Borgatello reiterated that they are working voluntarily to the benefit of the community and they want to be responsive.

Ricardo Castellanos is the Director of Marketplaces. It is his duty to continue to work on the issues. He has met with the carnival directors. They are negotiating with two smaller carnival operator that will be more geared to younger children.

This is not the same carnival operator as last year. The operators plan

Darwin Holter shared the issues related to the carnival that has been added to El Mercado.

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APRIL MEETING (CONTINUED)

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“Peter shared a video of the carnival to demonstrate the impact on the neighborhood.”

to put the movement rides away from the residences and the walk-through rides near the hillside.

They are taking time to plan a layout for the carnival that is thoughtful.

There is an issue with electricity. Ricardo has been working to bring power into the park. At this time, they will try to bring the power in from the parking lot side, permanent power that would eliminate the generator and cabling that has been a problem in the past. Unfortunately it may not get done before this year’s Fiesta.

Ricardo has a goal for a smaller stage venue with a rotation away from the homes. He agrees that it there is no need for a “Woodstock” in McKenzie Park.

Members inquired about the non-profits, and Anthony explained the process for identifying vendors that are non-profits. Anthony acknowledged that there were some non-competing food offerings that came with the carnival; it is not a perfect process.

Peter Basch responded to the efforts of the Fiesta representatives. He wondered why it had increased in size and scope. Anthony responded about external items that have

changed the requirements. Peter shared a video of the carnival to demonstrate the impact on the neighborhood. Anthony noted the issues demonstrated by the video, specifically that a generator had not been relocated away from the residential hill as previously stated.

New Business

None

Other Business

(Due to the delay of the SBFDF presentation, members were invited to share concerns).

A member who lives on Stanley, **Arthea Hermann**, spoke to the issue of sidewalk safety. She had taken a fall on a sidewalk area in need of repair. Mrs. Hermann reported on the difficulty of getting a response from the City on the issue. Wayne Beckman, Board Member, shared how he initiated a repair of the sidewalk and the City required him to repair more of the sidewalk than he initially intended. He cautioned members on taking individual responsibility for public works problems.

Jerry Ward described a childcare that had started in the neighborhood.

Harold England (Samarkand resident), inquired about Oak Park being used to mulch ma-

terial. He found it disturbing and did not think it was appropriate.

Open discussion:

The group brainstormed topics that might bring out larger attendance for our meetings.

A member shared about a home on Baldwin that has had an issue with mold that has interfered with a home remodel. The owner is concerned about the health issues and suspects possible City responsibility for moisture on that specific property. (Another member also shared that it is not the only property in the area that has had problems with mold.) Finally, the member shared that she would like to attend a meeting with a geologist who could describe the overall geologic concerns that may be related to our neighborhood.

A member inquired about an upgrade to the De La Vina to Alamar area. It was pointed out that some improvements were in planning, resulting from the neighborhood study and charrette that occurred a couple of years ago.

TALL BUILDINGS AND EL PUEBLO VIEJO

By Bill Mahan

(Previously printed in the Santa Barbara Independent and reprinted by permission.)

When your employer asks you to take a break and go for a walk, you happily oblige. And so I did when Mr. Hoyt asked me to walk downtown to see the new Suski Building at 820 State Street. It was 1965.

Such a sunny summer afternoon it was, and so we walked down the shady west side of State Street. When we arrived at the middle of the 800 block, we just stood there and looked up at it. In its white majesty it rose four stories straight up from the sidewalk. It was the new Suski Building.

"It's quite orderly and disciplined," I said to break the silence. Only five years out of architectural school, I was still indoctrinated with Miesian simplicity and order. I hadn't yet embraced the concept of architectural compatibility. Unimpressed by my comment Hoyt grouched, "Nothing like this has happened in Santa Barbara since the twenties. It's too big, way too big." He shook his head. "I'll tell you something, Bill, this is the wrong way for Santa Barbara. It's taking a bite

out of what we've been trying to preserve, the historical charm of our city."

Then we walked into El Paseo's patio and stood looking up at how that new building looms over the old two-story buildings on the north side of the patio. "If they'd had a bigger site, they could have set it back from El Paseo, and that would have helped," I offered. "Oh Billy," he said in a fatherly tone. "You're so naïve. If they'd had a bigger site, they'd have a bigger building."

Back in his office, he invited me to look at a plaque hanging on his wall. I stepped up and peered at it, looking first at its author's name: Charles F. Lummis, editor of the Los Angeles with a passion for Old California.

"Go ahead," Hoyt said. "Read it out loud."

"Do not let selfish men or greedy interest skin Santa Barbara of her Romance!

They are sure to do it unless you watch and stand fast.

- Charles F. Lummis

That was 1965. Now, I notice that building all the time. From De La Guerra Plaza looking

north at the venerable De La Guerra House, its massiveness steals the sky above the tile ridge of the old adobe. It rears three stories above El Paseo's charming and human scale patio, just as it did the first afternoon that Hoyt and I cranked our necks up to it. And from the west side of El Paseo, it towers five stories high: a very unfortunate expression of architectural hubris.

Not that the Suski Building is ugly. From the steps of the Post Office or along Canon Perdido and State Street, I find its architecture to possess a quiet dignity. It was, after all, designed by Lulah Riggs, protégé of George Washington Smith. Her taste and her understanding of Smith's love of simplicity is amply expressed in the rhythmic placement of windows and arched loggias.

In the end, however, the Suski Building is too big and its location on the site is unfortunate. It is too close to El Paseo. And its rectilinear shape gives no breathing room to its neighbors. "H" shaped designs, such as the Lobero Building, are much more successful. And, of course, the "U" shape of our Court

"When we arrived at the middle of the 800 block, we just stood there and looked up at it. In its white majesty it rose four stories straight up from the sidewalk. It was the new Suski Building."

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TALL BUILDINGS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 7)

House, along with its generous landscaped setbacks is the perfect example of siting and shape to mitigate bigness. Tall buildings benefit from setbacks that are in relationship to their height.

Unfortunately, most recent commercial buildings fill up their sites property line to property line. And more of them are choosing to go the four story limit provided in the City Charter.

The history of tall buildings in El Pueblo Viejo (our downtown historic district) is illustrated in the chart. By the end of the twenties, Santa Barbara had nine tall buildings. Then nothing happened for 35 more years. El Pueblo Viejo, thinking that its charm and scale were safe forever fell into a deep and unguarded sleep.

The five story Suski Building in 1965 was the wake-up call, followed by the County Administration Building. Those two buildings and a proposal to build high rise residential towers precipitated the 60 ft. charter amendment and an ordinance limiting building in the commercial zone to four stories. Now since El Pueblo Viejo is mostly in the commercial zone, the four-story, 60 ft. height

maximum applies.

As the chart shows, tall buildings continued to be built from time to time--- nine from 1965 to 2005. Then came the spike: in our present five year period (2005-2010) we will see ten tall buildings built, more than we've seen in the preceding forty years. We can only assume that this trend will continue, perhaps accelerate. This is a new wake up call.

The spread of tall buildings does not portend well for the future of our downtown historic district. It is a limited area. Its space, its charm, its human scale, its sky and mountain views, its openness are threatened Tall buildings consume these resources with their shadows, their blockage and traffic generation, their lack of charm ... in other words, with their incompatibility.

One only has to stand and look at the Arlington Tower to know that tall architecture can be wonderful and height in itself is not bad. It is the number of tall buildings that is becoming unacceptable. That is what the chart tells us. Too many, and they will change the wonderful character of our historic downtown. And the loss of human scale and Santa Barbara charm will be irreparable.

We will not be leaving to our heirs the El Pueblo Viejo that we inherited. It will be lost forever.

It is wistful thinking to hope that our Planning and Historic Landmarks Commissions can solve this problem. They cannot take away from land owners/developers the property rights granted by the City Charter and land use ordinances. But, we the people can amend our Charter and City Council can revise its ordinances. And this is the only solution. We must lower the height limit in El Pueblo Viejo. Fortunately, our City Charter directs us on building heights; *"It is hereby the policy of the City that high buildings are inimical to the basic residential and historical character of the City."* (Section 1506) To meet the intent of these words many of us believe that a 40 foot height limit is appropriate in the historic district.

Some will argue that such an action will cause the loss of potential housing. I suggest that it will be only the multi-million dollar condos looking out at the Channel Islands from their fourth floors that we will lose. Some argue for property rights, but these are not inalienable, they are granted by, and can be changed by

"We will not be leaving to our heirs the El Pueblo Viejo that we inherited. It will be lost forever."

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TALL BUILDINGS (CONTINUED)

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the people and by the City Council. Some ask if we can wait for the 2030 General Plan Update. But, the General Plan is only a guideline. The 60 foot maximum is already in our Charter. Developers may say that they have to build four stories because the land costs are so high. My appraiser friends tell me that land costs fluctuate with allowable building heights. If we lower the

height limit, the land costs will adjust downward accordingly. The most amusing argument that I've heard is that if we don't allow four stories, we won't have the varied skyline that makes the architecture of our city so interesting. Well, please give Santa Barbara a break. Many of us think the pre-1965 skyline of Santa Barbara was just about right. We should be worrying more about preserving El Pueblo Viejo

and making any changes very carefully, so as not to diminish her character, charm and human scale.

The plaque on Mr. Hoyt's wall calls us to our duty as stewards of this lovely and unique city which we have so fortunately inherited:

"Do not let selfish men or greedy interest skin Santa Barbara of her Romance..."

Stand fast.

Samarkand Neighborhood

The Association's mission is to provide a community voice to advise city officials, staff, school personnel and the community at large about community needs, events and concerns.



This newsletter is published 4 times per year by the Samarkand Neighborhood Association, Inc. Please direct comments to the editor: John Calder (john@thecalder.org or 687-6910) or any board member.

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