



THE WHITTIER CONSERVANCY

THE PRESERVATIONIST

Summer 2006

CONSERVANCY TO HOLD 19TH ANNUAL DINNER SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006 AT WHITTIER MUSEUM

The Whittier Conservancy invites you to join us for our Annual Awards Dinner to recognize outstanding residential and commercial buildings that contribute to Whittier's character, property values and quality of life.

- Time: 6:00 pm –tour of museum, silent auction, cocktails. 7: 00 pm dinner & program
- Location: Whittier Historical Society Museum, 6755 Newlin Avenue Whittier 90602 (at Philadelphia Ave.)



[Sketch of Whittier Museum by Carolyn S. Sucksdorf]

For reservations, and/or membership, please see page 3 for 2006 Membership/Annual Awards Reservation Form.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *If there is a property, residential or commercial, that you would like to have considered for the 2006 Conservancy Awards, please call Karen Bennett at (562) 696-4458*
- *Silent Auction donations are needed for the 2006 Awards Dinner! Please contact Maria Claver for more information at 323-651-0524*
- *Check out the Whittier Conservancy website: www.whittierconservancy.org*

HARBOR BLVD. WILDLIFE UNDERPASS OPENS

BY BOB HENDERSON

On June 1st we celebrated a milestone with the opening of a wildlife underpass on Harbor Blvd. After five years of planning and eight months of construction, the most dangerous wildlife crossing in the Wildlife Corridor is now a safe passage for both animals and motorists.

The 120-foot dirt floor tunnel features native plants at the entrance, which provide greater cover for animals, making them more confident about entering the tunnel. Originally, biologists ex-

pected that small animals would start using the underpass up to eight months after its opening as they are often shy about taking new pathway.

To everyone's delight, at 4:30 am on June 10th, only ten days after the opening, monitoring cameras recorded a brave doe going West to East through the tunnel. Additional deer, coyotes, and other animals have been photographed in the days following.

The project, a long-time goal

of the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, aimed to fix a major problem in the 31-mile long Wildlife Corridor stretching from the Whittier Narrows area to the Cleveland National Park in Orange County. The ability of animals to cross Harbor Blvd. allows them to mix genetically with animals from far away, preventing in-breeding and eventual loss of wildlife in our hills.

Animals can now cross between (cont. p 4)

Green Dot?

The Whittier Conservancy depends on and appreciates your continued support. If you have not yet paid this year's membership dues, you will find a GREEN DOT reminder on your mailing label. Payment of your dues will ensure that funds are available to help us continue our work to preserve the historic and unique character of our community.



Dorothea Boyd,
President,
Whittier Conservancy

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CONSERVANCY
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2006**

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE BY DOROTHEA BOYD

Moule & Polyzoides, the urban planners retained by our city council and their team of experts, presented initial suggestions for the new Uptown Specific Plan at a week-long charrette in June of this year. Based on years of experience throughout the United States, particularly in Southern California, they outlined a 20-25 year plan to bring Whittier to its full potential as a beautiful, viable, historic town. Emphasis was placed on preserving hundreds of historic buildings, some of Whittier’s true assets.

Although Whittier is currently below the county average in retail business, Stefanos Polyzoides foresees Uptown as a destination—a place to shop, to dine, to work and to live.

One of our current complaints is the lack of parking space. It was determined that 50% of Whittier’s retail district is paved for parking—considered a grave waste of valuable land. Parking complexes were advocated within walking distance of all venues, thus lessening wasted space, encouraging walking and reducing traffic. With the advent of high quality housing adjacent to Uptown, retail business should improve.

One of our greatest assets is parks. An advocate for open space, Polyzoides suggests two

or three additional parks within the historic area. However, there is much to be improved, some of which can be addressed immediately—dirty streets, trash in alleys, and lack of safety, especially after dark. Within the immediate future, with the help of Uptown business owners, we could see changes. The challenge given was to have the pavements and every shop window cleaned by the 4th of July. The City met the challenge and the sidewalks have been steam cleaned. Many, but not all, shop owners complied, making for a noticeable improvement.

For pleasant strolling and shopping, wider pavements were advocated. Ten feet being the acceptable minimum, many areas in Uptown are a mere three feet in width. Suggestions include removing some planters to improve pavement width.

Trees on Greenleaf have a limited life span. When the time comes, removal of every second tree to be replaced by an appropriate shade tree will ensue coexistent greenery. When the new trees reach maturity, the remaining trees will be replaced.

Policing the area of Uptown is a necessity which should reduce disfiguring graffiti and etching and give a greater feeling of safety to evening shoppers and diners. A guaranteed income increase would be the introduction of parking meters along Greenleaf.

This would increase customer turnover and bring in city income to possibly cover police patrol.

Addressing Whittier College and Uptown connections stores and coffee shops to entice students to spend time in Uptown and even affordable student housing were recommended.

Of course, the bookstore problem was broached and it was suggested that a bookstore would be a suitable anchor at the north end of Greenleaf with the movie theater serving as a southern anchor.

Those of us fortunate enough to attend a charrette left with a positive feeling of great anticipation as we watch the reemergence of Uptown Whittier.

Although implementation of the full plan will take many years, the immediate changes and first five years’ improvements will encourage home owners and shop owners to take even greater pride in their city.

As we anticipate the Uptown renewal, we can celebrate the near completion of Whittwood Center, a good place to shop and dine and the hub of Whittier’s revenue. New businesses are eager to enter the East Whittier commercial world. Car sales on Whittier Boulevard continue to grow and things look good as Whittier Blvd. links East Whittier and Uptown in a prosperous future.

THE “BRIDGE OF BLIGHT” BY ALLAN ZOLNEKOFF



The communities of Pico Rivera and Whittier have our own billboard-sized “sign” that says “Don’t get off the freeway here—it’s scary!” It is the graffiti-covered steel bridge over the 605 Freeway south of Beverly Boulevard. The bridge is a disgrace to both communities.

The graffiti sends a clear message to commuters that they

should stay on the freeway, lock their car doors and not venture into the surrounding communities to shop or buy a home due to rampant crime.

The reality behind this perception is exactly the opposite. We are two communities that are filled with people who care about their neighborhoods and

(cont p. 4)

COUNCIL'S CORNER BY JOE VINATIERI

...The stop sign on Janine, numerous emails/phone calls to oppose a cell tower, heavy metal, adequate revenue to hire a new police officer, inquiries as to why the State has not yet sold the Nelles property to a Whittier developer, the need for office space on the corner of Whittier Blvd. and Philadelphia, a new gateway to Uptown, a hedge between the homeowners and the new Whittwood, the appropriateness of wood windows for homes over 50 years of age outside the historic district, stopping graffiti in Whittier, marijuana clinics, etc., etc., etc. Questions and concerns and more questions and concerns!!!

I have been asked to share my thoughts with the Conservancy membership as Whittier's newest elected Council member and I am pleased to do so.

It has been an exhausting yet exhilarating three months diving into a myriad of issues like those above...trying to bring oneself up to speed with a steep learning curve...and all this while trying to run a law practice.

Just before New Year's, Doug Lopez announced that he was not going to stand for election and

Sandy and I decided to throw our hat into the ring. Please note that I say "Sandy and I" as there is no way that one can run for public office without the strong support of his/her spouse.

For approximately 100 days, we spent our time involved in a campaign that many times entailed 12-16 hours a day. In Whittier, the only way to win an election is by going door to door and meeting people in their homes. And this is the way it should be as people tell you things in their home that they would not say otherwise. But to have an effective campaign, there has to be an effective team and we were indeed fortunate to have many community leaders involved in our campaign, each handling various tasks that could not have been done without a "team effort". I am very thankful for all the members of our team and what was accomplished together.

Election night was a blur as the culmination of an extraordinary amount of time and effort...only to find oneself thrust from campaign mode into, "next week is your first meeting and here are the materials that you need to get prepared for the meeting."

As you can see, the past six months have been a whirlwind for me but challenging and exciting as well! I have come to know the City's staff and that they are extremely professional. It is more than just a job for them...it is a passion for our community and our values.

I have also found that my Council colleagues have one desire: to do what is in the best interest for our City and our citizens. That is not to say that we will not have (and have had) differences of opinion on how to achieve that goal but I very much enjoy working with Cathy, Owen, Greg, and Bob.

Needless to say, Whittier is confronted with some great challenges, but there is a community-wide sense of expectation and excitement in the air. Have you been to Whittwood recently and experienced IHOP, Jamba Juice, Panera Bread, Red Robin and the other newly opened businesses? Are you aware of the promise of the Polyzoides/community-crafted Uptown Specific Plan and changes at the Quad (Chili's)?

I am quite bullish on Whittier's "stock"...I am convinced that our



Joe Vinatieri,
Councilmember,
City of Whittier

direction is correct and know that our resolve is strong. We want to ensure that the next three generations of Whittierites have the same opportunities and benefits that Whittier has provided for those of us who call Whittier home. And I know that when it comes to this, all of Whittier is on the same page wanting what's best for our community.

Thank you for the privilege of being one of your five Council members. And thanks to the Conservancy for giving me the chance to share some of my thoughts. My email, phone and door are always open for any concerns, positive stories, etc. that you might have.



2006 MEMBERSHIP/ANNUAL AWARDS RESERVATION FORM

Yes! I want to be a part of the Whittier Conservancy!

<input type="radio"/> \$10 Student	Name _____
<input type="radio"/> \$25 Individual	Address _____
<input type="radio"/> \$45 Family	_____
<input type="radio"/> \$100 Patron	Email Address _____
<input type="radio"/> \$__ Donation	Phone # _____
<input type="radio"/> __ Tickets @ \$20 each—Annual Awards Dinner	

Please return this form with your membership/awards dinner fee (checks payable to the Whittier Conservancy) to:

Whittier Conservancy, PO Box 9114, Whittier, CA 90608

THE "BRIDGE OF BLIGHT" (CONT.)

support their local businesses.

Technically, the bridge sits just outside of the City of Whittier (but so did the Whittier Hills before we purchased them). It is, however, well within the sphere of influence of Whittier, L.A. County, and Pico Rivera.

The "bridge of blight" is strategically located at the west end of the new Whittier Greenway Trail (which is planned to abruptly end there). This will force cyclists, joggers and walkers onto busy Pioneer and Whittier Boulevards. The bridge could provide a safer way to get Greenway Trail users across the 605 Freeway to get closer to the existing San Gabriel River Bike

Path.

The graffiti could be abated if our locally elected folks work for getting an easement over the bridge. Developer Arnold Carlson, the present easement owner, has successfully dodged taking responsibility for the blighted conditions. Funding is still possible with MTA, Caltrans or grant funding with no increase in taxes to our residents.

It is time to end the finger-pointing over who is in charge of eradicating the graffiti. With some attention and focus from our locally elected folks, we could end the graffiti blight and complete the Greenway Trail all in the same move.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR (CONT.)

protected preserve on the West side and lands owned by AERA Energy (Shell Oil and Exxon/Mobile Oil) on the East. Efforts are being made to purchase this 3,000 acre property to assure that the Wildlife Corridor is permanently protected.

AERA's attempts to develop the land requires them to pass through SEATAC, a special committee of environmental experts that advise Regional Planning about highly sensitive property. After three years of AERA plan development (the long delay was AERA's choice, not the County's) the committee turned the project down as not compatible with the county

General Plan for these sensitive lands and recommended that AERA redesign the project.

Additionally, Orange County is moving forward with an extension of their successful Prop M road building measure. Environmental groups working with the county have negotiated \$243.5 million from the bond for large wilderness acquisitions and the AERA property would be the highest priority. Passage of the measure in November would be almost immediately available. We hope to have another MAJOR milestone to celebrate soon!

CONSERVANCY/ COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October, 21 2006

Whittier Historic Neighborhood Association

Sixth Annual Home Tour

For more information: www.whittierhistoric.org

Graffiti Abatement Program

To report graffiti in Whittier call

City Hall: (562) 464-3340 or

Public Works Dept: (562) 464-3540

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First buck to pass through Harbor Blvd. wildlife underpass

**PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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