

Board of Directors Report: 2019 Budget Approval

By Steve Haggerty, Board Treasurer

During the regular November 13, 2018 Board of Directors meeting, the directors reviewed, discussed, revised, and approved the 2019 Operating Budget, including a 6% increase in dues.

There was an extended discussion about transferring an adequate amount to the reserves budget - for replacement of aging infrastructure items such as the irrigation system, water supply pipes, garage roofs and walls, etc. - even as the Association faces rising operating costs. Some directors suggested a smaller increase, while others wanted a larger one so as to provide a more adequate transfer to the reserves. The board compromised and approved a 6% increase for a slightly larger reserve transfer amount than in 2018 while compensating for increased 2019 expenses and the mandatory special assessment transfer.

Most directors want a long-term, consistent plan with guidelines, so that increases are more predictable. More discussion on funding reserves is planned for the near term.

Expenses and Income in the 2019 Budget

2019 budgeted expenses increased \$170,478 [6.4%] above 2018, to \$2,820,812. When the special assessment transfer of \$581,010 is included, the expense total is \$3,401,822. The seven expenses below alone total \$172,833 in increases over 2018.

Largest 2019 expense increases:

1) Wages – regular	\$46,353 (two additional staff)
2) Escort & Patrol	\$42,487
3) Utility – Water	\$40,000
4) Utility – Sewer	\$16,393
5) Utility – Electricity	\$10,000
6) Repairs – Exterior	\$10,000
7) Ross Morgan Fees	\$ 7,600

Without any dues increase, the 2019 budgeted income would have increased by only \$958 [0.03%] above 2018, to \$3,725,431. After subtracting total expenses from total income, only \$323,609 would have been left for reserves transfer, the lowest amount in eight years.

The 6% dues increase will make possible a \$500,448 transfer to reserves, which is more in line with transfers of the last seven years. Per unit, the estimated 2019 dues increase will range from \$20.84 to \$37.62 per month. □



As autumn turns to winter, some trees lose their beautiful red leaves while the Brazilian peppers are busy producing huge crops of orange berries, like these glowing in the sun in Court 13.



Photos by Don Dongallo and Zig

Online Work Orders Now Rolling Out

After many twists and turns, the long-awaited online work order system is finally operational, VG manager Sherri Giles told the board in November. To use the system, owners must first give the office their current contact information and after that, they will receive their log-on credentials and be able enter the system through www.villagegreenla.net. The current paper system will still be available for those who prefer that.

Owners who rent out their unit(s) have the option of giving their tenants their log-on credentials or entering work order requests for them.

The roll out process began with Court 1 and will continue in numerical order around the property. "Management is confident that the pace of on-boarding will increase now that the initial challenges have been navigated," Ms. Giles said. □

Public Security Report

Edited by Jordan Deglise Moore

October 18 - November 7, 2018

Oct 17 STOLEN VEHICLE. Court 12 Garage Court, 12:10 pm. A resident alerted security that a delivery person had reported his locked truck was taken.

Oct 22 PETTY THEFT. Court 6 Laundry Room, 9:45 pm. A resident reported that her clothes were removed from a dryer and left wet on the laundry room counter.

Oct 30 ARMED ROBBERY. West Circle, 8:50 am. An in-home service care worker reported being robbed of his cell phone at gun point while taking a cigarette break just outside the hedges on Rodeo Road. □

LAPD Holiday Safety Tips



At a recent VG Safety Committee meeting, LAPD Senior Lead Officer Roybal recommended that residents actively take these precautions during this holiday season:

1. Keep packages out of sight. If possible, have them sent to secure alternative addresses. If you can't, the next best thing is to ask your neighbors to help you.
2. Contact Public Security at 213-703-0540 if you think an individual may be walking through the property looking for opportunities to steal things.

Situational awareness is each individual's responsibility and the most likely first deterrent to prevent robberies and other crimes. □

December Foot Beats Schedule

Thurs., 12/6, 7:00pm: Meet at the Clubhouse, walk central area.

Fri., 12/14, 9:00am: Meet at Court 17 entrance, walk east area.

Thurs., 12/20, 7:00pm: Meet at corner of Coliseum and Hauser, walk west area.

Fri., 12/28, 9:00am: Meet at Court 4 entrance, walk central area.

Thurs., 1/3, 9:00am: Meet at the Clubhouse, walk east area.

Fri., 1/11, 10:00am: Meet at Court 13 entrance Court 13, walk west area.

Foot Beats is a project of the VG Safety Committee. □



Budget and Finance Committee Wants YOU!

Village Green's Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) reached out to the community last month with a round table conversation about the HOA's budget with treasurer Steve Haggerty and a frank appeal for new members.

The BFC's mandate is, "to study all factors affecting Village Green costs and income; monitor current expenses; assist the Board of Directors and/or the manager on any specific problems... relating to financial matters; and make recommendations to the Board..."

To fulfill its mandate, the BFC needs more members. *The committee meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Clubhouse and welcomes guests. □*



Tree Committee Autumn Walk

Photo and caption from Tree Committee co-chair Jeff Clark

On a balmy November afternoon, 20 Villagers came out for the Annual Fall Foliage Walk led by Tree Committee co-chair Jeffrey Mintz. Not shown in this photo are the maples, London plane trees (sycamores), and heavenly bamboos that gave us the fall colored show. □

Board of Directors Meeting

By Lucy Fried, with appreciation to Diann Dumas and Haleh Shoah

November's Board of Directors meeting began with seven homeowner comments and a presentation on earthquake insurance from the Association's broker. After passing the 2019 Operating Budget and dues increase and approving a transfer to the reserves fund, directors approved the Elections Calendar and funded purchase of a new maintenance cart. They then considered five resolutions from the Pet Task Force and approved four. These are summarized below:

1. Adds new language to Article 15 spelling out noise suppression obligations of second-floor owners with a dog or cat. Also says the rule can be waived annually with a signed statement from the unit below. Creates a \$50 fine for non-compliance and adds it to the schedule of fines.

2. Clarifies language in Article 15.7D to read: "Pets shall not be walked or exercised in the common areas that include the West Green, Main Green, East Green, and Garden Courts."

3. Changes and clarifies language in Article 15.7B to read: "Pets are not allowed to roam free in any Common Area." Moves both the new language and existing language in 16.7 - "and may not be tied or left unattended in any Common Area" - to 15.12.

4. Changes wording in 15.7 to read: "Any waste droppings left by pets must be picked up by the pet owner and deposited in an appropriate waste container." Also adds Section F to read: "Pets must be taken in and out of the unit using the Garage Court entrance."

Note to new owners: The Board updates *Handbook* rules from time to time when the directors feel it is necessary. Before new rules are finalized, owners are given notice of the changes and offered the opportunity to propose amendments. □

November Manager's Report

From Sherri Giles, Operations Manager

Residential Building Insulation, Carpentry, and Painting

The 2018 project continues with scheduled buildings 88, 89, and 95 and is expected to run through the end of the year.

Garage Inspections

The second round of garage inspections is in progress and will be completed by the end of November. Residents who are still in violation of the Association's rules will be referred to the board's enforcement committee.

Requests for Proposals

At the board's direction, we have sent requests for proposals for an electrical grid survey; an irrigation overhaul plan; and a design for restoration and renewal of the landscape near the corner of Coliseum and Hauser. Management has been meeting with companies who have already responded to our RFPs while continuing to contact additional companies.

Landscape Maintenance

Greencrew reported that the crew detailed courts 7-10 and will be in courts 11-East Circle next. In January, they plan to reduce the three-man watering crew to two, with only one worker doing hand-watering. Mr. Havai has also proposed to de-thatch the turf, a process that can be done safely only in the cooler months. □

Turn to Page 4 for Mr. Havai's article on thatch.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Do you want to say or ask something about an article in this month's **Highlights**, or suggest an idea for a future issue?

Write us at villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com or drop your contribution off at the office.

Thatch... and An Affordable Winter Solution



By George Havai, Green Crew Land Care Inc.

Editor's note: Green Crew is Village Green's landscape maintenance company. The article below is a slightly condensed version that Mr. Havai wrote for the board in connection with a Landscape Committee proposal to remove thatch from our lawns.

You may have noticed, when you walk on a VG lawn, that the grass is spongy and that even when it's very high, only the top part is green. This condition is due to thatch, which is an interwoven layer of living and dead organic matter produced by grass plants. At Village Green, thatch has accumulated for many years without any form of dethatching having been done. It is not a desirable condition for a lawn.



Thatch is resistant to breakdown and decay and becomes thicker and thicker. When thatch gets too thick (more than 3/4"), it restricts the movement of air, water, and nutrients into the soil and grass root zone and prevents healthy grass root growth. The lawn is then more susceptible to insect and disease problems and more likely to suffer from drought stress and become hydrophobic (resistant to wetting). The result is localized dry



spots or areas popping up here and there in a lawn.

Thatch Removal

Two common ways of removing thatch are with power rakes or vertical mowers. Both can be costly, and with the large turf areas at Village Green, could cost thousands of dollars.

A less costly method is gradually cutting the turf to lower heights. This should be done in many steps. Every time the grass is cut, the mower height is adjusted to a lower height. With this process, in a way we are training the turf to start producing green leaves at a lower height and reducing the thatch build up. We should do this only in the cooler months of the year because if done during warm days, it will cause the turf to go into stress.

At VG we think we can achieve this by cutting the turf in 6 consecutive periods, starting as soon as possible for about a month and a half. The cost is substantially lower than the mechanical use of power dethachers.

WHAT YOU WILL SEE:

During the de-thatching period, residents will see a turf that is being cut shorter than usual, with a possible browning, which in reality won't be so different than usual during winter months, since VG lawns are mainly warm weather grass.

However, come springtime, we should have a much healthier and more vibrant green turf. And people will notice how much easier it is to walk on a grass with less thatch build up. □

Aeration

Often, aerating is done in conjunction with de-thatching. Over time as the turf is being cut, people walking etc. the soil gets pretty much compacted hard enough that it will not allow water or nutrients to reach to the root zone easily. Aerating breaks down the soil so that the water and nutrients are allowed into the root zone. □

Landscape photos by Zig

It's That Time of Year!

The Board of Directors elections and Annual Meeting are right around the corner, so owners, please make sure your account is up to date to be eligible to vote.

Read the materials that come to your mailbox and consider nominating yourself or a neighbor who would be an excellent director. Don't delay, as nomination forms are due in the office by 4:30 pm on December 10.

You can see some of the board's responsibilities by going to www.villagegreenla.net/board-of-directors.html.

In January, learn about the candidates and vote. On February 2nd, attend the Annual Meeting from 10:00am - 12:00pm at Baldwin Hills Elementary. It's the biggest day of the year for our HOA to review the past year's work and look to the year ahead.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR OWNERS:

Monday, 12/10	Candidate nomination forms must be in the office by 4:30 pm.
Sunday, 12/16	Any owner with an unpaid regular or special assessment due December 1 may not be eligible to vote.
Thursday, 12/27	Candidate statements are due in the office by 11:55 am for inclusion in the ballot package.
Wednesday, 1/2	Look for a package with your ballot, "Meet the Candidates" flyer, and candidate statements.
Friday, 2/1	Last day to turn in your ballot to the office. The deadline is 5:00 pm.
Saturday, 2/2	Village Green Owners Association Annual Meeting, 10:00 am.

"Meet the Candidates" Forums:

Tuesday, January 15, 6:30 pm
&
Saturday, January 19, 10:00 am
at the Clubhouse. □

From the Ground, Up.

By Amanda Sigafos, Master Gardener



"The successful gardener fertilizes adequately but not excessively; irrigates thoroughly but not too frequently; mixes organic matter into the soil; and tills little when the soil is wet." This quote, from the *California Master Gardener Handbook*, summarizes a successful gardening strategy that anyone can accomplish. It is especially good advice if you want to grow edibles or flowers in pots or the ground in your patio.

Soil is composed of minerals, air, water, and *organic matter*. Together, these components provide plants a place to grow and live. If you think of soil as a home for plants, and if the home has what it needs, the plants living in it will flourish.

Organic matter in soil includes decaying plant and animal residue and living organisms like earthworms, fungi, and bacteria; it is the living part, or the life, of your soil. The native soil of California, including many Village Green patios, is mineral heavy but contains minimal amounts of organic matter. Enriching it by adding organic matter creates a soil food web, and this "web" enables plants to thrive.

Take a moment to observe your soil. Consider its texture and how it smells. Healthy soil is soft, feels lightly moist, smells sweet, and is easy to dig into. If this isn't the case, start to build up its organic matter. Add compost, worm castings, manure, and/or mulch. *You can add organic matter to your soil at any point during the year.*

December is a good month to plant kale, mustard, radishes, beets, peas, parsley, spinach, arugula, and any type of lettuce or salad green; and, you can sow wildflower seeds now for blooms early next year. □

Upcoming Events All Events at VG Clubhouse

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

(Holiday Schedule)

Tuesday, December 11th

Homeowner comments start promptly at 7:00 pm.



Village Green Holiday Party

Saturday, December 15,
7:00 - 10:00 pm

Join neighbors for an evening of
food, fun & festivities as we send
wishes for peace on earth and good
will to all this holiday season.

BYOB and/or your
favorite holiday fare

We will be collecting monetary
donations for California fire victims

*Sponsored by the
Cultural Affairs Committee*

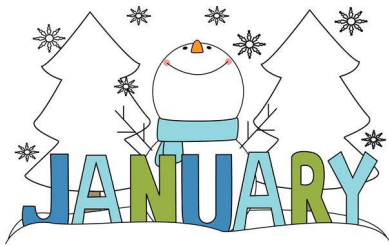
Looking ahead:

“MEET THE CANDIDATES” FORUMS

Tuesday, Jan. 15, 6:30pm

Saturday, Jan. 19, 10:00am

Attend one or both events
and hear for yourself how
each candidate stands on
the issues and interprets
the responsibilities of being
a director.



ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, Feb. 2, 10:00am

Baldwin Hills Elementary

PEOPLE OF THE GREEN

Tree and landscape committees co-chair **Jeff Clark** has sold his unit and will be moving to Northern California in January. During his tenure, significant planting initiatives were planned and carried out, including the East Green tree plantings. Committee members will hugely miss his dedication and leadership; and his court neighbors and many friends will miss his kindness and cheerful nature. Best wishes from all of us, Jeff.

West Circle resident **Jason Williams** announced that he has pledged \$50,000 to a University of Maryland scholarship fund for under-served students of Baltimore-Washington. As a boy, Jason had taught himself to dive; after high school, he was admitted to UM on a partial scholarship as the first African-American diver *not only* at the school but in the entire Atlantic Coast Conference. “In giving back, I’m giving back to individuals and neighborhoods from whence I myself came,” he said.

Editor’s note: *The Communications Committee would like to include “People of the Green” in Highlights every month. Not a day goes by in this diverse, lively community without births, deaths, weddings, achievements, and other significant events in residents’ lives – but we need you to tell us about them. Please send notices to villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com or bring them to the office.* □

NOVEMBER COMMUNITY REPORT

By Cynthia Singleton and Lucy Fried

The Housing Rights Center is looking for volunteer testers to play the role of someone looking to rent or buy a unit. There have been recent complaints of illegal racist and discriminatory practices by sellers and landlords, and the testers help pinpoint such situations so the perpetrators can be held to account. The hours are flexible, and testers will receive stipends and mileage reimbursements. For more information, contact Lilian Calderon: lcalderon@housingrightscenter.org, 800-477-5977 x 1118.

LAPD reports that package theft and cell phone snatching have increased. If you order by mail, please know that Amazon has pickup stores, including one at USC. You can also have your package delivered to a neighbor or leave instructions to put the package in your patio.

A new chapter of the Sierra Club has formed in Culver City to work with other groups challenging the continuing dangers of the Inglewood Oil Field in Baldwin Hills. At a recent forum in the Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw Mall Community Room, speakers announced that two high-quality health studies will soon be out that may lead to improved regulations. They also noted that County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas will be termed out in 2020. Ridley-Thomas has not been willing to support an end to drilling in Baldwin Hills and instead favored a plan to set standards and monitor the expanding drilling. □