

SHEFFIELD VILLAGE CRIER

SHEFFIELD VILLAGE HOME OWNERS' ASSOCIATION
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SPARKS FLY AT 2003 ANNUAL HOMEOWNER'S MEETING

DANBURY CONSTRUCTION, CC&R's, AND DUES DEBATED

Over 55 homeowners attended the Annual Meeting and Election on January 4th, a two and a half hour session that saw often contentious arguments over issues from the legality of funding the Annual Picnic to revision of the CC&R's, to increasing dues, to whether or not action should be taken concerning the construction project on Danbury Street. (*Disclosure: this reporter, as the outgoing Board President, was often at the center of the debate.*)

Almost lost in the proceedings were the election of three new Directors to the Board: Don Melcher, Sally Barros and Charlie Ridgell, as the terms expired for President Brian Brick, Vice President Jill Warner, and Secretary-Treasurer Jennie Brick. (Don and Sally introduce themselves in letters appearing on page 3 of this issue; also see Charlie's column on the pages 3 - 4.) Said one Villager at meeting's end: "It's a miracle they found anyone willing to be on the Board after this."

The meeting started with an announcement that the year-end financial statements would be presented at the next Board meeting, along with a

the donations received by the Association. The issue appears likely to be raised again this year, although a majority of those present seemed to support the Egg Hunt and the Annual Picnic.

After a brief review of the major Association events of the last year, Parks Chair Matt Cronin addressed the state of the Village-owned parks. Some tree work will be done in January - but more work will be needed in the foreseeable future. This led into a discussion of the need to revise the CC&R's to raise dues, "so that everytime we need to take care of the parks we don't have to go begging with a tin cup". The responses to this suggestion were many: why doesn't the Village sell the parks to a private developer (calling Ed Patmont?) or deed them to the Parks Department, why aren't other trees being trimmed, etc.

Many Villagers were concerned about the mechanism by which new CC&R's would be approved, as well as what the legal costs might be. Despite many sound comments, it did not appear that any consensus was reached as to whether or not the dues should be increased or the CC&R's re-written. Some Villagers supported an overall dollar "cap" on dues; others were concerned about whether exceptions should be made for Villagers on fixed budgets or long-time residents. The only consensus seemed to be that the issue will take at least a year to resolve, one way or the other

The longest, and most emotional debate

presented. Three other members stated they had definitely not seen the facade drawings; the fifth did not remember. However, the Board admittedly did not retain a copy of the plans that were approved (in violation of the CC&R's; the Board claiming it was told the plans had to be returned; the homeowner denying such statement) - and thus it would be a "he said - she said" battle on the issue.

About two dozen Villagers offered comments on the situation. Some supported the construction as appropriate to the neighborhood, others supported it on procedural grounds - that the Board had approved it, or it was too late to reject it - while others opposed the construction as not in character with the neighborhood, or based on alleged improprieties in the City permit process.

Several motions were made, and amended, but when the dust finally settled, the 24-9 vote was to have the Association attempt to negotiate with the homeowners, and to obtain a free consultation with a real estate law attorney, to be advised of legal rights. It was approved that if litigation was to be brought, the Board would first give 10 day's notice for a special meeting with the attorney, at which time a vote would be taken. A fee limit for such meeting was approved; a deadline for negotiations was rejected. A subsequent motion to drop all claims against the homeowner was disallowed by the President as being inconsistent with the motion previously approved.

In short - nothing was resolved, but the parties will continue to talk.

Due to the length of the meeting, final comments from the retiring Board members were skipped, save for a few brief comments by Jennie Brick, and recognition of the volunteers of the year was also omitted. Instead, the last item was election of new officers. Three of the primary participants in the debate ultimately agreed to run, after a strong

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

One of the traditional honors bestowed by the SVHOA Board each year is the recognition of one or more "volunteers of the year". Last year the Village was once again the beneficiary of so many contributions of time and effort that the task of selecting the honorees was exceptionally difficult.

The Board wished to make special mention of the following Villagers: ? Lita Flinders- picnic, garage sale, blight fighter; ? Carole Delozier- webmistress; ? Dawn Chesney- development fighter, "Make a Difference Day" organizer; ? Gerry Delozier- Easter helper, garage sale mover and shaker, picnic helper, all around great "pitch-in" guy; ? Janice Jorgenson- picnic helper; ? Maureen Cronin- picnic helper; ? Pat Mossburg- city liaison, endless fount of information; ? Michelle Fulper- taking care of our rec center, always helping whenever asked, and for bringing her giant lizard to the picnic; ? and all of the many behind the scenes people who helped with the parks, the fight against the development, the picnic and Easter Egg Hunt, etc.... the Villagers who got involved!

The Board selected, as volunteers of the year, the following five Villagers:

? ? **Susanna and Gerry Oto** - Easter Egg Hunt creators and organizers for two years running, who also help with the kids' games for the picnic, even when they are out of town!

? ? **John and Tracy Shimko** - Since they moved to the village only three years ago they have helped with just about *every* event and cause, including the Chabot Golf Course battle, every garage sale, the Easter Egg Hunt, every picnic... AND they led the Christmas Caroling in 2001 year!

? ? **Steve Bettcher** - He had just moved into the Village and immediately came to a Board meeting and said "what can I do to help?".

MEET YOUR NEW SVHOA BOARD MEMBERS

Sally Barros, Plans Chair:

I grew up in San Leandro, attending Roosevelt School, Bancroft and San Leandro High. My childhood best friends both resided in the Sheffield Village, so I have been around the neighborhood since the 1970s. After receiving a Bachelors of Science degree in Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1983, I then lived in Central America, Sweden and South America for the next 17 years, working in journalism, forestry, and starting a family. I returned to the Bay Area in 2000 to live near my parents, who still live on Begier Avenue. I am a single mother and both of my children attend Roosevelt School. I work with the City of San Leandro in the Community Development Department, Planning Division.

? ? ?

Don Melcher, Vice President

I was born at Oakland Hospital and first lived in San Leandro at the corner of Bowling Green and Pershing Drive. My father's side of the family had a lot of involvement in the area when I was growing up, including my grandparents being one-time owners of what is now Dutton Ace Hardware, Real Estate Sales (my grandfather worked for Stanley M Davis), Postal Service - my father was a mail carrier in San Leandro and he later one of the first television shops in San Leandro on Victoria Circle.

Though we had moved to Hayward by the time I started school, most of father's family lived in San Leandro on Dutton Avenue near Washington School, so I spent some of my weekends and summer vacation time nearby.

building material distribution business, and for PG&E.

While at PG&E, I started a part-time marine communications business in Alameda that turned into a full-time business about 7 years ago. Hopefully, I can successfully balance the demands of that business with my time on the board.

? ? ?

President's Corner

Charlie Ridgell, President

On January 4, after living in Sheffield Village for 3½ years, I went to my first SVHOA meeting. Although my family and I have always loved the neighborhood and plan to stay, we had never paid more than casual attention to the HOA. We paid our dues, our kids went to the annual picnic and we've donated items to the annual garage sale, but that was about it.

I considered attending the meeting because I was curious about the item in the meeting notice regarding the construction project at 14 Danbury. I know the owners and asked what it was about. That's when I learned that some in the neighborhood objected to the new design.

I decided to go to the meeting and hear the discussion for myself. I was also hoping to see if others had City tree roots tearing up their driveways and lawns, and to see if there was any interest in adding more speed bumps on Marlow. I hadn't given the slightest thought to the election of SVHOA officers.

After reports from the officers on the state of the parks, the budget, and the activities of the last year, the discussion turned to the item that dominated the meeting: the construction at 14 Danbury.

Two main issues were raised. There were objections to the new appearance of the house because, in the opinion of the objectors, it looked

Although everyone got to have their say, the meeting at times became a little uncivil and took on a tone of mutual distrust. There was even a suggestion that the SVHOA should sue the owners. And there was an allegation about an e-mail that implied the house should be torched!

At the end of the discussion, two motions were passed: The first was to consult legal counsel (at no expense to the SVHOA). And the second was to meet with the owners and attempt to 'negotiate' an acceptable resolution. (I voted in the minority in each case.)

The meeting then proceeded to the election of three new officers. One neighbor was nominated for the Board but declined. No one else was nominated or volunteered. The outgoing president briefly described the time commitment and typical activities. After further silence I raised my hand and volunteered to serve on the Board. Then another neighbor, Sally Barros, raised her hand, and then a third, Don Melcher raised his. As there were no other nominee/volunteers, the three of us were declared elected.

After the meeting the two continuing and three new Board members met. Matt Cronin indicated a desire to continue with the Parks assignment; Gail Rappl agreed to become the Treasurer, and Sally Barros indicated an interest in the Plans assignment. I suggested that Don Melcher be the President, but he insisted that since I had volunteered first, I should be President and he would be the Vice-President. And there you have it!

The discussion on 14 Danbury left unanswered my big question: Given that the construction is almost complete, what specifically do those who object to the appearance of the house want the owners to do?

It also raised other questions for me: If the owners followed all the rules and have all the proper

I believe these are important questions to consider as times change and Sheffield Village with them. We owe it to ourselves to discuss these matters in a calm and focused way in order to preclude future conflicts, and to handle differences of opinion in a civil manner that strengthens our bonds as a community.

The new Board took up the issue at its meeting of January 21, which was the earliest that all five Board members were available. In addition to the Board, there were about a dozen other neighborhood residents, including the owners of 14 Danbury.

When the discussion turned to the matter of 14 Danbury, the owners of the house presented their plans with a letter from the Board's Plans Chair indicating the Board had approved them. After full discussion (including a few reports of informal conversations with lawyers) in which the majority of those present concluded there was no basis for legal action since the owners had obtained all the proper City permits, and many expressed the opinion that the neighborhood needed to move on, the Board, by a 3-2 vote, passed a motion "confirming the previous Board's approval of the plans as presented, and to request that the owners work with the Plans Chair to improve the harmony with existing structures through the selection of exterior finishes". The Board then voted 4-0 to apologize to the owners and to confirm that they had followed proper process.

At this point, although not everyone is happy, the matter is essentially moot. If the owners and the Plans Chair work something out, that's good. If not, there's not much to be done but for those who are dissatisfied to pursue the matter on their own and at their own expense.

I believe strongly that there is no good purpose to be served by the SVHOA continuing to

WELCOME TO ALL NEW SHEFFIELD VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS IN 2002

This past year the following joined the Village! Be sure and say "hello" to your new neighbors!! Murray Stokely (Danbury), Gerald & Johanna Howell (Roxbury), the Daougs (Middleton), Jose & Maria Gutierrez (Marlow), David & Judy DeYoe (Brookfield), David Ling & Talitha Green (Marlow), Matthew & Tracy Bauer (Marlow), David & Ann D'Antonio (Covington), Alice Wagner & Lumberto Roque-Hernandez (Covington), Peggy Rismanchi & John Caruso (Covington), and David & Alyssa West (Revere)!

ALL VILLAGERS ARE INVITED TO SVHOA BOARD MEETINGS. THE NEXT MEETINGS WILL BE HELD FEBRUARY 25TH and MARCH 25TH AT 6:30 PM AT THE CLUBHOUSE, 247 MARLOW DRIVE

Please Come Take Trimmings and Free Firewood!
The tree trimming at Milford Park (the tennis court) and Onset Park is now complete, but a good 50 barrels of trimming need to be disposed of, the majority of which is in Milford. Please come by with your green barrel and take some of the trimmings, and pick up some free firewood while you are at it! Call Parks Chair Matt Cronin at 430-1636 with any questions.

WE DID IT! SHEFFIELD VILLAGE (AGAIN) MADE A DIFFERENCE!!!!
On Saturday, October 26th, hundreds of Sheffield Villagers contributed to our second "Make

misspellings or unmentioned names): Brian Brick, Catherine Chriss, Maureen Cronin, Lita Flinders, Don Fuller, Michelle Fulper, Stefan Galvez, Laura Gouldthorpe, Cherie Harpell, Deni Hodges, Sharon James, Janice Jorgenson, Peter Lemcke, Elizabeth Moorehead, Jackie Meier, Pat Mossburg, Jennifer Palmer, Rich Palmer, Jana Parker, Gail Rappl, Tammy Rodriques, Benton Russel, Ian Russel, Marlene Sinagra, Clara Roque-Wagner, Alice Wagner, Allison Yee, Don Yee and Suzanne Yee.

A heartfelt THANKS to Maureen Cronin for making me a hot lunch...yummy! Also to Lita Flinders for being our photographer and Rich Palmer for making the signs. A special thanks to Larry Reid, our Councilmember, for the very nice letter acknowledging our efforts in the Village to make a difference in our community!

Dawn Chesney, Villager

Villager Classifieds
? **LOST CAT** "Ollie", missing since Jan. 5th from 381 Marlow Dr. (near Middleton), is a spayed female approx. 8 years old. Very slender, "tiger" printed tabby (brownish hues; color photos posted around Village) Extremely friendly, loves to lick noses. Could she be in your garage or under your house ? If you spot her, PLEASE call 430-9097.
? **SEARS EXERCISE BIKE**. 2 years old, hardly used. Great shape. Paid \$350. FREE. Contact John at jshimko@pacbell.net or 635-7460.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:
Non-Emergency Police: 777-3333
Patrol Officer Cell Phones: 520-9235
(9 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.); 520-9935 (2 p.m. - 1 a.m.)
City Park Security (Ranger): 851-2130
Michelle Fulper, Village Rec. Center: 638-7190
Charlie Ridgell, SVHOA President: 635-2898

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