

Hillside Federation Newsletter June, 2011



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The City Needs a “Clean Hands” Ordinance Wendy-Sue Rosen



A Clean Hands ordinance would keep applicants with outstanding violations from getting any permits.

The County of Los Angeles has a “clean hands” ordinance, which is, as County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky recently explained, a “common sense rule” that “if you violate the zoning code, we will not process a new application on your property until you remedy the existing violations.” Its “purpose is to hold violators of the law accountable.” The clean hands ordinance is important because local governments lack the resources to perfectly monitor and enforce zoning requirements.

The City of Los Angeles, however, does not have a “clean hands” ordinance. So property owners with one or more code violations have been

Agenda June 1, 2011 7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

Guest Speaker:

“Clean Hands” - Ben Saltsman

II. Approval of May 4, 2011 minutes

III. Officers’ Reports

A. President’s Report

B. Treasurer’s Report

IV. Old Business

A. Ads in Parks - Marian Dodge

B. Cell Phone Towers

V. New Business

A. 9118-9229 Crescent Dr. - Carol Sidlow,
Steve Poster

B. Modified Parking Requirement Districts -
Wendy-Sue Rosen

VI. Adjournment

Next meeting - Wednesday, July 6, 2011

Pinz Bowling Center, next to Jerry’s Deli

12655 Ventura Blvd., Studio City 91604

101 between Coldwater Canyon exit and Laurel
Canyon exit

The mission of the Hillside Federation shall be: To protect the property and the quality of life of the residents of the Santa Monica Mountains and other hillside areas of Los Angeles and its environs, and to encourage and promote those policies and programs which will best preserve the natural topography and wildlife of the mountains and hillsides for the benefit of all the people of Los Angeles.

allowed to obtain grading, building and other permits without first bringing their properties into compliance with all land-use regulations. That is just bad policy. The City should adopt a clean hands ordinance similar to Section 22.04.110 of the County’s Zoning Code, which provides as follows:

“No application for any permit required pursuant to this title shall be accepted for processing or approved where an existing land use, not previously authorized by any statute or ordinance, is being maintained or operated in violation of any applicable provision of this title, or any condition of approval of a land use permit. This provision applies to the operation of land uses only, and does not affect buildings or structures which do not conform to development standards. [¶] Where in his sole discretion the director, whose determination shall be final, determines that the use in question is consistent with the objectives, goals and policies of the General Plan, or that the continuation of said use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare, this provision shall not apply.”

The need for a clean hands ordinance is especially important in hillside areas, as two current development projects illustrate. Representatives

of a property owner on Tower Lane in Benedict Canyon are seeking what they claim are “ministerial” and “by right” grading and building permits for an approximately 60,000 square-foot museum-sized mega-mansion on a 5.2 acre hillside lot. They contend that these massive grading and building permits must be issued, regardless of long-standing violations on the property and factual errors on recent land-use applications that are not part of the grading and building permit applications. If the City had a clean hands ordinance in place, the property owner would be required to bring all aspects of the property into compliance before the City would even consider granting the grading and building permits. Similarly, a property owner in Franklin Canyon contends that the City is required to grant his building permit application despite the fact that he is grading massive swaths of hillside without a permit and in defiance of a stop-work order. Again, with a clean hands ordinance, the City would not even consider his “by right” applications for an approximately 22,000 square foot project until he brings the entire property into compliance.

County Supervisor Yaroslavsky, in an April 28, 2011 letter to Bud Ovrom, the General Manager of the City’s Department of Building and Safety, and Michael LoGrande, Director of the City’s Planning Department, asked that the Tower Lane property be brought into full compliance with the law. In his letter, Supervisor Yaroslavsky described the County’s clean hands ordinance as an effective tool for ensuring such compliance. It is time for the City to adopt the same common-sense clean hands policy by passing a clean hands ordinance.

P.O. Box 27404 Los Angeles, CA 90027 323-663-1031 president@hillsidefederation.org www.hillsidefederation.org	ORGANIZATIONS: Bel Air Knolls Property Owners Bel Air Skycrest POA Bel Air Ridge Association Benedict Canyon Association Cahuenga Pass Neighborhood Crests Neighborhood Assn. Encino Property Owners Assn. Forrest Hills Homeowners Assn. Franklin Ave./Hollywood Bl. West Franklin Hills Residents Assn. Highlands Owners Assn. Hollywood Dell Civic Assn. Hollywood Heights Assn. Hollywoodland Homeowners Holmby Hills HOA Kagel Canyon Civic Assn. La Tuna Canyon Community	Laurel Canyon Assn. Los Feliz Improvement Assn. Mt. Olympus Property Owners Mt. Washington Homeowners Nichols Canyon Assn. N. Beverly Dr./Franklin Canyon Oak Forest Canyon Assn. Outpost Estates Homeowners Residents of Beverly Glen Roscomare Valley Assn. Shadow Hills Property Owners Sherman Oaks HOA Studio City Residents Assn. Tarzana Property Owners Assn. Torreyson Flynn Assn. Upper Mandeville Canyon Whitley Heights Civic Assn.	CHAIRPERSONS EMERITUS Shirley Cohen Jerome C. Daniel Patricia Bell Hearst Gordon Murley Polly Ward CHAIRMAN IN MEMORIUM Brian Moore
PRESIDENT Marian Dodge CHAIRMAN Charley Mims VICE PRESIDENT Mark Stratton Wendy-Sue Rosen SECRETARY Donna Messinger TREASURER Don Andres			