

VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

HIGHLIGHTS

A Monthly Publication of the VGOA

August 2020

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Almost 40 residents tuned in to the Board of Directors' July 27 (Zoom) meeting and heard directors approve eight resolutions, including:

PUBLIC SECURITY and RACIAL PROFILING:

Exhibit A of the contract between Public Security, Inc. and the VGOA defines the steps Public Security officers shall take when someone is suspected of being a trespasser. The resolution approved by the board addresses the matter of how to determine whether a person is a trespasser. It clarifies that:

Reason to suspect someone is a trespasser cannot be based solely on a person's appearance. Appearance includes real or perceived age, race, ethnicity, gender, sex, disability, and/or manner of dress. This resolution further clarifies that if an owner/resident, staff, or vendor does not recognize someone, this does not constitute a reason to suspect someone is a trespasser.

Directors found this resolution necessary after hearing from residents and Public Security (PS). Numerous Black and Latinx residents – some who have lived here for decades – testified at the July 25 "Open Discussion about Diversity, Race, and the Village Green Community" that, while doing nothing but sitting on the Green or walking on a path, they have been stopped by security and asked whether they live here. *When questioned, the PS post commander stated that since he started here in February, he could remember only one trespassing call made about a white person.*

It's likely that directors will consider additional items next month to improve reporting and record-keeping procedures to track improvements.

Continued on Page 5

Animal Poisonings

Dear Residents,

We share your concerns about dead and dying wildlife at the Green. Some neighbors have told us they place animal poison in their patios. We ask anyone doing that to stop, as the poison threatens the safety of both wildlife and pets.

We are confident that recent animal deaths are unrelated to Village Green pest control efforts. Our pest control company uses tamper-resistant bait stations to control rodents only. The stations are supplied with Selontra bait, which is not an anti-coagulant, nor does it allow for secondary poisoning. Per Selontra, "Overall, the likelihood of adverse exposure to non-target animals ... is limited (when label directions are followed and tamper-resistant bait stations are used). If a cat or dog eats a rodent that has consumed Selontra rodent bait, no toxic effects would typically be expected."

VG Management ☐



Management Advisory to All Residents

Flags have been planted in courts 4-15 showing where underground environmental tests will be done this month. **PLEASE BE SURE CHILDREN KNOW NOT TO REMOVE, MOVE, OR BEND THEM.**

These tests are required by LA's DWP for our electrical upgrade. They will be noisy - equivalent to jackhammer noise. We distributed notices last month and appreciate your patience and understanding.

Sherri Giles, Operations Manager ☐

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HIGHLIGHTS is a volunteer project of the Village Green Communication Committee

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Contact us at villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com.

Court 6 Failed Power Line

The DWP has determined that VG is responsible for the removal and replacement of the damaged conduit in Court 6 that failed on Christmas Eve last year, and we are now getting estimates for the work. It is not yet known whether the large ficus tree whose roots are in the conduit's path is dying.

Telecommunications Services

At the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee, the office has switched our business internet service to a newer plan and updated analog services to digital, with about \$4,275 in net savings/year. .

Unauthorized Visitors on the Green

Management has serious concerns regarding liability and security issues that may arise from non-residents and unauthorized guests of non-residents recreating on the Green. In early July, our escort and patrol service post commander expressed concern about a growing number of non-residents and non-guests on the Green... He was encouraged to politely approach these groups and ask



*from Manager
Sherri Giles'
July
Board Report*

where in VGOA they worked or lived.

Arborist Report

Following a July campus-wide walk-through, arborist Cy Carlberg recommended 10 trees for pruning and one for removal and replacement. Gum trees took center stage. The removal/replacement tree is a dead American sweetgum in Garage Court 10, and five other gums will be pruned. The remainder are a twisted myrtle, two Brazilian peppers, a Floss silk, and the beloved Coral tree in the Central Green.

Greencrew Report

The crew detailed courts 14-16 and will be moving to courts 16-2 and Sycamore. They are using a three-man watering crew and ask residents to understand that, "Until an irrigation upgrade is completed, the irrigation system will never function efficiently, and brown spots will continue to pop up throughout the Green during the summer months..." They will be mulching courts 14, 16, 17, Building 8, and the rose garden along Hauser and trimming garage court walkways. □

PUBLIC SECURITY REPORT June 24, 2020 - July 22, 2020

JUNE 26 LOUD AND VULGAR MUSIC; Court 4, 4:30 – 5:30 pm. Security responded to calls about loud music and profane language. The individuals complied and soon left the location.

JUNE 28 DOG RUNNING LOOSE ON MAIN GREEN; 5:40pm. Security asked the resident to leash their dog, and they complied.

JULY 2 VEHICLE BREAK-IN; Court 5, 12-6 am. A resident reported their vehicle was burglarized. Little was stolen, as in similar incidents.

JULY 2 BICYCLES STOLEN; Court 2 garage, 1-7 am. A resident reported two bicycles stolen from their garage.

JULY 9 LOUD NOISE; Court 16, late night/early morning. A downstairs resident complained the

upstairs neighbor deliberately makes noise by throwing heavy objects onto the floor.

JULY 10 FALLEN TREE; Court 2, 11:50 am. Security noticed a fallen tree and contacted maintenance.

JULY 13 FALLEN TREE; Court 4, 1:20 pm. A resident reported a fallen tree in their front yard. Maintenance was called and cordoned off the area.

JULY 13 VEHICLE VANDALIZED; Court 6, 2:45 pm. A resident reported her vehicle's car windows had been knocked out while parked on Coliseum.

JULY 17 GARAGE DAMAGED BY VENDOR VEHICLE; Court 5, 4:15 pm. The driver was very cooperative, and the damage was photographed and filed. □



*Edited by
Jordan Deglise
Moore*

VGOA Operating Budget Holds Steady during COVID-19

By Claire Knowlton, VG Board Treasurer

VGOA's Budget & Finance Committee and Board of Directors have been actively monitoring the fiscal impact of the global pandemic on our HOA.

Delinquencies are one important metric we have been closely tracking. Delinquencies are assessments, fines, and late fees that are owed to VGOA and overdue. If delinquencies get too high, VGOA would not have enough cash to meet our operating needs.

In the wake of the 2008 recession, delinquencies started a steady, upward climb that continued for years, reaching a height of \$565,000 in April 2018. The VGOA increased the use of liens and other legal measures to ensure we could collect delinquent assessments when units were put up for sale, and delinquencies began to decline. The balance dipped below \$500,000 in June of 2018.

Excluding fines and late fees, two years ago, delinquent assessments and special assessments totaled well over \$200,000. Homes sales have been brisk, and today, liens coupled with sales have reduced those delinquencies to less than half that amount. Prior to liens being in place, when a unit would sell, the HOA had no legal standing to collect the overdue assessments at the point of sale.

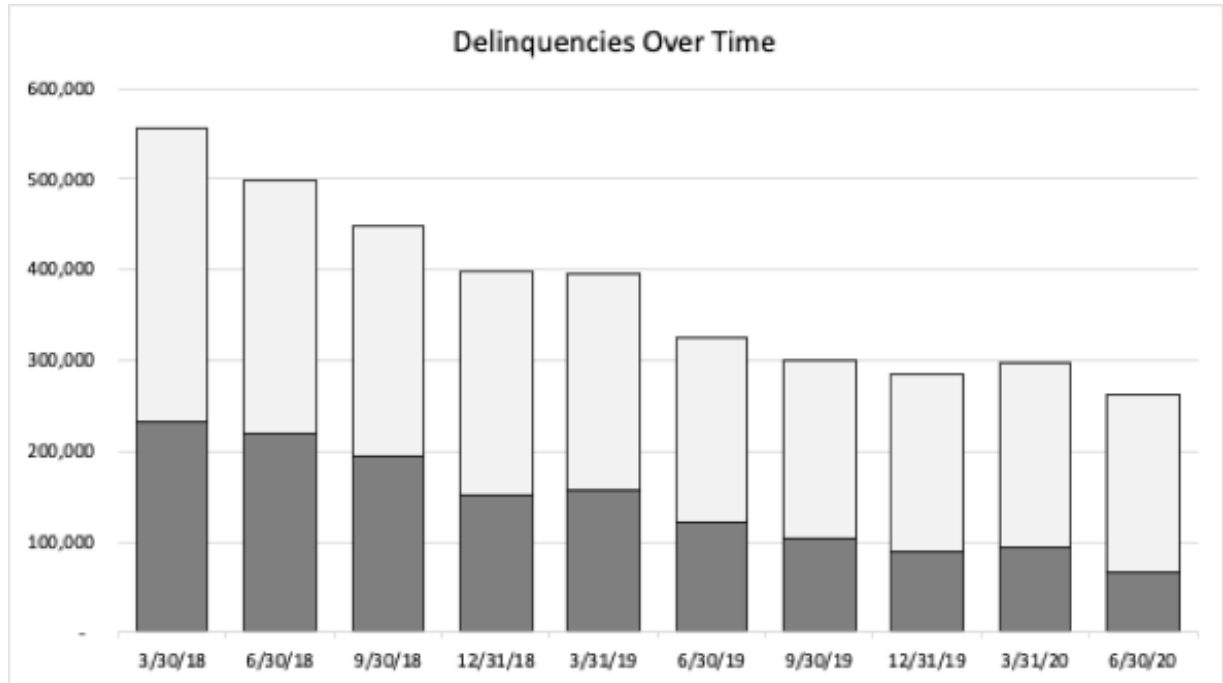
Thankfully, so far delinquencies have continued to follow a steady downward trend during the pandemic as the vast majority of owners have been able to maintain regular payment of their dues without interruption through April, May, and June. The board will continue to keep a close eye on delinquencies, which you can also track in the monthly financial dashboard shared with owners who dial into the monthly board meetings.

It's a good thing our operating cash position has remained strong, because operating expenses have been relatively unchanged. Our three biggest operating expenses – staff, security, and grounds keeping – have closely followed our budget as they continue to carry out their work while following safety protocols.

Reserve spending, on the other hand, has mostly stalled as projects requiring access to the interior of units remain on hold. These include water supply re-piping and building insulation and exterior painting. Insulation requires interior inspection of units to ensure there are not any holes or gaps in interior walls the insulation would spray through. Exterior painting also requires that windows remain open at certain times, with painters working right outside those open windows. When making decisions about how to operate, the Board must consider the needs of all owners and residents.

Continued on-time payments from owners coupled with delays in reserve project spending put VGOA in a strong cash position to navigate this time of uncertainty. That said, the board has considered a variety of potential options, such as securing a line of credit, should the situation take a turn for the worse. With a stable financial picture and worst-case-scenario plans already under consideration, VGOA is positioned to remain a calm oasis for owners and residents.

□



AROUND THE GREEN



Circus Training Good Exercise for Kids

By Gwen and Jordan Deglise Moore, Court 6

The circus came to the Green last month as fifteen VG children explored the circus arts on the West Green in a three-session class led by a circus professional.

Wearing face coverings and safely distancing outside in the fresh air, the kids worked on developing coordination, motor, and social skills while learning the fundamentals of acrobatic movement, juggling, and expressive movement.

To gauge the level of interest, we had emailed the Village Green parents-with-young-children Google group, and once it became clear there was a lot of interest, our daughter Rosalie volunteered to help by sharing her love of circus and leading a class of 4-6 year-olds.

The kids had so much fun, there may be more classes in the coming months, providing a much-needed physical and artistic outlet for Village Green children. If you would like to learn more, please email Jordan at Jordan.Deglise.Moore@gmail.com. □



Nightlife

By Heide Oglesby, Court 16

It is late at night; only the street lantern in front of my window lightens the room. I wake up to whispering, little noises, movement under the halfway open window.

I am scared; heart pounding and "Little Girl", the cat, is of no help.

I get up, peek through the slats of my window covering and see nothing. But I hear what sounds like people talking very quietly.

A minute later, now looking out of my living room window, my frowny face breaks into a smile. I see a raccoon family of six or seven playing in the grass, chasing each other around the big tree, hiding in the deep sprinkler holes.

On the porch step of the building across from me I see an opossum walk slowly towards an unknown destination. Maybe she is carrying her baby on her back.

Soon, the raccoons disappear too, whispering under another window, perhaps.

Nightlife at our quiet Village Green is alive and well and I love it. □



Owls and Hawks

Teresa Thompson, Court 8, and Lucy Fried, Court 13

An abundance of wildlife has visited Village Green this summer. Besides gophers, rabbits, skunks, coyotes, rats (!), an occasional Red-tailed Hawk, and bevvies of songbirds, at least one family each of Great Horned Owls (late June/early-July) and Cooper's Hawks (mid and late-July) temporarily settled here - prompting scores of enthralled residents to strain their necks for close-ups of the camera-shy birds.

Before late July's rash of animal poisonings, the Great Horned Owls were "... the one true predator of skunks...", as skunks cannot see the owl swooping down from above and thus can't protect themselves with their spray (www.factsking.com/animal-facts/predators-of-skunks/) ... And if you've been wondering where all the songbirds have gone, you can probably blame the Cooper's Hawks, as they feed on small and medium-sized birds.

Go to www.villagegreenla.net to see the list of birds species that have visited Village Green. □



Race, Diversity and the Village Green Community

By Marie Germaine, Court 12

In the middle of the pandemic, we learned of the unjust murder of George Floyd. Some Village Green residents showed their support for the Black Lives Matter movement and justice for George Floyd by protesting outside the Green. Honestly, I wondered what took us so long as a community to publicly show our support.

As a long-time teacher at Baldwin Hills Elementary School (BHES), it is not lost on me that the majority of VG parents have chosen to avoid the seventy-seven percent black student body and majority black teachers at BHES for more than a decade. I have heard so many explanations or excuses as to why this is so. College-educated parents have said there is too much homework, too much focus on academics, too much time spent on black stuff, there are too many black kids and they want a school that has "diversity." Labels of fault and inferiority are assigned to BHES to justify racial biases against blacks.

While I appreciate the diversity in the people who live here at Village Green, I agree with some residents who have said that VG feels like an unfriendly place. I learned from the comments expressed during the July 25th meeting that we have an under-culture that criminalizes Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by calling security on them for carrying out typical daily activities such as walking and doing laundry or simply an unsubstantiated summation that an ethnic minority is walking through Village Green with negative intentions. Quality of life diminishes when we allow racism to live. If you want to take a stand for Black lives, then you have to actively advocate for measurable changes to systems that so many non-whites have been oppressed by.

This is definitely a time for reflection! I am encouraged by the intentional steps taken to bring neighbors to a safe space to discuss sensitive issues, and I look forward to the progress we will make together. □



Marie Germaine

Anti-Racism: Not a Choice

By Lucy Fried

The pain so many Black and Latinx neighbors expressed at the July "Open Conversation..." shouldn't be ignored by white residents. Racism has infected our Village Green community and diminished its humanity. If we want to improve our Village and our country, we must become anti-racists, and the July conversation must be just a beginning.

The Communications Committee thanks all who spoke and the 90+ residents who attended the July meeting. We are preparing a report and invite all to join in considering "what next." □

BOARD NEWS *Continued from Page 1*

SEWER LINES: The board okayed a management proposal to hire Troxler and Sons at \$1,051,223 to replace almost 4,000 feet of sewer lines connecting residential courts' lines to the main lines crossing the Green and tying into the City's main lines. This project has long been needed to prevent the kind of extensive flooding that impacted all of Court 6 in 2016. As it's outdoors and away from buildings, it's

permissible during this COVID time.

GARAGE COURT SIGNS: Directors also approved an expenditure of \$5,700 for re-stripping of garage court signs in courts 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, and the East and West Circles.

FINANCES: And, the board voted to record a lien on a property in arrears. The good news is that delinquent regular assessments have dropped to \$35,000 from \$90,000 a year ago. □

VIRTUAL TOUR OF VILLAGE GREEN

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 4-5 PM

SPONSOR: CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Take a ZOOM tour of Village Green with USC architectural and urban design professor Liz Falletta. Learn more about the enlightened development team and thoughtful community design process, and the significant growth experienced in this part of the city during the mid-twentieth century. Discussion and Q&A will follow Professor Falletta's presentation.

RSVP: vgculturalaffairs@gmail.com or by calling: 603-674-0930 **The Zoom link will be provided the day of the event.**

CANDIDATES FORUM Heads up! Neighborhood councils and associations in L.A. Council District 10 are working together to organize a Run-off Candidates Forum (Zoom) with Grace Yoo and Mark Ridley-Thomas on either September 12 or 19th (Saturdays).

LABOR DAY CONCERT The Cultural Affairs Committee regrets to announce that the Labor Day Concert, a tradition of more

than 30 years, will be cancelled due to the social distancing requirements during the pandemic.

All board and committee Zoom meeting dates are announced on villagegreenla.net □

Foot Beats

From John Howell, Safety Committee Chair

Foot Beats is a project of the Safety Committee to enhance safety awareness and provide resident presence on the grounds. While walking and chatting, foot beaters notice safety concerns such as burned out light bulbs and often write work orders for correction. All residents are welcome.

Tuesday, 8/11, 7:30 pm - Meet at Court 1 entrance, walk east area of the Green.

Wednesday, 8/19, 9:30 am - Meet at VG office, walk central area.

Thursday, 8/27, 7:30 pm - Meet at corner of Coliseum and Hauser, walk west area.

Tuesday, 9/1, 9:30 am - Meet at office, walk east area.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I was excited to read the article in the last **Highlights** about VG resident, artist, educator and author, Alile Larkin, whose picture book, **Dreadlocks and the Three Bears**, was recently published. She wrote the book when her son was young, "because there were so few media images celebrating Black children..."

As a parent, children's librarian, diversity in children's lit advocate, and trainer, I'm always hungry for excellent diverse children's literature. I immediately ordered Ms. Larkin's book from Amazon, loving the idea of an Afro-centric retelling of **Goldilocks and the Three Bears**. The story is clever and engaging. Our heroine, Dreadlocks - a "cinnamon brown girl" with beautiful curls and locks and a loving family - travels from her Caribbean home to visit a favorite aunt in the Teddy Bear Forest. Adventure begins, and Dreadlocks and Auntie Samelle help make all right in the end. The story text is so fluid and lyrical I could hear a story-teller telling it.

The book is a hard cover and although self-published, is of very good quality, which I find rare for self-published books. The illustrations are bright and colorful collage art, with the text weaving its way through the pages and beautiful African and Caribbean fabric designs and patterns throughout.

For every child, **Dreadlocks** is a feast for the eyes. For children of color, particularly of African or Caribbean descent, the illustrations can add to the joy and pride of learning about family culture and

art and seeing what may be familiar at home. ***This is the power of diverse children's literature: we are all either learning and appreciating the beauty of another's culture and experience, or we are having the chance to celebrate and share ours.***

I hope **Highlights** readers order a copy to share with the children in your life. I'm asking Ms. Larkin to autograph my copy - perhaps she'll autograph yours.

Allison Grover Khoury, Court 1 □

