



A Message from the Board President

As fall comes to Santa Barbara, it's time to look back on the Upper East Association's contributions to the betterment of our neighborhood.

The Board of the Upper East Association (UEA) has had a very busy year trying to stay in front of two divisive issues with potential impact on our wonderful neighborhood: **vacation rentals** and **district elections**. In both cases, we have been able to use a survey tool to ascertain your thoughts on these issues. Because we feel it is an effective tool to help us understand our members' thinking, we will continue to fine-tune this approach.

As to **vacation rentals**, I believe the current Council is trying to walk a fine line between (1) property rights and residents' ability to address their income needs and (2) those of the wider community who must contend with issues that come with visitors wishing to have a brief experience of living in this very special place. We will continue to monitor the city's progress on this issue and keep you abreast of related items as they come to our attention.

District elections are a larger long-term situation, which will affect how we govern ourselves as a city. Although we as a Board took a proactive approach in this process, our membership was divided on how this might be implemented. Nevertheless district elections are here to stay for some time, and we will need to ascertain how to advocate for the best interest of the neighborhood and the UEA. Like other neighborhoods in town we will be on a learning curve. The first election under the new system will be this November. There will be three Council members elected in the Eastside, Westside and Mesa districts. The other members will continue to serve as they were elected at-large. In the next election the other three districts will elect their own representatives. The Mayor will always be elected at-large.

The Board continues to take a hands-on role in carrying out various activities. To that work effort we have invited Diane Johnson to join us as our newsletter

editor. Many thanks to Milt Hess who will take a well-deserved rest from this assignment; we look forward to his continued contributions to the Board's work. Speaking of the Board, we hope there will be a number of you who will consider joining us as two to three of our members step down this coming year.

As to my dog Mo and me, we have spent the year contemplating RV parking, wayward dogs, noise (particularly from Earl Warren Showgrounds), and crime monitoring. Board members Beth Perry, Tony Fischer, Steve Forsell, and Milt have put in the bulk of the effort to monitor and keep you informed about these issues. Joan Livingston and her committee hosted a very successful gathering of representatives of the numerous institutions that are part of our neighborhood. Marie-Paule Hajdu, Lisa Burns, and Steve contributed to researching neighborhood history and the all-important effort to monitor our water use to keep things as green as possible through this drought.

Don Olson, Steve, and I spent many hours in support of the wider organization now known as the Mission Heritage Trail Association, or "A Safe Passage". We have worked to keep the project moving in a positive direction in spite of a concerted campaign by some who don't want changes made and aren't terribly concerned about the safety of walkers, bikers, and others through that important corridor within and adjacent to the Upper East neighborhood.

So now it is on to this next year where new challenges will surely arise. We as a Board will continue to watch for the best ways to preserve and enhance this place we call home.

Fred Sweeney
President, Upper East Association
Board of Directors



Become a Member for 2016

It's time to renew your membership in the Upper East Association (UEA) for 2016, or to join if you're not yet a member. Annual dues for next year will again be \$20.

If you live or own property in the Upper East you know what a lovely and historic neighborhood it is. The Association's goal is to keep it that way. The UEA serves three key roles:

- Monitor local government initiatives affecting the Upper East and keep our members informed.
- Share the Upper East perspective with local government officials.
- Promote activities to beautify the neighborhood and enhance the quality of life of our residents.

We send out monthly email newsletters alerting our members to coming events and neighborhood news. We invite members to let us know about quality-of-life issues, and in a number of cases we've been able to do something about them. We maintain a website with up-to-date information about the community and the Association. We provide opportunities to interact with other neighborhood associations on mutual interests and help disseminate information on local resources available in case of emergency. Finally each fall we distribute this printed newsletter to every residence in the neighborhood.

The Association has grown to over 260 member households. If you're currently a member we hope you'll rejoin for 2016. If you're not yet a member, please join us. Send the enclosed form with a check for \$20 payable to *Upper East Association* to:

Joan Livingston, Treasurer
Upper East Association
PO Box 91329
Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1329



Annual Garden Party Sunday November 8th, 3-5pm Junipero Serra Hall

All members are invited to the Upper East Association Annual Garden Party, which is an opportunity to meet your neighbors, review the Association's activities during the past year and share goals for the next. Light appetizers, wine and other refreshments will be served.

Our guest speaker this year will be Paul Casey, our new City Administrator. Paul has worked for the city for 17 years, including as community development director and assistant city administrator. He was appointed to his current post in February 2015. This will be an opportunity to get his perspective on issues that the City is addressing, especially those affecting the Upper East.

The UEA Garden Party is limited to current and new members only. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining today so we can include you on the invitation list.

Location: Junipero Serra Hall, corner of Garden and East Los Olivos Streets.

What We've Been Doing...



Surveys

During 2015 we started conducting surveys to assess members' opinions on important issues. Using Google Forms, we were able to develop short questionnaires, send them to members via email, and easily tabulate the results.

When noise from events at Earl Warren Showgrounds (EWS) disturbed the neighborhood, we conducted two separate surveys to determine the extent of the problem. What we learned gave us credibility in our discussions with EWS management. Another survey invited members to provide feedback on our monthly email newsletters. Their responses let us know that the newsletters are read and enjoyed, reinforcing our commitment to continue the monthly publication schedule. Finally, and most recently, we surveyed our members on the subject of vacation rentals in anticipation of City Council's taking up the issue. The responses we received enabled our President to address Council on behalf of the membership.

Other Issues

From time to time issues arise in the City that affect the Upper East and merit our oversight and community input. The UEA Board has been involved in several such issues during the past year including the following:

Vacation Rentals

“Vacation Rentals” (VRs) refers to the use of property in the City of Santa Barbara as a short-term (less than 30 days) rental in any zoning district not allowing hotels. Short-term rental of single-family homes can be legal in the R-4 (Hotel) zone and the commercial zones after receipt of building, fire and zoning approvals. As an Internet search will reveal, ads exist for hundreds, maybe thousands, of vacation rentals in the City.

The City Council initiated a review of the status of vacation rentals. City zoning and finance staff gathered data about funds collected, past enforcement, the proliferation of ads and sites, and the experiences of other cities. The increase in VRs was attributed to new phone apps and Internet services which simplify the advertising, contract arrangements and collection of rent for owners and vacation renters. The report noted the appearance of City approval by issuance of business licenses, collection of transient occupancy tax (TOT), and the lack of enforcement against vacation rentals.

In July of 2015, the City Council received the staff and Planning Commission recommendations and heard from owners and operators as well as from those objecting VRs in their neighborhoods. Upper East Association conducted a poll of our members and received about 125 responses. The UEA July newsletter published the results showing that a clear majority favored VRs, though most stipulated with strictly enforced rules. City staff recommended a distinction between the rental of the entire unit and a shared-use rental with the owner being present. The City Council expressed concern with the definition and its enforcement. Without endorsing it, staff was allowed to explore the idea and to bring it back for discussion.

Expressing a desire to protect the residential character of city neighborhoods, City Council decided to end issuance of a business license and to stop collecting TOT from illegal vacation rentals, increase enforcement funding, and allow use of subpoena powers for evidence collection. The Council directed staff to prioritize enforcement. The City is first going to go after those that haven't registered. Only after that is done will they shut down the VRs that have registered - some time after Jan 1 2017. This plan acknowledges that owners invested funds to own and operate vacation rentals while obtaining business licenses and

paying the TOT. City Council directed its staff to get the word out that business licenses would not be issued for new locations, and vacation rentals will be subject to enforcement, with the highest priority against those that are the subject of a complaint.

Mission Heritage Trail

Since 2011 a group called Concerned Citizens for Safe Passage has been working to improve safety along the winding road leading from Mission Historical Park up to Mission Canyon. In 2012 the group published a document outlining both the safety issues and the many historical resources that must be considered in developing solutions. As a result of that work Caltrans awarded the County an \$88,000 grant in 2013 to develop a conceptual improvement plan for the corridor. The City has been an active partner with the County on the project along with the working group.

Last year community workshops were held and conceptual plans were presented to various County and City boards and commissions for input. Through this process a tentative conceptual plan was identified that focuses on improvements to the left side of the corridor (looking toward the mountains). It includes new continuous walking and bicycling paths along the left side of East Los Olivos Street from its intersection with Laguna Street, a new footbridge on the left side of the historic Mission Creek Bridge, and a new walkway in front of the “Stegosaurus wall” continuing along the left side of Mission Canyon Road all the way up to Foothill Road. Earlier this year this conceptual plan was presented for review and approval by the Board of Supervisors and City Council.

In addition to working in support of this Community Consensus Plan, the Working Group has developed conceptual plans to improve safety on the right side of the corridor and to improve access to the many historic resources in Mission Historical Park and Rocky Nook Park. Detailed drawings of these plans have been presented at the Upper East Association's annual meeting, at a public workshop sponsored by the Working Group and to other community groups to build support for all of the improvements that are needed to make this historic area safer and more accessible from an educational standpoint.

Anticipating the need to solicit private as well as public resources, the volunteer Working Group has formed a new non-profit organization, named Mission Heritage Trail Association. The Mission Heritage Trail Association welcomes public input on the Vision Master Plan. For more information or if you would like to be notified of future workshops and progress of planning efforts in this area, please provide your email by visiting our new website www.MissionHeritageTrailAssociation.com.

A Bit of Upper East History

THE GREAT "DROUTH" OF THE 1860'S

The following text in quotation marks is reprinted from "Santa Barbara – Tierra Adorada", Copyright 1930. It describes, in the literary style of the day, how a historic previous drought changed Santa Barbara forever.

When young Santa Barbara men returned from fighting in the Civil War, they found a different scene than they had left. "The stark hot hand of drouth had, during their service in 1864, swept over the southland, destroying the herds and bringing to a tragic close the pastoral life of old California. Three successive dry seasons had left the land so parched that the grass did not come forth in the spring and around the faint green of disappearing water holds the starving cattle congregated literally by thousands, only to perish of

starvation.... Over two hundred thousand cattle had measured the wealth of Santa Barbara in 1863. Less than five thousand head were alive to munch the grass that sprouted after the rains came in the winter of the following year.... The entire economic life of Southern California was altered. Cattle raising as the distinctive industry of the Southland was ended forever, and range lands fell so low in value that the southern counties assessed them at 10 cents an acre. It meant the partition of the great ranchos" because the land owners needed money. The Santa Barbara Mission lands fell into this category because the Church could not sustain the land it held. Thus much of the land outside the core Mission area became available to East Coast visitors, and this ultimately led to the "Crocker Houses" on Garden Street.



Upper East Association Board

The UEA Board of Directors consists of nine members:

Term ending Dec 2015

Marie-Paule Hajdu
Lisa Burns – Secretary
Don Olson
Beth Perry

Term ending Dec 2016

Fred Sweeney – President
Steve Forsell – Vice-President
Joan Livingston – Treasurer
Milt Hess – Membership
Tony Fischer

Board members serve two-year terms, with five of the Directors elected in even-numbered years and four in odd-numbered years. The Board meets monthly for approximately two hours.

The election of Board members for the 2016-17 term will be conducted in November 2015. Prospective candidates for the Board are invited to contact us at ueacomm@gmail.com to express interest and to schedule a meeting to discuss what the role entails.

