

SANTA MONICA NEWS

City Council Trims Planning Commission's Hedge Role

The battle over hedge height is starting to heat up again. Now, the City Council has decided to remove the Planning Commission from having the final say on residents' appeals and place jurisdiction of the appeals with an independent hearing officer. Many residents are criticizing the city's decision to remove appeals from a large panel to a single judge.

The issue over the height of hedges arose in 2004 when the city began giving notices to residents saying that they faced enormous daily fines if they did not immediately trim hedges in accordance with a 1948 ordinance that was rarely, if ever, enforced.

After a public outcry, a new

ordinance was passed that set height limits at 42" in front, and 12' on the sides and at the rear of properties. Under the new ordinance, higher hedges that had already been in place could be grandfathered in if registered with the city.

However, residents who contested grandfathered hedges had the right to file appeals with the city. Roughly 105 appeals were heard by a zoning administrator, with about 28 of those decisions being appealed to the Planning Commission.

The council and commission felt that the commission's current workload prevented it from hearing appeals in a timely fashion.

CCSM To Build 45 Condos
The Community Corporation

of Santa Monica (CCSM), which through generous funding from the City of Santa Monica has become the largest landlord in the city, is embarking on a large, new housing project in the Pico Neighborhood.

The three-story, 45-unit condominium project is slated for High Place in the Pico Neighborhood, a one-block street located east of Cloverfield Blvd. and north of the

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Meeting Announcement

Lainy Parry / Bill Dawson - Meeting Moderator
Legal Questions Answered
State Legislative Report
Rent Control/Owner Education

**City Council Candidate's Forum/
Earthquake Safety Valves & Bootleg Units**

Mon., Sept. 22, 2008 • 7:00 P.M.
Oct. Meeting - Oct. 27

Colorado Center Comm. Rm. - 2500 Broadway - Across from Helen's Cycle Shop
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Under the Dome **BUDGET IMPASSE** **BECOMES TOXIC**

*By Steve Carlson,
Sacramento Lobbyist*

As this article is being written, the budget impasse continues, and it is getting pretty ugly. The Governor has incurred the wrath of state employees by signing an Executive Order lowering wages to the federal minimum wage level and by laying off temporary employees and many retired annuitants. He has also threatened to veto all bills sent to him until there is a deal on the budget.

His initial proposal of a temporary one cent sales tax tied to a long-term budget spending cap and other reforms was not received warmly by Republicans or Democrats, for predictably different reasons. The Democrats, who desperately want to attend the Democratic Presidential Convention in Denver at the end of August, realize the public perception would be terrible if no budget deal has been reached by then.

Adding to the mess, the Democratic leadership in the Assembly threw Assemblymember Nicole Parra (D-Hanford) and her staff out of her Capitol office for being the only Democrat to refuse to vote for their budget proposal. A moderate Democrat, she warned that she would not vote for a budget unless there was movement on Central Valley water issues.

Not only was she sent to an office building across the street that houses legislative staff, she was also informed that the remainder of her bills for this year would be killed in the Assembly.

Virtually all of the bills we are interested in have been resolved favorably, but at this tricky time of the year we must be vigilant to guard against last minute “gut and

amends.” The only bill among the key bills we have been following that has had substantive movement since my last article is AB 2052.

AB 2052 (Lieu) – Relieving Victims of Domestic Violence from Lease Obligations

AB 2052 awaits action on the Senate Floor at this writing. The bill provides a process to allow a victim of domestic violence abuse to get out of a rental property lease without penalty. AAGLA and the California Association of Realtors (CAR) asked the author to consider amendments to the bill that could facilitate the eviction of the abuser, especially in just-cause-eviction jurisdictions.

The proposal was originally rejected by the bill’s sponsors. However, through our lobbying efforts, the assistance of the author and the Judiciary Committee staffs, and the cooperation of tenant and battered women’s advocates, we believe we have found a compromise for the purposes of terminating a perpetrator’s tenancy once a victim has vacated. If the bill is amended as agreed, and we are cautiously optimistic it will be, AAGLA will support the measure as it proceeds through the remainder of the process.

The status of the bills below is virtually unchanged from our last article.

AB 2925 (Davis) – Substandard Housing

This bill would have imposed unreasonable requirements on and discourage those who would purchase substandard housing with the goal of rehabilitating the properties.

With our California Housing Providers Coalition allies, we killed the measure in the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee.

AB 2586 (Torrice) – Tenants in Foreclosed Properties

Amendments have narrowed the scope of the bill. Initially, it would have imposed notice and other

requirements in situations where a tenant resides in a foreclosed property. Most allied groups have moved to a neutral/watch position. The bill awaits a vote on the Senate Floor.

SB 1598 (Padilla) – Smoking

The bill was dropped by the author without a hearing in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

SB 1299 (Migden) – Rent Control

Originally terrible, this bill would have required one-for-one replacement of units demolished in rent-controlled communities, and placed the new units under previous price controls. It died without a hearing in the Assembly.

SB 1386 (Lowenthal) – Carbon Monoxide Detectors

The bill would require carbon monoxide detectors in all multifamily properties with fossil-fuel-burning appliances. Amendments would, for existing multifamily properties, require installation at least two years after the publication of the 2010 state building standards and that tenants notify an owner if the device is inoperable. It awaits a vote on the Assembly Floor.

SB 1518 (Correa) – Submetering

After amendments gutted the bill, it is now being used for a completely different purpose.

SB 1608 (Corbett, et. al.) – Disability

This bill strikes a positive balance between disability access and providing owners with the opportunity to cure problems before suits are brought. It also includes a certification process to ward off many of the frivolous actions that have been growing in this area. The bill awaits a vote on the Assembly Floor.

In our next article, we will do a final summary of legislation this year and take a look at the November elections that will result in over 30 new members of the Legislature.

Mona's Musings CITY COUNCIL'S FORUM/ BOOTLEG UNITS & EARTHQUAKE SAFETY VALVES

By Mona Begum,
Westside Office Manager

Hopefully, you enjoyed having some time off from AAGLA meetings in August. Now let's get back to business. It's kind of like all the kids heading back to school this month only we head back to the meeting room.

This month's meeting will be held on Monday, September 22, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting will feature a forum consisting of candidates running for the four open City Council seats. All four of the incumbent council members are running for re-election.

We also plan on introducing

Jack Leonard, the new chief building official for the City of Santa Monica. He will discuss bootleg units and the new requirements for earthquake gas safety valves, and take your questions.

As usual, the meeting will feature a local attorney to answer legal questions and discuss legal issues. And, of course, we will have our usual maintenance and vendor tips.

Don't forget that when you attend our Santa Monica meetings, you have a chance to win a \$300 gift certificate, generously donated by Carlson's Appliances, located at 1342 5th Street in Santa Monica. So, in addition to all the information you can gather at the meeting, you have a chance to win something nice.

After the September 22 meeting, our next Santa Monica meeting will be held on Monday, October 27, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.

The Santa Monica Meeting is held in the Colorado Center Community Room, located at 2500

Broadway Avenue in Santa Monica. The meeting room is just across the street from Helen's Cycle Shop. Street and validated parking in the building are available.

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City Council Trims Planning Commission's Hedge Role

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10 freeway.

This will be the first project developed by CCSM that includes condominium units for sale. According to CCSM, the 45 three-bedroom condominiums will be made available to qualifying moderate-income families if they can qualify for a loan. CCSM said that preference will be given to Santa Monica residents and full-time city employees.

What is not clear at this time is what restrictions will be placed on the re-sale of the units to ensure that they are affordable to subsequent purchasers.

The proposed price for the condominiums is \$225,000, well below market for similar units. The estimated cost of the condominium project is \$24 million, with the City of Santa Monica expected to contribute about \$14.5 million.

CCSM will also develop an-

other 45 units of affordable rental housing at the High Place site it has owned since about 2002. The development site on High Place consists of approximately seven parcels totaling 50,000 square feet of land, according to the public record.

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