

# CHEVIOT HILLS HOME OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

**P.O. Box 64458, Los Angeles, CA 90064**     [www.cheviot hills.org](http://www.cheviot hills.org)

## **Minutes for the Board Meeting Thursday, September 7, 2023 Via Zoom**

Directors present: Bob Keehn (President), Jim Gilbert (Vice President), Marty Bischoff (Treasurer), Cindy Kane (Secretary), Renee Dernburg, Steve Herman, Eugene Izumo, Mike Mandel, Marcie Newby, Andrew Oelz, Greg Pulis, Larry Tabb

Directors not present: Margaret Gillespie, Mark Sedlander, Brandon Reif

Guests: Professor Michael Salman, Ellen Doyle

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

### **I. President's Report:**

#### **A. Guest: Michael Salman (current/upcoming drill site issues)**

Michael Salman joined us this evening. He is a professor emeritus of History at UCLA. Since 2014 he has worked on city and state oil industry regulation. He attended as a board member of Neighbors for a Safe Environment (NASE) which is a local community nonprofit organization concerned with the West Pico drill site, and all the drill sites in CD5 and the city as a whole. Salman and others were active with the Rancho Park drill site and the zoning administrator (ZA) in 2018. Together they prevented installation of a natural gas burning flare after the November 2017 mercaptan leak. He explained that CHHOA has been very supportive of NASE's efforts regarding the West Pico Drill Site since 2020. Bob invited him to speak tonight about what he sees as troubling developments at all four drill sites in CD5 including at Hillcrest and Rancho Park. NASE will be sharing detailed news about this and community email updates over the next two weeks. They will be asking for help from individuals and groups like our HOA. Salman attended tonight to give us a quick heads up about the underlying issues.

There are new unapproved projects on oil wells at West Pico and Hillcrest. More unapproved projects were attempted at Rancho Park and Hillcrest this past year. At West Pico the oil company's new projects on wells are being waived through by the ZA without required formal applications and reviews despite the fact that NASE won a unanimous city council vote in May 2023 granting their appeal to require an environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This is also happening despite the city's new law that prohibits such projects unless they qualify for a health, safety, or environmental exception after an application and a full zoning administrator review. Salman explained that we can see the pattern of the ZA not following city law and the state CEQA law. At Hillcrest, three projects on wells were executed in fall 2022, without application to the ZA for city

approval and for CEQA clearance. This was brought to the city's attention. In response the ZA is proposing to grant the project retroactive approval a year later without public notice, without CEQA and without a public hearing by claiming that there was a "eminent emergency threat to public health safety, or the environment". However, the ZA is not telling anyone what the emergency threat actually is. This is an abuse of a provision in the city's new law that prohibits new projects and oil wells unless they can be shown in a full review to address a health, safety or environmental problem and to do it in public, with an exception only for emergency cases. A second pattern is that the ZA is making oil cases disappear from public view by not requiring full formal applications, not giving public notice, not putting proposals through CEQA's environmental analysis, and not holding public hearings. There is a third pattern that is emerging that's worse and may hit the communities around Hillcrest and Rancho Park drill sites harder than anywhere else in the city. Last week it was discovered that a deputy city attorney, who handles oil cases, appears to be contending that the city's new law that prohibits drilling new wells, re-drilling existing wells, and performing maintenance projects on wells does not apply at the West Pico Drill site. Her contention, according to Salman, is based on a clearly erroneous reading of past ZA approvals for West Pico and her implicit incorrect assumption that the city's new oil law does not prevail over old approvals. If the deputy city attorney's approach were to be applied across all oil drill sites in the city, then her implicit assumption that new law does not prevail over old approvals would hit worst of all at the communities around the Hillcrest and Rancho Park drill sites. The original 1957 and 1958 approvals for those sites were issued a dozen years before the protections of CEQA existed and 60 years prior to current environmental knowledge. The city's new law makes statements of authorization for future new projects that are comparatively clearer and more explicit than what the ZA wrongly claims about the 1957 and 1958 approvals and what the deputy city attorney wrongly claims is an authorization at West Pico which dates to 2000. At Hillcrest and Rancho Park, the implications of the deputy city attorney's incorrect assumption about the new law and her lax reading of old approvals would allow the operating oil company to drill dozens of new wells and perform unlimited maintenance projects on wells, all without ever applying to the ZA or going through any CEQA reviews or public hearings. NASE will have community updates and will need to ask for our help.

B. Approval of minutes for August

The minutes were approved and will be posted to the website.

C. Website Upgrade

Marcie reported to the board and opened discussion about a \$5 increase in dues. Most everything has gone up in price. We are spending money to use a new membership software and this minor increase will also help offset the processing fees of PayPal. The last increase from \$70 to \$95 was in 2019. The board discussed increasing even more however others felt that we need to do better outreach to get homeowners to understand what they are getting for their money. A motion carried to increase the dues from \$95 to \$100. This will go into effect when the new website is live and a new member signs up. Members current on their dues will receive a reminder ahead of January 1st to pay their dues.

The board was provided a sneak peek of the working website design. Board members will have a chance to review the website prior to it going live. It is expected to go live on September 12<sup>th</sup>.

D. Fox Expansion presentation

Several board members attended the Fox presentation on August 28<sup>th</sup>. The two most prominent new structures are a 24-story building along Olympic Blvd and a 42-story (35 floors of office space and 7 floors of parking) along Avenue of the Stars. Apparently 95% of traffic will still be routed to Pico/Motor gate. The EIR will take a full year to complete, and it will include many traffic studies. Fox is at the first step of nine steps. Currently they have almost 5,000 parking spaces and will be seeking to add another 4,900 parking spaces. Jim suggested we began to think about lining up legal representation or traffic engineers. This is something we would share the cost with other HOAs. We will have a lot of time before anything is approved. Others felt it was premature to seek out representation. Some of the CCTMP (Century City Traffic Mitigation) earmarked funds can be used for traffic studies. Bob will reach out to Mike Eveloff to discuss this project and how the funds can be accessed.

E. Possible Mid-Year Mailing to Residents

Deferred

F. APS price increase and revised contract

The draft was circulated to the board. The times for opening (5:30am)/closing (10:30pm) the Northvale gate and the deployment schedule will be added. An old email revealed that we share two cars with California Country Club from 8:00 a.m. until noon – meaning that we have the functional equivalent of one dedicated car for that four-hour period – and that we share a single car with CCC from noon to 4:00 p.m. There is no patrol coverage before 8:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. however APS would respond to an emergency call from our area outside of the active patrol hours.

The final draft must be reviewed by all board members and approved. It needs to be sent to APS.

G. West Pico and Rancho Park Drill Sites

Nothing new to add.

H. 2720 Monte Mar Terrace

Nothing new to add.

I. Midvale Project

Several board members have attended meetings about this project. We have not been formally asked to take a position on this project. We are geographically distant from the project. All we should do as a board is share information with the community.

J. Dollar Tree Store on Pico

A lease has been signed by Dollar Tree to take over the space once occupied by Face Values at Pico/Prosser. The Westside Neighborhood Council is working with CD5 to make sure they follow rules as a business. Some of the neighboring businesses are worried about the clientele that will shop there.

K. Resident suggestions regarding Rancho Park

Glen Friedman made a couple of suggestions. One is to get Katy Yaroslavsky on record to not use the parking area near the archery range as a tiny homes village. He also suggested

that we get the Rancho Park Golf Course “historic status” so it can’t be turned into housing someday.

There was discussion about the status of the golf course remodeling. As the Fox expansion takes hold we should think about how we can improve things at the park or golf course.

These two proposals from Glen would carry more weight if they came from surrounding HOAs. It was suggested that maybe Glen also approach other HOAs (Teri Tippit, WofWFOA). Bob will reach out to Glen to discuss this.

L. United Neighbors

The group had a meeting with Katy two weeks ago with the various proposals. She was generally supportive of the group’s efforts. The group has been in touch with her deputies and will be working with the planning department as they roll out new maps.

II. Secretary’s Report/Membership

- A. Membership – Membership currently stands at 343.
- B. CPAB update – SLO Chris Baker in a telephone update to Cindy reported that the catalytic converter etching event was yesterday. Three Cheviot residents signed up and attended the event. He also reported that there has been an RV parked across from Overland Ave Elementary School. He is working with CD5 to help get the administrative process going so the Dept of Transportation can act on it for removal.
- C. Ellen Doyle’s ideas to improve membership – Ellen was thanked for her full list of ideas. We appreciate her taking the time to brainstorm. The highlights include distributing flyers and creating a survey to the community. There was discussion about the upcoming Rory Posin block party. This is a community event and they do not solicit for business. We will continue discussions on ideas for improving membership with the area realtors.  
Ellen reported that most people in the neighborhood don’t know that there is an HOA and what we do for them. One of the reasons she wanted to get involved is for historical preservation, but she doesn’t see that as a focus of our HOA. We all feel strongly about historical preservation; however, we don’t have any legal standing. Anyway, more events could be helpful to membership. If we really want to expand the security patrol then we should state that. We should give people a reason to join. Perhaps a subcommittee can come together to further address this. Eugene, Greg and Marcie agreed to meet separately with Ellen.

III. Financial Report

No questions about the financial report.

IV. Public Comment/Other

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.