

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association...the voice of your neighborhood



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association (SONA) general meetings are open to all interested parties. General meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at Bascom Community Center, 1000 S. Bascom Ave beginning at 6:30pm. SONA board meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Sherman Oaks Community Center at 6:30pm. Newsletter is partially funded with a Community Action and Pride (CAP) Grant from the City of San Jose.

Issue 162 of Your Neighborhood Newsletter

Notes from the President

I cannot believe that we are moving into September already. Time really does fly by when you're having fun. OMG – are we having fun? I didn't see that on an agenda... but, yes – we indeed are having a good time as well as some challenges to deal with, too!

Speaking of challenges... I am reaching out to each and every person in our inter-connected community. ***We need your involvement and active participation.*** Our Board of Directors is small compared to the potential of our numbers and just think of what we might accomplish if we banded together and worked hand in hand with each other.

So I am asking you to seriously consider two things: (1) we need each and every person in our community to be a full-patron by paying your membership dues (only \$15 per voting member per fiscal year); (2) seriously consider being an active participant. What talents do you have that can be shared with SONA? Have you considered working on a committee or becoming a board member? We want you – we need you!

I share a little poem that my mother used to carry in her purse. She was a very active volunteer in numerous organizations throughout her life. Maybe it's genetic, but I share the same spirit of volunteerism. Thanks, Mom!

ARE YOU AN ACTIVE MEMBER?

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented that you are on the list?
Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay at home and criticize and knock?
Do you take an active part to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied to be the kind that just belongs?
So come to the meetings, often, and help with hand and heart.
Don't just be a member, but take an active part.
Think this over...PLEASE! You know right from wrong.
Are you an active member, or do you just belong?

See you at the meeting! - LK

SONA General Meeting Thursday, September 11, 2014 Bascom Library, 2nd Floor 1000 S. Bascom Ave

6:30pm Cookies and Conversation.

- Come meet your neighbors before the meeting.

7:00pm Meeting Starts!

- Welcome
- Bylaws Review
- Reports from elected officials and/or staff updates.
- Police Report (when available)

- **Program: San Jose City College**
- Dr. Jeffrey Lease, President SJECCD Board of Trustees
- Dr. Byron Breland, President San Jose City College
- Jorge Escobar, Administrative Vice President San Jose City College
- Seher Awan, Business Services Supervisor

Folks from the campus will be here to present updates on campus construction and security. We have already asked them to address noise and traffic issues during events, please let us know any specific questions you might have so they can arrive with answers! This is a great time to meet our largest neighbor and find out what's going on at the campus.

8:15pm Time to Wrap Up

- Door Prizes
- Final comments/questions
- What's next
- Clean up

Get Home Safely!

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Notes and News

San Jose City College will be demolishing one of the wing buildings on the west side of campus in late August/early September. The campus has worked with neighbors to establish a traffic pattern that minimizes the on-street truck traffic as they loop through in an effort to minimize the problem for residents. There should be no incursion into neighborhoods and vehicle traffic will be monitored at all times. If you have problems or questions during this process, contact the Gilbane Building Company project coordinator Quang Le at 408.482.8740 or QLe@gilbaneco.com. Always let SONA liaison LaRocca know so we can follow up.

Get up to date SONA news online. SONA is online via a Yahoo group, NextDoor and Facebook. You don't need an invitation to join any of these groups. When information comes in we post to all three groups at the same time. You can join the Yahoo group anonymously by just going to the link. NextDoor is run by a third party and you simply "like" our Facebook page to get our feed on your page. Traffic alerts, West Nile, fogging, school news are all things that happen quickly. Choose your platform and stay on top of the latest.

Thank you to new and renewing members: (in no particular order) Andrew Eserini, Betty & Bob Slater, Anne Kline, Lisa Steingart, Wahed Magee, Tricia Bem, Lois Silva, Tosh Leventhal, Nancy Huff & Konrad Beck, Clara Carney, Ernest March, Maureen Wasstra, Bookmark Café, Randi Kinman and Saffett Brackmann. If you are receiving this newsletter and haven't joined, please do. We are moving from a yearly formula to a fiscal year formula but will take your dues anytime. You can mail a check or pay online.

School has started; are you being careful?

SONA bylaws normally get updated during elections, but Michael and Layne have been doing a major clean up. A copy of the proposed bylaws revision for our general meeting can be found on our website:

<http://www.sona-sj.com/documents/Proposed%20bylaws%20amendment-08112014.pdf> a copy will also be available at our general meeting in September.

Got cans? Or bottles? Jussi and Lisa are still collecting cans and bottles for recycling; give them a call for home pick up and help SONA.

Michael LaRocca deserves a big thank you for making our ice cream social another great event! Lots of familiar faces and a whole bunch of new ones this year!

October 20 is the last day to register to vote! Register online at the following URL address: <http://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Pages/Online.aspx>

SONA Contact List

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SONA Chat Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/talk2sona/>

Facebook: Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association (San Jose)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sherman-Oaks-Neighborhood-Association-San-Jose/151383304945052?fref=ts>

Nextdoor Neighborhood: www.Nextdoor.com

Website www.sona-sj.com

SONA's newsletter is published monthly and distributed to 1000 residences. All ad copy is due by the 15th of each month. Newsletter editor is Randi Kinman. Our all-volunteer group welcomes your participation. Feel free to contact any of us with ideas or questions.

San Jose City College

SONA board members are assigned as liaison to SJCC and the board to help facilitate communication between the neighborhood and campus. This means attending regular meetings at the campus and frequent emails as we monitor ongoing issues.

Recently during the first week of July an event on campus led to a flurry of emails back and forth and the realization that previous informal agreements between the campus and the community weren't in a "pass down" book for new administrations to use. This has led to the board members meeting with the campus and asking to be included in ongoing strategic event planning. Among the priorities is establishing a "loop road" on the Moorpark side that will allow people looking for parking to travel on campus and not wander around on city streets.

SONA now has a voice in how traffic at events can be handled to facilitate easier access, control points and safety. We also follow up to see what works and what doesn't. Suggestions made at a recent meeting will be implemented at future events.

Football season here and the recent All Star game, regarding noise was a good example of "that didn't work out as well as expected". We explained how the problem gets worse, to a certain degree, the farther you go from the campus. SJCC turned off one side of the speaker system and while that did reduce noise for residents nearby, it was still a problem a few blocks away. Obviously some more work to be done.

This month's SONA meeting will be an opportunity to have an open dialogue with SJCC campus personnel, meet new administrators, talk to our Trustee and see how campus improvements are progressing. If you have questions bring them up at SONA's meeting, email them to our liaison board members Kinman, LaRocca or President Kulwin.

Please send specific questions or comments in advance so staff has answers at our meeting.

Responsible Landlord Engagement Initiative (RLEI) Update

As previously mentioned, SONA board has been working with Neighborhood Housing Services Silicon Valley (NHSSV) on the RLEI process to help improve the lives of tenants in our area. The process requires the backing of the neighborhood association and SONA requested RLEI assistance in three different areas with the Richmond/Menker (R/M) area taking the lead.

RLEI allows tenants to anonymously and safely identify problem tenants and landlords. Landlords are contacted and made aware of the problems and advised of the potential consequences. In the case of the R/M area, because the properties have joint easements and a landlord association, the RLEI process also gives compliant landlords an extra tool to apply pressure on non-compliant landlords.

Thus far in the R/M area, RLEI staff have received written statements from some tenants and have held meetings with some of the landlords. San Jose Police Department (SJPD) has collected data and testimony from tenants. Code Enforcement is also becoming involved. It is not surprising that all have identified a few building as causing the majority of the problems.

The ultimate "price" to be paid for not resolving the problems could be a civil lawsuit (which is why a neighborhood group needs to sign on). Landlords have requested another meeting as a means to convey all the information gathered and develop a plan. SONA has requested that a synopsis report (without identifying reportees) be provided. This report will allow us to move forward with data rather than hearsay information.

While SONA's board is willing to push further, it is hoped that the pressure of other landlords will be the deciding factor in making change.

Our thanks to Susan Price-Jang for her hard work and continuing to work with the tenants in R/M. If your area is plagued by problem tenants, please contact President Kulwin who is acting as the liaison for RLEI projects.

Who and What is SONA?

Our SONA community, (Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association) was formed almost 15 years ago to fill a void. With no local neighborhood group, we were often overlooked and bypassed in favor of larger and more established neighborhoods. As a group of individual small neighborhoods it was easy to divide and conquer when it came to getting attention.

Among our early “wins” was the concrete block wall along the light rail line adjacent to Southwest Expressway. Discovering the tracks would be much higher than the backyards; neighbors were alarmed to think thousands of people would be peeking into their lives. SONA wrote letters and lobbied VTA to show the elevations and site lines. When their board realized they had the money to fix this (and beautify the equipment boxes), it was approved in no time. And, thanks to founding board member Charles Crowder, the established trees along the corridor weren’t ripped out.

Since then we have worked with developers on parks (St. Elizabeth is our jewel), traffic (see the new signals coming in on Southwest Expressway) and good development. We were driving forces in the library and community center, helping to build coalitions with other neighborhoods.

We don’t win every fight, but we do at least get their attention. Most of all, SONA is you, the residents. We know that homelessness, trash, traffic and safety are all big concerns. Our board is always looking for new blood and fresh ideas on how to solve those problems. As volunteers with “real lives” to live, our time is limited, but it can be enhanced with your help. Do you have a subject for a meeting, a speaker or an idea?

And if things are going great, we need to hear that, too! It’s always a good thing to know that by and large we’re doing well in some areas.

SONA Dues are Due

SONA asks for yearly dues of \$15 per person. Dues pay for newsletters, flyers and special events like the upcoming National Night Out Celebration. While we have augmented dues by obtaining grants, those sources have dried up. This year, more than ever, we need your support. You can also pay dues online through PayPal and set up an automatic billing by visiting our website at www.sona-sj.com. Thanks for your help. Please note that at no time do we share or release your information.

_____ **YES! Our Family wants to support SONA with our dues payment.**

NAMES:

ADDRESS:

Email/Phone:

Make all checks out to: SONA

_____ **DUES**
_____ **DONATION**
_____ **TOTAL**

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