

The BEVERLY HILLS

The Best Read Newspaper in Beverly Hills

COURIER

VOLUME XXXXII NUMBER 31 \$75 PER YEAR - 50¢ PER COPY www.bhcourier.com

August 3, 2007

Beverly Hilton Plans To Replace Concrete With Gardens



FROM CONCRETE TO GARDENS – The Beverly Hilton has released updated renderings of its \$500 million revitalization plan. The drawings show how the hotel plans to create public gardens and open space in more than half of the property's nine acres. *Rendering courtesy of The Beverly Hilton*

By Chris Sieroty

It has been more than six months since The Beverly Hilton announced its \$500 million revitalization plan. During that time, company executives and the project's architects have been making adjustments to their original plans.

On Monday, Charles Gwathmey and Peter Walker outlined their plans to expand and renovate the hotel's nine-acre parcel to several city officials, business leaders and representatives from *The Courier*.

"Our whole strategy is to transform the site with gardens and new buildings," said Gwathmey, of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates in New York. "Once the

project is complete, there will be a 500 percent increase in landscaping."

The plan calls for replacing outdated concrete structures with more open space and gardens, including public gardens for residents and additional landscaping and sculptures along Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards.

"We designed the gardens to have a very intimate feel to them," Walker told *The Courier*. "We want to produce something like a village, not just for people staying here, but for the whole community."

Once completed, the half of the nine-acre property will be open space, compared to five or 10 percent now, he said. Walker,

of Peter Walker Partners in Berkeley, said the design called for using palm trees along both Wilshire and Santa Monica.

Among the other proposed changes is the elimination of the parking garage, putting all the parking below grade. The entrance on Merv Griffin Way will be expanded from 60 feet to 300 feet, he said.

Gwathmey said the removal of the existing Oasis Court hotel rooms would allow for the expansion of the entrance and additional gardens and public space.

The hotel's rooms that are removed from the Beverly Hilton will be replaced with luxury rooms at a new Waldorf-Astoria (see 'HILTON,' page 17)

Commission Approves Park Master Plans, City Council To Vote Next

By Abbey Hood

The Beverly Hills parks that have hosted generations of birthday parties, first dates and picnics will no longer look the same under plans approved by the Recreation and Parks Commission.

After 11 different meetings with residents and stakeholders, three public hearings, and more than 1,700 surveys received since October 2004, the Recreation and Parks Commission voted 3 to 1 to adopt the park master plan for Roxbury Park. The decision came after a plea from some surrounding residents of the park to hold off on the recommendation.

"Don't bring this to a conclusion tonight," said former Planning Commissioner Rose Norton, who called herself "raging Rose"

in her address to the commission at Wednesday's meeting. Norton said residents had not seen all three renditions of the park master plan until moments before the meeting and needed more time to review the changes.

But, after a lengthy commission meeting and debate between commission members, chair Michael Blumenfeld, members Marc O'Krent and Myron Roberts were ready to vote on the plan that will act as the park wish list the commission will present to the City Council in September. Commissioner Jill Tavelman Collins was not at the meeting.

"I want to thank the community," said Blumenfeld. "We have received heartfelt and good

(see 'PARK,' page 13)

City Council Approves New Health And Safety Commission

By Abbey Hood

Vice Mayor Barry Brucker said when the April wild fire threatened parts of the City of Beverly Hills, he assumed the evacuation center for north side residents affected by the fire was Hawthorne School, but he was mistaken.

The evacuation center was actually at Roxbury Park. If the recently approved Health and Safety Commission had been implemented, residents would have had a greater awareness about what to do in the event of a natural disaster, and hopefully not make the same types of misassumptions, Brucker said.

The Health and Safety Commission, unanimously approved by the City Council on July 24, is a seven-member commission that

was first supported four years ago by Mayor Jimmy Delshad's election campaign. Delshad said the commission was something important to the mayor, even before his run for office.

It took the City four years and a trial-run of two committees to establish the commission. During the trial-run three years ago, the committees brought in the technology needed for the newly implemented commission, said Delshad. Delshad and Brucker worked together this year to expedite the process of implementing the commission, Delshad said.

"I am extremely gratified that something that I thought was important before I was on the City Council has been brought to (see 'COMMISSION,' page 17)

Brian Goldberg Enters Board Of Education Race

Saying he is "committed to working with Beverly Hills students, parents, teachers, administration and City Council to ensure the Beverly Hills Unified School District continues to be the crown jewel of the City," former Maple Counseling Center CEO Brian David Goldberg filed papers last week to run for a seat on the Board of Education. The election will be Nov. 6.

Goldberg, a parent of a sec-

ond grader and two more to follow at Horace Mann, said he is in it for the long haul, wanting to make long-term solutions to challenges the school district faces.

Those solutions include addressing adolescent prejudice, retaining staff, recruiting more residents to enroll their children into the district, and maintaining and improving the API ranking of the BHUSD.

Goldberg said he realizes the importance of maintaining excellence in Beverly Hills schools,

but is always seeking opportunities for improvement.

Goldberg, a professor of political science at the American Jewish University, teaches American Government, including Presidential Politics, Legislative Politics and topics associated with the President's Speakers series through the Department of Continuing Education.

In the community, Goldberg is a soccer coach for AYSO and a coach in the Beverly Hills Basketball League. Goldberg, his wife Elenora and their three children are members of Temple Beth Am's Jeremiah Society.



AVIVA! AVIVA! – The Triumph of the Spirit benefit hosted by Aviva Family and Children's Services at the Beverly Wilshire found actress/author Suzanne Somers (right) being presented with a Lladro/Aviva award by gala co-chair Anne Kopelson of Beverly Hills. *Photo by Alex Berliner/Berliner Studio/BEImages*

INSIDE:

George Christy, Page 6.
The Simpsons' "Cheese Omelets"
& Connie Wald's "Youthful Chic"



Main News: Pgs. 4,5 • Editorial, Rabbi Pressman: Pg. 35 • Sports: Pg. 10
Arts & Entertainment: Pg. 14 • Real Estate: Pg. 16 • Health & Wellness: Pg. 18
Automotive: Pg. 23 • Classifieds: Pgs. 27-34

COMMISSION

(Continued from page 1)

life," said Delshad.

The City's 10th commission will raise community awareness about public health, safety and disaster preparedness. In addition it will aid in strategies relating to disaster preparedness, disaster hazard mitigation, disaster management and health and safety risk reduction.

"The importance of the commission is the awareness the commission will bring and the assurance to residents that the City is concerned about the two issues of health and safety," said Delshad. "The commission unites the different departments and committees of health and safety. Now residents have a place to go to discuss concerns and ideas about how to improve and maintain the health and safety of Beverly Hills."

The commission should not be confused as a police or fire oversight commission. One of the concerns is that the city of Los Angeles has a Police Commission, an aggressive organization that oversees and looks into the police force for the city. This commission is not that commission, explained Brucker. It will only compliment the police department, fire department and emergency preparedness to communicate information to the public.

A lead proponent for the commission is the Beverly Hills Fire Department.

"We support the commission," said Fire Chief Dale Geldert. "The commission is a community based forum to help the citizens and broaden the input from the community to the City Council through the citizens. This is a way for the City Council to stay tuned to the community through different avenues, to get more perspective to the wants and the needs of the community; which this City Council is very sensitive to."

Pamela Mottice-Muller, director of emergency preparedness, will act as the city liaison for the commission.

"We are very excited about the establishment of the com-

mission," said Mottice-Muller. "The commission will serve in a vital role of bringing the messages of health and safety to those who live and work in Beverly Hills. Preparing for a disaster, taking care of our health, ensuring ourselves and our families are safe and secure requires a joint effort on the part of the city and the community."

The second liaison to the new commission will be a staff person from the Beverly Hills Unified School District. Because many emergency facilities are located at schools in the event of a disaster, it is important to keep the ties with the district so the city and district are in sync, said Brucker. Beverly Hills Unified School District will also have a liaison.

Beverly Hills Superintendent Kari McVeigh said she has not seen the plans for the Health and Safety Commission and declined to comment.

The two liaisons will help the seven-seat commission, first introduced as a five-seat commission. The commission was expended to appoint specialized community members calling for seven seats, said Brucker.

A seven-seat commission will accommodate the broad scope of issues that may be addressed in commission meetings including: elder care, flu information, Hillside Fire Safety and school safety.

Applications for the commission will be accepted after the second reading at the Aug. 7 City Council meeting. Any resident with a variety of background in the areas of health and safety or representatives from the businesses and non-governmental community agencies may apply, said Mottice-Muller.

With the threat of wildfire still, the commission will play an important role in educating the public.

ahood@bhccourier.com

HILTON

(Continued from page 1)

that will be built on the site currently occupied by a parking lot and a former Trader Vic's restaurant. Once completed, there will be 522 hotel rooms on the property, down from 569.

The plan also calls for spending \$5 million to upgrade Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards. If approved, The Beverly Hilton would pay to add two eastbound lanes, including a dedicated right-turn lane from Wilshire onto Santa Monica, one westbound lane on Santa Monica and a lane to Merv Griffin Way.

Corinne Verdery, senior vice president of Oasis West Realty LLC, which owns The Beverly Hilton, said none of the park on the north side of Wilshire would be used to make room for the additional eastbound lanes. Instead, a portion of the lane expansion will come from reducing the median, she said.

The traffic improvements were expected to handle 1,400 cars during peak hours, she said.

The updated plans call for a sculpture, instead of a water feature on a portion of the property that faces both Wilshire and Santa Monica. Parker said both condominium buildings and The Waldorf-Astoria would have rooftop pools.

The 12-story building that faces Wilshire will be set back from the street in an effort to reduce the line of sight into the nearby residential community. Gwathmey said he felt the hotel's gardens, additional trees on Wilshire and Beverly Gardens would adequately address the homeowners privacy issues.

Verdery said there had been a lot of positive feedback, but the hotel would continue to do significant community outreach to keep residents informed of any additional design changes.



"We want the new buildings to frame the original hotel," said Gwathmey. "All sort of things in the history of the hotel have been important to the community."

Built in 1955, Oasis West Realty recently completed an \$80 million renovation including new luxury hotel rooms, upgrades and redesign of all public spaces and ballrooms, a new restaurant, spas and new retail outlets.

After the presentation, Vice Mayor Barry Brucker told *The Courier* he didn't want to make any judgments until after he heard from residents.

"The compelling (issue) is assessing whether it fits into the master plan of what the community wants Beverly Hills to look like," Brucker said.

csieroty@bhccourier.com

ROXSAN

Pharmacy

SERVICE IS OUR PRIORITY:

- Personalized, Friendly Help • Quick On-Time Delivery
- Computerized System • Up to Date Records On Patients
- Drug Interaction Checks • We Carry Homeopathy Vitamins
- Customized Medications • Free Consultation

465 NORTH ROXBURY DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS

Hrs: 8:30 am - 6:30 pm • Corner of Santa Monica

310/273-1644 • FAX: 310/276-4152

• NO EXTRA COSTS • With Insurance

• CHARGE ACCOUNTS AVAILABLE •

The Westsider's Assisted Living Community

Licensed by CA Dept. of Social Services • License #198204050

PROMOTING INDEPENDENCY, MAXIMIZING CHOICES AND MAINTAINING DIGNITY

1. We provide assistance to senior adults with activities of daily living in a setting that looks and feel like home.
2. Our program is design specifically for senior's to find a solution to the difficulty of living alone.
3. Our professional team is focused on providing comfort, safety and peace of mind to you and your family.

Within walking distance of the Culver City Senior Center

Personal care services are available for an additional fee

IT IS ALL INCLUDED IN ONE MONTHLY FEE.



Studio Royale Offers: Private and semi-private accommodation including utilities, Individually controlled heat/AC, 3 nutritious meals per day and snacks, 24 hour reception and well trained staff, full housekeeping, towel & linen services, social activities, outings, scheduled transportation for shopping, doctor appointments, and emergency call system in every studio & bathroom



Studio Royale

3975 Overland Avenue • Culver City, CA 90232

Call us today for a visit w/a complimentary Lunch

310.836.5854

www.GKind.com

