

Beverly Hills Weekly

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Issue 411 • August 16 - August 22, 2007

Board of Education Race Begins



Millan unexpectedly withdraws from race



letters & email

“Roxbury Park Seeks Facelift”

It's time to cut through the misinformation about Roxbury Park. Plan “B-3” passed by the Parks and Rec Commission and to be considered in September by the City Council is a \$40 Million solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

Roxbury Park is a neighborhood park. It is not a dumping ground for all the misplaced aspirations of the politicians' failed industrial area “community center.” If the Southwest Homeowners and others hadn't shown up and protested, the plan about to be sent to the City Council included an indoor pool, gym, indoor basketball courts, locker room, 2 baseball fields, a gazebo for weddings and other events for several hundred people, a subterranean parking structure, elevated tennis courts, and a 3-story behemoth building covering half of the currently open space Olympic Blvd. exposure!

Under the new “B-3” plan, it's been

“downsized” to add to the existing facilities only the expensive, dangerous underground 165-car parking structure and a new community building with 7,000 additional square feet. And what does the City's \$180,000 consultant tell us these 2 added “features” will cost us? A mere \$40 Million of the most foolishly proposed dollars one can imagine (which could easily escalate to double that, based on past budgets that have been exceeded). Do we need a 500 seat gym at Roxbury Park which, in turn, requires a new 165-car subterranean garage? And if, as a high City official has reportedly said, the 500 number was incorrect and should have been only 250, then that means we don't need the proposed garage!

What also does plan “B-3” include? The expensive-to-maintain lawn bowling area hardly ever used (never during the week), when it could be an additional play area for any age. Why? We are told “for historical reasons.”

One City Councilmember is quoted as saying, “Roxbury Park is in desperate need of revitalization.” The only part of the park he accurately describes is the community building (which is in terrible shape). But not for \$40 Million. The City's consultant himself said that would cost \$13.4 Million (an estimate that, by the way, was never released to the public or vetted by any independent analysis before being sent on to the Council).

letters cont. on page 4

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

You can write us at:
140 South Beverly Drive #201
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

You can fax us at:
310.887.0789

email us at:
editor@bhweekly.com



SNAPSHOT

Beverly Hills Symphony

Bogdan Avramov
Music Director Debbie Grossman
President

905 Loma Vista Drive, Beverly Hills

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2007 2:00 PM

Beverly Hills Symphony, conducted by Bogdan Avramov, will be performing at the Greystone Courtyard in Beverly Hills. The program includes Handel's Suite from "Water Music", Respighi's "The Birds" and Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral") by Beethoven.

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW CONCERT

TICKETS:

General \$25 – Senior (65 & up) \$20 – Student \$15 – Parking Frt

Additional Information (310)276-8385
Box Office to open one hour prior to the concert.

City of Beverly Hills Recreation and Parks Department



SONNY'S GOING PRO QUALCOMM STADIUM

Beverly High Class of 2003 graduate Sonny Shackelford (center) greets his former principal Dan Stepenosky (left) and Sharon Stepenosky (right) after the Aug. 4 San Diego Chargers FanFest. For more on Sonny and the Chargers see brief on page 5.

Beverly Hills Weekly

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Publisher & CEO
Josh E. Gross

Reporter
Elisa Osegueda

Sports Editor
Steven Herbert

Contributing Editor
Rudy Cole

General Manager
Rebecca Rihani

Advertising Representatives
Caroline Hakimfar
Patricia Massachi

Legal Advertising
Michael Saghian

140 South Beverly Drive #201
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
310.887.0788 phone
310.887.0789 fax
CNPA Member

editor@bhweekly.com
All staff can be reached at:
first name @bhweekly.com
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Beverly Hills Mogul Merv Griffin Passes

Former Beverly Hilton owner transformed hotel

By Elisa Osegueda



Merv Griffin

Former Beverly Hilton Hotel owner and creator of "Jeopardy" and "Wheel of Fortune," Merv Griffin, died Sunday, August 12 of prostate cancer. He was 82.

The business entrepreneur and talk show host followed only one model—investing in the things he loved, according to friends and family members.

After exploring the entertainment industry Griffin sold the Merv Griffin Enterprises and began to explore his fascination with hospitality business. According to his website, Merv described hotels as "talk shows with beds."

In 1987 he bought the landmark Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills for \$100 million.

Griffin purchased the 582-room hotel from a partnership of Hilton Hotels Corporation and the Prudential Insurance Company.

"His vision to transform The Beverly

Hilton into an entertainment and cultural gathering place lives on today. On behalf of the entire Beverly Hilton family, we can only say we will miss him a lot. His vision, dedication and love of The Beverly Hilton will never be forgotten," said Beny Alagem, who acquired the Beverly Hilton for approximately \$130 million in 2003.

In 2003 Merv released a statement in which he thanked the Hilton staff who worked with him for almost two decades, "the Beverly Hilton and its employees will always be very special to me. After 17 years, I am pleased to turn over the reigns to Beny and Oasis West, who I am confident, will continue the proud traditions of this extraordinary property."

Merv Griffin was "much more than a business icon; he was a kind and generous human being who touched the lives of many," said Alagem.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Young Musicians Foundation, for which Griffin served as Chairman of the Board and Host of the annual Gala. Donations can be sent to: YMF, 195 S. Beverly Drive, Suite 414, Beverly Hills, CA 90212.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

CITY CLERK
BYRON POPE, CMC
455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210-4817

(310) 285-2400
FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: August 23, 2007
TIME: 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard
LOCATION: Commission Meeting Room A
Beverly Hills City Hall
455 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

The Planning Commission of the City of Beverly Hills, at its regular meeting on Thursday, August 23, 2007, will hold a public hearing beginning at 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, to consider:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS ESTABLISHING A PROCEDURE FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF MULTIPLE PERMIT APPLICATIONS AS PART OF A SINGLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND AMENDING THE BEVERLY HILLS MUNICIPAL CODE

The proposed ordinance establishes a single reviewing authority for projects that consist of multiple discretionary permit applications that, if filed separately, might otherwise be subject to final decisions of different reviewing authorities. Further, the intent is to require all applications for a single project to be processed together subject to review by the highest level review authority with final decision making authority over any of the several applications, while not altering the advisory role of subsidiary reviewing authorities.

This ordinance has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. Staff has determined that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the adoption and implementation of this ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment. Under the authority provided by the Section 15061 (b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed ordinance is therefore exempt from the environmental review requirements of CEQA.

Any interested person may attend the meeting and be heard or present written comments to the Commission.

If you challenge the Commission's action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City, either at or prior to the public hearing.

If there are any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Planning Department at 310.285.1123. Copies of the applicable plans and exhibits can be reviewed by any interested person at 455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40, Beverly Hills, CA. 90210.

David Reyes
Senior Planner



NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCIES:

CITY CLERK
BYRON POPE, CMC
455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210-4817

(310) 285-2400
FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCIES:

ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION

The Beverly Hills City Council is seeking qualified residents to fill two upcoming vacancies on the Architectural Commission. The initial term of office for both positions is two years. At the discretion of the City Council, the Commissioner may be reappointed to a second term of four years.

The appointees will be required to file an initial and an annual "Statement of Economic Interests" financial disclosure.

In order that we may preserve the integrity of the application and interview process, please direct all inquiries to the City Clerk, City Manager or the Director of Community Development. Please DO NOT contact the City Councilmembers or the members of the Architectural Commission regarding the vacancies.

Application forms for the Architectural Commission, along with a description of the duties of a Commissioner, and filing details are available for pickup in the City Clerk's Office, Room 190, 455 N. Rexford Drive, or call 310.285.2400 to receive an application and information by mail or by email.

The deadline for filing applications for this Commission is Friday, September 28, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.

BYRON POPE
City Clerk



NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCY:

CITY CLERK
BYRON POPE, CMC
455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210-4817

(310) 285-2400
FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCY:

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

The Beverly Hills City Council is seeking qualified residents to fill seven (7) vacancies on the Health and Safety Commission.

The initial term of office is for two years. At the discretion of the City Council, the Commissioner may be reappointed to a second term of four years. Each appointee will be required to file an initial and an annual "Statement of Economic Interests" financial disclosure.

In order that we may preserve the integrity of the application and interview process, please direct all inquiries to the City Clerk, City Manager or the Director of Emergency Management. Please DO NOT contact the City Councilmembers regarding the Health and Safety Commission vacancies.

Application forms for the Health and Safety Commission, along with a description of the duties of a Commissioner, and filing details are available for pickup in the City Clerk's Office, Room 190, 455 N. Rexford Drive, or call 310.285.2400 to receive an application and information by mail or by email.

The deadline for filing applications for this Commission is Friday, September 21, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.

BYRON POPE, CMC
City Clerk

briefs

Beverly High Student Artwork Unveiling at the Montage Hotel and City Public Gardens Project Site

On Thursday, August 16 a barricade artwork designed by Beverly High students will be unveiled at 5:30 p.m. in the 200 block of North Canon Drive.

The 36 panels of colorful paintings will cover the barricade that surrounds the Montage Hotel and City Public Gardens construction project just north of Wilshire along Beverly Drive. They will remain in place until November 2008.

Beverly Department Chair of Visual Arts Michael Federman coordinated the project and

worked with 36 students to design their own individual panels. The art program was co-sponsored by the Beverly Hills Unified School District, the City of Beverly Hills, and the developer of the Montage Hotel project, The Athens Group.

"This is a project for the community by the community. It is an exciting construction project," said Chief Operating Officer of The Athens Group Jay Newman.

Beverly Hills Mayor and City Council, Beverly Hills Unified School District Board Members, Fine Art Commissioners and officials with The Athens Group will participate in the unveiling ceremony and recognize the students for their contributions to the beautification of the City and the Beverly Hills art landscape.

briefs cont. on page 5

letters cont. from page 2

And as for the consultant's parking study which included a parking demand for 500 spaces for the 500 seat gym? It also calculated that for a soccer game or baseball game, the park will need 1 parking space for every player! I guess he never heard that moms and kids on teams typically carpool and that many neighbors and their families walk to the park. But, again, the parking study was never released to the public or vetted or even discussed by the Commission before recommending plan B-3.

What we really need is plan "B-4." The park "before" the consultant started to fool with it. The City should simply study either a new or a refurbished community building. And while they're at it, also

study how to fund and maintain the existing facilities (for a whole lot less than \$40 Million). That's what's needed for a neighborhood park we can all use and be proud of and live next to.

*Ken Goldman
Pres., Southwest Homeowners
Association Beverly Hills*

P.S. A member of the Commission is quoted as stating that, "the ones who are against it [plan B-3] are primarily people who don't understand what a plan is and they are just afraid of change." (Issue #410.) How demeaning and completely inaccurate. He needs to apologize to all of us who took hours and hours to understand and to participate in the process.



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
455 N. REXFORD DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210-4817
FAX: (310) 858-5966

(310) 285-1123
FAX: (310) 858-5966

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR) AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, August 22, 2007
LOCATION: City Council Chambers
Beverly Hills City Hall
455 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
PROJECT: The Beverly Hilton Revitalization Plan
9876 Wilshire Boulevard



The City of Beverly Hills has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project described below. The public is invited to attend a meeting to comment on the findings regarding the environmental impacts addressed in the Draft EIR.

Project Location: This site is part of a triangular-shaped parcel located west of the intersection of Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards. The parcel is currently characterized by three developments: the Robinsons-May site, the Beverly Hilton, and the Unocal gas station (see map). The Beverly Hilton property is currently zoned commercial (C-3) which allows 2:1 floor area ratio (FAR), and building heights of three stories or 45 feet.

The proposal requires changes to the existing zoning and general plan, and would be subject to review by the Planning Commission, Architectural Commission, and City Council.

Project Description: Under the proposed project, portions of the existing Beverly Hilton Hotel would be demolished, including the Palm/Oasis Court; Cabana/Lanai Rooms; pool terrace and pool; hotel entry drive and valet entrance; Wilshire Boulevard "Edge" building containing the conference center, hotel support space, hotel and professional offices, and retail uses; a portion of the lobby and lobby bar; the former Trader Vic's Restaurant and adjacent surface parking lot; the parking structure; and existing landscaping.

Portions of the site would be redeveloped with new Beverly Hilton Hotel rooms and ancillary facilities, a new Waldorf Astoria Hotel, a restaurant, residential uses, subterranean parking, and new landscaping. The project proposes:

The project has been determined to have potentially significant impacts in the following topical areas: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Cultural Resources; Geology; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; Public Services (Fire Protection and Emergency Services); Transportation, Traffic and Parking; and Utilities (Water, Wastewater, Electricity, Natural Gas).

Purpose of the Draft EIR Findings Meeting: The purpose of the meeting is the presentation of the Draft EIR environmental impact findings. Following the presentation, interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be encouraged to comment on the findings of the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR is being circulated for a 45-day public review period, from August 7, 2007 to September 21, 2007. Following the public review period, written responses will be prepared for comments submitted to the Planning Commission, provided that such comments raise environmental issues.

During the public review period, written comments concerning the adequacy of the document may be submitted by any interested person and/or affected agency. Comments should be directed to:

City of Beverly Hills
Department of Community Development
455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40
Beverly Hills, California 90210
ATTN: Donna Jerex, Senior Planner

Emails will also be accepted at: HiltonHotelComments@beverlyhills.org.

To ensure that the Final EIR addresses any specific concerns that the public may have, comments should be submitted as early as possible, and no later than September 21, 2007.

Public Review: Copies of the Draft EIR are available for public review beginning on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 at the following locations:

City of Beverly Hills City Hall
Planning and Community Development Department
455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40
Beverly Hills, California 90210

City of Beverly Hills City Hall
Office of the City Clerk
455 North Rexford Drive, Room 190
Beverly Hills, California 90210

Beverly Hills Public Library
444 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

The City's Website: www.beverlyhills.org

The Planning Commission will hold public hearings on the EIR and on the project over the next few months. After the Planning Commission has completed its public hearings, the City Council will conduct public hearings to consider both the EIR and the project.

The case file on this project, which includes the plans and applications, is available for public review at the Community Development Department, 455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. If there are any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Planning Division at 310.285.1123.

DONNA JEREX
Senior Planner

Use	Description
New Beverly Hilton Hotel Rooms	50 rooms in new hotel wing @ 3 stories/45' height along Wilshire Blvd
New conference center	21,000 s.f. in new hotel wing with New Beverly Hilton Hotel Rooms along Wilshire Blvd.
Ancillary hotel facilities	Hotel retail, restaurant, offices, and support space
Pool	Reconstructed pool and pool terrace @ Beverly Hilton Hotel
Waldorf Astoria Hotel	120 rooms on 8 floors of a building @ 2-15 stories, 45-150' tall, near intersection of Wilshire & Santa Monica Blvds.
Restaurant	9,660 sf in 2-story, 45-foot wing of Waldorf Astoria Hotel building
Residences (Condominiums)	- Residence A, 42 units @ 10-13 stories/112-150' tall - Residence B, 48 units @ 13 stories/150' tall - Waldorf Astoria Residences, 30 units in top 7 stories of Waldorf Astoria Hotel building
Subterranean Parking	1,422 spaces in two structures with secured resident parking
Off-Site Roadway Improvements	- Widening of Wilshire Blvd. to include new eastbound and right-turn-only lanes at Santa Monica Blvd. - Reconstructed traffic signal at Wilshire & Santa Monica Blvds. - Expansion of Wilshire Blvd. hotel pedestrian entrance - Curbside setback along Santa Monica Blvd. to accommodate new southbound lane; - New landscaped median on Santa Monica Blvd. east of Merv Griffin Way - New traffic signal @ Santa Monica Blvd./Merv Griffin Way - Alignment of Merv Griffin Way and Whittier Drive @ Wilshire Blvd.

briefs cont. from page 4

Beverly High Head Counselor Resigns

After seven years of serving Beverly High, Kevin Sweeney has resigned as Director of Counseling.

Sweeney said he will be focusing on new business opportunities in commercial real estate, franchise business and film. Although his resignation was difficult to make it's one that "I feel is what I need to do at this time and point in my career," said Sweeney.

"Mr. Sweeney will be greatly missed. He was an asset to our staff," said Beverly Hills High School Principal J Guidetti.

Guidetti said that "in this profession people leave to pursue other things and [Sweeney] had other opportunities outside of the educational world that he wanted to pursue and we wish him all the best."

Sweeney is confident that his "counseling staff is rich with leadership, talent and experience." Regarding his replacement, "I have full

confidence that the counseling staff will identify new leadership and will continue on as a group that is recognized as one of the very best in the country. It has been an honor to have been a part of the team."

Candidates to fill in his position will begin next Friday. According to Guidetti, students counseled by Sweeney will not be affected. "We are down a counselor but if you think of where we were two years ago we are up a counselor because the State provided funding for intervention counselors. Plus we have a staff that knows the ropes."

Gun Identification Act Presented to Senate Staff

Assemblymember Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles) was joined on Tuesday, August 14, by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles Sheriff Lee Baca, and Los Angeles Police Department's Deputy Chief & Chief of Detectives Gary Brennan to demonstrate the efficacy of microstamping and urged the pas-

sage of AB 1471. The legislation, called the Crime Gun Identification Act of 2007, requires that all new models of semiautomatic handgun are microstamped with its make, model and identification number.

Microstamping, which is used to identify guns used in crimes, would be required on all new models of semiautomatic handguns sold in California after 2010. It has already been approved by the Assembly and now will be considered by the Senate soon after its return from summer recess on Aug. 20. Beverly Hills Police Chief Snowden is a supporter of the legislation.

False Alarm at Theodore Man Store

Surrounding residents of Rodeo Drive and Santa Monica Blvd received a scare on Sunday, August 12 at approximately 8:20 p.m. when an alarm system triggered and police sirens invaded the streets. The police department received a call of a possible burglary at the Theodore Man men's clothing store.

"It was a false alarm," said Lt. Mitch McCann.

"Basically someone made a false call to the owner or relative saying [someone] was breaking into the store so we sent a bunch of units out there and basically setup a parameter and made sure that there wasn't in fact anything going on in the place."

Beverly Alumnus Plays in NFL Exhibition

Sonny Shackelford, a 2003 Beverly High graduate, played in his first National Football League exhibition game Sunday, but did not record any statistics in the San Diego Chargers' 24-16 loss to the Seattle Seahawks at San Diego.

Shackelford, a wide receiver, was signed as a free agent by the Chargers on April 30 after being bypassed in the draft.

The Chargers are scheduled to resume exhibition play Saturday by playing at St. Louis.

-Steven Herbert



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
455 N. REXFORD DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210-4817
FAX: (310) 858-5966

(310) 285-1123
FAX: (310) 858-5966

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR) AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: Monday, August 20, 2007

LOCATION: City Council Chambers
Beverly Hills City Hall
455 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PROJECT: **Proposed Development** **Mixed-Use**
9900 Wilshire Project (Robinsons-May Site)



The City of Beverly Hills has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project described below.

The public is invited to attend a meeting to comment on the findings regarding the environmental impacts addressed in the Draft EIR.

Project Location: This site is part of a triangular-shaped parcel located west of the intersection of Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards. The parcel is currently characterized by three developments: the Robinsons-May site, the Beverly Hilton, and the Unocal gas station (see map). The 9900 Wilshire site is currently zoned commercial (C-3) which allows 2:1 floor area ratio (FAR), and building heights of three stories or 45 feet.

The proposal requires changes to the existing zoning and general plan, and would be subject to review by the Planning Commission, Architectural Commission, and City Council.

Project Description: Under the proposed project, the existing Robinsons-May department store, parking structure, and surface parking lot would be demolished and the entire site would be redeveloped with residential, retail and restaurant uses, and a landscaped public garden. The project proposes:

Use	Description
Residences (Condominiums, Lofts & Townhomes)	252 units in 4 buildings 2 buildings @ 12 stories/144' height 2 buildings @ 4 stories/48' height
Commercial/Retail	15,656 square feet at a height of approximately 16 feet along the Santa Monica Blvd. frontage
Restaurant	4,800 s.f. indoor/outdoor seating along the Santa Monica Blvd. frontage
Subterranean Parking	956 spaces

The project has been determined to have potentially significant impacts in the following topical areas: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Cultural Resources; Geology; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; Public Services (Fire Protection and Emergency Services); Transportation, Traffic and Parking; and Utilities (Water, Wastewater, Electricity, Natural

Gas).

Purpose of the Draft EIR Findings Meeting: The purpose of the meeting is the presentation of the Draft EIR environmental impact findings. Following the presentation, interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public will be encouraged to comment on the findings of the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR is being circulated for a 45-day public review period, from August 7, 2007 to September 21, 2007. Following the public review period, written responses will be prepared for comments submitted either orally or in writing at this public meeting or in writing during the public review period, provided that such comments raise environmental issues.

During the public review period, written comments concerning the adequacy of the document may be submitted by any interested person and/or affected agency. Comments should be directed to:

City of Beverly Hills
Department of Community Development
455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40
Beverly Hills, California 90210
ATTN: Donna Jerex, Senior Planner

Emails will also be accepted at: 9900WilshireComments@beverlyhills.org

To ensure that the Final EIR addresses any specific concerns that the public may have, comments should be submitted as early as possible, and no later than **September 21, 2007**.

Public Review: Copies of the Draft EIR are available for public review beginning on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 at the following locations:

City of Beverly Hills City Hall
Planning and Community Development Department
455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40
Beverly Hills, California 90210

City of Beverly Hills City Hall
Office of the City Clerk
455 North Rexford Drive, Room 190
Beverly Hills, California 90210

Beverly Hills Public Library
444 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

The City's Website: www.beverlyhills.org

After the Final EIR has been prepared, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the EIR and on the project. Notices of the availability of the Final EIR and of the hearings on the project will be released at later dates. The case file on this project, which includes the plans and applications, is available for public review at the Community Development Department, 455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. If there are any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Planning Division at 310.285.1123.

Dated: August 7, 2007
DONNA JEREX
Senior Planner

from the hills of beverly



Surprise in Board Race

Millan drops out, election changes

By Rudy Cole

America wants the world to have free elections, but in Beverly Hills we have a difficult time finding candidates willing to run for public office. Twice in recent years we have had to cancel elections for school board and city council because no one wanted to serve.

Thanks to a political science professor named **Brian David Goldberg** we will have a school board election this November. If the former executive director of the Maple Counseling Center had not filed, there would have been no election.

It seemed as if we were going to have an interesting, highly competitive board election this fall when quite suddenly one of the incumbents, Board President **John Millan**, at the very last minute, withdrew from the race (see page 9).

Millan explained to friends that he was simply worn out, wanted to spend more time in his business and with his family and had no stomach for a bruising campaign.

Contesting the incumbents was a very strong and viable candidate, **Steven Fenton**, who had gathered a most impres-

sive list of early supporters, many of who could often be found on different sides on civic and education issues.

Had Millan stayed in the race, Fenton was certain to have raised serious questions on education issues including out of district enrollment and the changing cast of characters in school administration positions. He probably will raise these issues, but will it be with the same intensity? With his name recognition and strong resume of involvement in the schools, he might now appear to be one of the incumbents.

If the people of Beverly Hills are so involved in education, why do so few show any interest in serving on our school board? We have able leaders working in all the school's Parent Teacher Associations and on the board of the Beverly Hills Education Foundation, but in recent elections only one or two sought election to the board.

In 2005 board member **Myra Demeter** filed for a second term and only one non-incumbent, **Nooshin Meshkaty**, filed for the seat vacated by **Barry Brucker** who had won election to the city council. The

result: No election.

Now, incumbents **Alissa Roston**, running for a third term, and **Myra Lurie**, for a second, will be challenged by Fenton and Goldberg for three seats. There will only be one loser.

Although Millan took his name off the ballot on Friday, word did not spread until Saturday that there would be another "open seat." The election codes make provisions for this by extending the filing time for five more days if any incumbent does not file for reelection, but with no newspaper published during the week, the filing time deadline, Wednesday, came and went, at least as of this writing, without any other challengers.

There were rumors that Goldberg might be pressured to drop out so that the district could avoid the expense of an election - a strange reason in a democracy for aborting a campaign. But Goldberg made it clear he was in the race to stay.

Elections do offer voters an opportunity to consider education issues and to air problems any school district faces. In fact, in one of the most troubled districts in the county, Compton, 15 candidates filed for board compared to four in our city.

Millan's withdrawal may not have really helped Goldberg. With Fenton running a strong campaign critical of the board and the administration, Goldberg might have won second votes in the same way that **Barry Brucker** helped elect **Gerald Lunn, Jr.** Brucker's unprecedented successful write-in campaign in 1997, highly critical of the then board for supposed failures in school construction progress and constant internal bickering, swept a very unknown Lunn with him into office.

Goldberg told me this week that he will run a campaign with professional management, adequate funds to get out his message and an appeal to young parents. Goldberg will be the only candidate with children in the elementary schools.

It would not be accurate to say that Goldberg and Fenton will now compete for the one remaining "open" seat, however, Millan's decision inevitably helps the two remaining incumbents, Lurie and Roston.

Of the two, Lurie has the edge. Roston will try for a third, Lurie for a second term. Lurie kept the board together during a very difficult period, especially when the highly regarded superintendent **Jeff Hubbard** unexpectedly resigned to take a much bigger top job in Orange County.

Both will have solid community support, both have strong credentials of service our schools, but the third term bugaboo could impact Roston's campaign. For the record, I think term limits are anti-democratic and create more problems than they solve.

Obviously, there were more internal problems and disagreements inside the board than we knew, and this too may have led to Millan's decision. Whatever the problems, this board wisely kept them from becoming too much of an issue having learned from voter reaction to previous boards in-fighting.

Although the timing of his departure was unfortunate, the community does owe Millan a vote of thanks for having served. His expertise on school construction and his desire to avoid meaningless squabbles served the district well.

Congratulations to the Beverly Hills Resident's Association and its president **Alan Kaye** for actually holding a community meeting that will hear both sides of two major development issues 9900 Wilshire and the Waldorf-Astoria/Beverly Hilton.

It's fine to be partisan, to take strong positions on issues, but when one side or the other is not given at least a fair chance at telling their stories, the community suffers.

Merv Griffin's incredible career left a big mark on our city (see page 3). Singer, talk show host, hotel owner and businessman, and television producer, Merv, made countless friends in Beverly Hills. He owned the Hilton during a transition period eventually selling to **Beny Alagem**, a sale that was good for Merv, the hotel and the city. I think Merv wanted an owner who had the vision and the resources to make the hotel even better.


Maybe you haven't noticed, but the movie choices on cable seem to have diminished in quality since the introduction of On Demand and Pay Per View, premium services. On four successive nights, we could only find three movies with three star ratings and none with four stars although there were hundreds of possible selections.

Turner Classic Movies (TCM) may well have the best, historic choices. But imagine my surprise when this non-commercial outlet recently did a brief bit on Nate 'n Al's for its national audience in between features. Our hometown favorite did us proud.

And, speaking of cable, a review of the new **David Duchovny** Showtime series, Californication, in the Los Angeles Times almost turned me off, something the title nearly accomplished, but fortunately, I gave the show a half hour Monday and I was pleasantly surprised.

Duchovny plays a blocked, flawed writer living a hedonistic life in Malibu with verve and even subtlety. The show is witty, the women are strong and beautiful and the pace perfect. Compared to the pedestrian sitcoms on commercial TV, this is a viewing gem.

But what do I know; I loved "Mind of a



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

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BYRON POPE, CMC
 455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE
 BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210-4817

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 FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City Council of Beverly Hills, at its regular meeting to be held on **Tuesday, August 21, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.**, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, will hold a public hearing to consider:

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS FINDING THE CITY TO BE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (CMP) AND ADOPTING THE CMP LOCAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CALIFORNIA CODE SECTION 65089.

The City of Beverly Hills is required to comply with the CMP, which is a state-mandated program implemented by a designated CMP agency, which is the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The City Council will consider adoption of a Resolution acknowledging the City's conformance with the CMP requirements.

If you challenge the Council's action in regard to this matter in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City, either at or prior to the hearing.

Any interested person may attend the meeting and be heard. Written comments may also be submitted and should be addressed to the City Council, c/o City Clerk, 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. The comments should be received prior to the hearing date.

BYRON POPE, CMC
 City Clerk

Married Man" that lasted only two seasons.

The Farsi ballot issue which received far too much attention the first time around, surfaced again last week as the council tried to make sense out of possible rules and laws governing the inclusion of non-English languages on city council ballots.

The city has two very professional experts on the law: City Clerk **Byron**

Pope and City Attorney **Larry Wiener**. No matter the intent of the council, there is still some confusion on what is mandated and what is voluntary. I agree, and this may be a first, with Councilmember **Linda Briskman** that the reaction of some in our community to the Farsi translation was not "our finest hour."

The point is simple: The council and the community need some clarity on the legal requirements and the voters need to understand both the legal and practical reasons for the ballot design long before the next municipal races begin.

It shouldn't divide us, this ballot problem. Whatever makes it easier for any voter should be welcomed. Now, the professionals need to bring back a report the council can act on that might deter the overly emotional reactions of the last city election.

This could also be a chore for our Human Relations Committee to undertake.

Speaking of non-elections, **Anthony D.**

Angelica must be doing one hell of a job as a board of director of the La Canada Irrigation District. Not one voter managed the courage to challenge his bid for reelection or ditch his candidacy. (Look for the pun, fast readers.)

Rudy Cole served for eight years as a member and chair of the city's Recreation & Parks Commission. He was also President of the Greystone Foundation and served on three other city committees. Rudy can be reached at: Rudy@bhweekly.com.

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Beverly High Class of 1987 Reunion

Photos: Jennifer Grenell Ailes



Bobby Benveniste, Brooke Glassman Kanter, Zach Zeidler and Michelle Ghadir Faradi.



Ruthie Brownfield, Nick Grad, Sid Richlin, Kim Rucker Friedman, Jenny Rose Weisberg, Matt Feinstein, Kami Lerner & Beth Rudnick Zehnder



Joanna Stone, Bob Craig, Kami Lerner and Frank Scott.



Alex Berenson, Merideth Kaplan Alexander, Kami Lerner, Erin Tuch Cardenas, & Allen Stern



Ruthie Brownfield, Karen Fisher Braunstein, Erin Tuch Cardenas and Matt Feinstein.

Hawthorne School Class of 1983 Reunion

Photos: Debbie Rubins



Karen Birnkrant, Debra Rubins, Danny Croll and Wendy Brokaw Kretchmer.



Jennifer Simon Wooster, Samatha Sackin, Elizabeth Richards, Erin Tuch Cardenas and Shani Tuch.



Candy Potts, David Koskoff, Stacey Katz and Eric Neshanian.



Wendy Brokaw Kretchmer, Ann Karlin Kline, Elizabeth Richards, Candy Potts and Debra Rubins.



Ramsey Salem and Marty Marcus.

coverstory

BOARD OF EDUCATION RACE BEGINS

Millan unexpectedly withdraws from race

By Elisa Osegueda



John Millan

Beverly Hills Board of Education President, John Millan unexpectedly withdrew as a candidate for re-election on Friday, August 10.

"It was a very difficult decision because I think I have accomplished a lot in the four years and I think there is always more to do," said Millan.

Millan originally wanted to run for a second term because he believed he was "well trained for the position and there are some things that I wanted to see through on the board."

Incumbents Myra Lurie, running for a second term and Alissa Roston, running

for a third term with challengers, talent agent/manager Steven Fenton and Brian Goldberg, political science professor also running. Three seats are open.

With new opportunities and current responsibilities, Millan felt it was best to withdraw from the race.

"I've got my regular full time job with some additional responsibilities, I'm on the Board of Education and I'm also the President of the Board of Education at this time. The presidency has a lot more responsibilities and duties than even I expected. So there is a lot happening right now," said Millan.

"With all those additional things, something had to give," said Millan.

According to Goldberg, Millan has been a "tireless public servant and I am really sorry to not see him in the race."

Goldberg believes Millan would have been a "vigorous debate partner on some

of the issues that I am bringing up and it really is a loss but I understand why he has decided not to run. I know that is not the end of John's involvement in our school and community."

"One of the reasons why I ran in the first place is because of my familiarity with school construction and finance in particular," said Millan, who believes he made a great contribution in getting the Science and Technology Center off the ground.

No elections mean, "nobody hears [the candidates] positions and that I think that isn't healthy," said Vice Mayor Barry Brucker.

Two years ago one incumbent ran unopposed and a new candidate ran without opposition, leading the 2005 election to be cancelled. Brucker's ally Nooshin Meshkaty was automatically elected without having to mount a campaign.

"I think that it is a sad commentary on our school district and our community that the last school board election was cancelled because there was no opposition. It's always good to be able to have an election where we can continue to put real issues at the table and that's what we should be discussing, the issues around the school and school district," said Goldberg.

Goldberg, whose lack of traditional school experience has come into questions, said he received a call from former Mayor Steve Webb, in which Webb "was kind of poking and trying to get a sense as to why I was running now at this time and suggested to me that maybe this would not be the best time to be running."

Goldberg disagreed with Webb's comments and felt that if he "was not running now, given that John [Millan] had decided to withdraw his candidacy that we wouldn't be having an election and so many of the issues that I hope to bring up wouldn't have a chance to be aired because we would have an election.

"It was clear that I wasn't giving him [Webb] the response that I think he was hoping for and we ended the conversation amicably."

Webb said he asked Goldberg questions that "weren't meant necessarily for him to rethink, but I asked question that I think any constituent resident in the community would ask."

According to Webb, it is unusual to find someone who is running for political office who has little experience or prior involvement in the community. "He just

recently moved into Beverly Hills, within the last couple of years, and as far as I know he has not been active in the community."

"It is my belief that one earns the right to become an elected official through a lot of hard work and effort in the community. That's what I questions, what is the rush?," Webb said.

Webb advised Goldberg to get active and involved in a number of organizations, to learn more about the school system from within.

Webb believes Fenton has spent his time productively. "The one thing I know about Steven is that he is very bright, he is personable, articulate and he's got a lot of drive and energy."

"I think we are definitely going to have at least one brand new member on the school board, obviously with an open seat now. I think that unfortunately with John dropping that it might be a more negative campaign than if John would have been in it," said Goldberg.

Brucker believes the dialogues, "the debate and the discussion [sparked during campaigns] are so good for the community. I think with John [Millan] not running is a bit disappointing," said Brucker.

Typical voter turnout in a Board of Education race ranges from 3,000 to 4,000 ballots cast out of approximately 20,000 total registered voters.

Millan also believes that every election needs a variety of candidates, "It's too bad that more people are not running and maybe that was influenced because there were three people that were incumbents running. I think that people need to run no matter what, if they think they have something to offer they have to look beyond that," said Millan.

Fenton declined to comment on any issues regarding the race.

"John gave four years of service to our school district and I know that members of our community join me in wishing him well," Fenton said.

A candidates forum will be hosted by the PTA Council on Wednesday, September 26 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. Community members are encouraged to submit questions and comments to the PTA before the forum. All questions will be presented to the candidates ahead of time. Limited time will be given to audience questions.

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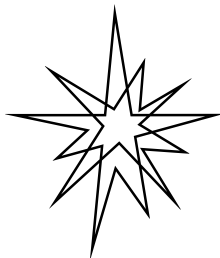
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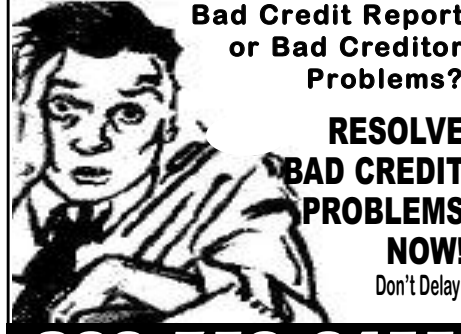
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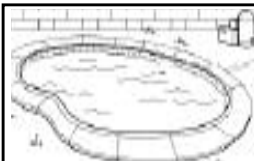
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302-House Unfurnished

304-Apartments Furnished
306-For Rent
308-Condominiums
309-Recreational For Rent
310-Rooms
312-Rentals to Share
314-Hotels/Motels
316-Garages Storage
318-Office Space
320-Commercial
322-Resort Property
325-For Lease

400-499 Real Estate
400-Homes For Sale
401-Real Estate
402-Condominiums
404-Commercial/Industrial
406-Mobile Homes
408-Income Property
410-Lots For Sale
412-Farms/Ranches
414-Resort Property

416-Lakeshore Property
418-Oceanfront Property
420-Out-of-State Property
422-Real Estate Exchange
424-Real Estate Wanted

500-599 Employment
500-Employment Opportunities
501-Help Wanted
505-Work at Home
510-Employment Agencies
515-Business Services
516-Business Opportunities
520-Jobs Wanted
521-Personal Shopper
522-Drivers

600-799 Merchandise
600-Garage Sales
610-For Sale
615-Business For Sale
700-Antiques
705-Appliances
710-Medical Supplies
715-Coins & Stamps
720-Computers
725-Furniture

726-Miscellaneous
730-Musical Instruments
735-Office Furniture
740-Television/Radio

800-899 Financial
800-Real Estate Loans
801-Financial Services
802-Money to Loan
804-Money Wanted
806-Mortgage & Trust
808-Escrows

900-999 Transportation
900-Autos For Sale
905-Trucks & Vans
910-Motorhomes/Campers
915-Motorcycles
920-Trailers
925-Classics
930-Auto Leasing
935-Aircraft
940-Boats
945-Personal Watercraft
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