

VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Public Meeting

April 14, 2005

7:00 p.m.

Four Corners Room/Community Center

INTRODUCTION

VRA Board member Ron Bialkowski led the meeting. Because attendance was so high we skipped the introductions and went straight to the Public Safety section of our meeting.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Officer Brian Parsley addressed us:

1. **Increased security in the Village.**

- We have had no other major incidents in University Village since the attempted kidnapping in March. We now have a bike-mounted police officer here during the day and an officer in a police car during the evenings.

2. **Parking.**

- Little League has started up again, so there will probably be parking problems on 10th Street. Police officers are trying to work it out so that Little League parents don't stop or park in inappropriate spots, but on weekends there are multiple games and people like to park along red zone. Officers have told the Little League organization that they will start issuing tickets if the problem is not resolved.
- The guest parking situation will get worse when West Village opens. Residents need to remember that guest spots are for guests, not for families to park second cars. Jackson Street currently has 72 hour parking for guests.
- *Question:* What should you do when someone parks in your reserved parking spot?
Answer: DON'T just sit there and honk! The offender may or may not hear you and you will certainly annoy other neighbors with the noise. Also don't park in someone else's reserved spot. Even if someone has parked in your space you will still get a ticket if you park in someone else's parking spot. When you find another car in your parking spot, call the police (see phone number below).
- *Question:* If someone parks in your spot, where should you park? This is a hard question to answer since guest parking is so hard to find. Officers will try to find a solution to this problem. Unless a lot of time has passed, officers try not to tow cars that have been parked in reserved spots.
- The 10th street gate will remain closed.

3. **Bike theft.**

- As spring comes we will have more bike theft in the Village. Remember to lock up your bike with a high-quality lock. Unfortunately, we do have professional bike thieves who specifically target the Village.

4. **Maintenance misunderstanding.**

- *Question:* A while ago there were a number of police cars outside a Section B apartment. What happened? *Answer:* It was a misunderstanding of sorts. A resident in the Section B apartment called maintenance to request that some work be done in the apartment, forgot about it and left to do an errand. When the resident returned the maintenance worker was inside the apartment. The resident was frightened and called 911. Everything was straightened out afterward. The good news was the quick and overwhelming response from the Albany Police Department and the University Police Department in an emergency situation.

3. **Solicitation.**

- *Question:* Is it legal for newspaper vendors and others to go door to door in University Village? *Answer:* Yes, it is legal. The Village is open to the public (it does not have a fence enclosing it) and so the sidewalks are public property. However, if a vendor is too pushy or makes you feel uncomfortable, call the officer on duty. He or she would be more than happy to speak with the offending individual and emphasize the importance of politeness and respect.

3. **Local police contact information.**

- To contact the officers responsible for patrolling the Village, call 642-6760.
- If you have an emergency and need to call from a cell phone, dial 642-3333 (if you call 911 you will be sent to a non-local call center that will have to reroute your call to the appropriate police station).

NANCY JURICH FROM HOUSING & DINING

Nancy addressed us regarding the transition from Section B into West Village and Section A. She answered many questions from residents:

1. **Section B closing.**

- Section B will be closing permanently on June 30th. The goal is to get all Section B residents moved into other housing by July 15th at the very latest.
- Housing & Dining has been arranging individual meetings with Section B residents and trying to match them up with appropriate housing options. Nancy would like very much to make sure that all Section B residents have an opportunity to select an apartment that they would be happy with, instead of being assigned an apartment.
- If you or anyone you know in Section B has not been contacted by Nancy about future housing options, email her at njurich@berkeley.edu.

2. **Priority system.**

- Offers are being made according to a priority system: eligible residents without ending dates on their rental agreements get first priority; residents with ending dates on their rental agreements get second priority.
- If two families want the same apartment, single parents have first priority, families with children have second priority, and couples without children have third priority.
- The latest date that last priority families could get apartment offers is the end of May.
- Right now there is a long waiting list for new applicants to family housing.

3. **Housing options.**

- During apartment showings, Housing & Dining usually offers four or five choices. Most residents get their first or second choice.

- Housing & Dining is only offering apartments that are currently available in order to increase the probability that residents will get their first choice.
 - All Section B residents get a free subscription to CalRentals, a regularly updated listing of available apartments in the Berkeley area. Contact Nancy for more information.
4. **West Village.**
- West Village will open on July 8th.
 - All Section B residents are guaranteed a spot in West Village if they so choose. Many Section B residents have requested apartments in West Village – to date Housing & Dining has made 50 offers to Section B residents for West Village apartments.
 - There have been a number of open houses at which residents have been able to walk through West Village apartments. The next open house will be in May. Be looking for more information on the exact date. When a date is chosen Housing & Dining will inform the VRA who will in turn send out an email announcement to the VRA listserv.
5. **Section A.**
- There have been fourteen requests for two-bedroom apartments in Section A.
 - All current Section A vacancies are along San Pablo. They have been shown to some Section B residents but have not been very popular because the location makes it more dangerous for kids and more noisy because of the traffic.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Jason Maxi, the after-hours emergency maintenance staff, had the following to say:

1. **Maintenance entry.**

- Maintenance will always knock before entering an apartment. Usually they only come if the resident requests some work to be done on the apartment. However, if there is a flood or some other problem that is damaging the apartment or affecting other apartments they will come uninvited. In the case of an emergency maintenance problem they will knock, yell, etc., but if no one answers they will have to enter the apartment.

2. **Lockouts.**

- When you leave a message with maintenance about being locked out of your apartment, also leave a number at which you can be reached. DON'T just leave your home number; that doesn't help if you have been locked out of your house.
- The Village Office can only let in people who are listed on the rental agreement. If you have out-of-town visitors you can put them on the rental agreement temporarily. To do this, just go to the Office and talk with the staff at the desk.

2. **Toilet trouble.**

- The plumbing pipes in the Village have been getting clogged up by items that should not have been flushed down the toilet. Do not flush baby wipes, dental floss, or anything besides waste and toilet paper.

Yao, a resident advisor in the Village announced the following upcoming events:

1. **Family Friday.**

- Family Friday will be held on the second and fourth Fridays in April. At Family Friday they have a movie or activity and sell pizza for \$1 per slice. It is a good opportunity to do something fun and relaxing with your children.

2. **Health Fair.**

- This year’s Health Fair will be held the morning of Saturday, April 29th in the community area in front of the Village Office. There will be dental screening, free food, and lots of good information. Please come!

3. **Art Show.**

- The Art Show will be held on May 12th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Community Center. Children and adults interested in participating will be able to submit their artwork a week in advance. Be looking for more information about the submission dates. There will be prizes, craft activities, and catered food. It will be a great time for everyone.

Rob Schetchman, the Vice President of Academic Affairs in the Graduate Assembly, had some items to discuss:

1. **Class Pass passed.**

- The Class Pass renewal passed 80% to 20%. The percentage of graduate voters was much greater than the percentage of voters for the rest of the student body. Many thanks to Village residents for helping to make this happen!

2. **Housing issues.**

- Rob met with Harry LeGrande and the head of the Office of Student Affairs to discuss future plans for Section A. They were willing to acknowledge that the plans for redeveloping Section A may be open to change. The previous plan (which has been shelved for now) included building housing for single graduate students. Since that plan was developed the housing market has changed in the Bay Area and more apartments are available.
- Rob wants to organize a meeting of former Section B residents after they have moved into West Village in order to record the impact of the rent increase on their lives. The meeting will be video taped and sent to the regents. After Section B has been vacated we will be looking for residents who are willing to participate in this project. If you are interested, contact the VRA Secretary at vra@calmail.berkeley.edu.
- The Graduate Assembly wants to know what kind of families tend to live in Section A versus East Village: how many international students live in Section A, how many students with professional spouses live in Section A, whether Section A students tend to come from the social sciences, hard sciences, etc. The Graduate Assembly is worried about losing international students due to high cost of living. There has already been a 1/3 drop in international students recently.
- The Graduate Assembly would also like to know what students would like to have in new housing. They want 8 – 10 bullet points to take to show University administrators.
Question: Would we really be able to build cheaper new housing? The West Village is much smaller than East Village, but still costs a great deal more than Sections A or B.
Answer: Perhaps the University could pursue a different style of housing such as a coop. There may be ways of reducing costs even for new housing.

3. **Referendums.**

- Student fee referendums can get the University to do things that the students would like to see accomplished. Perhaps University Village could get a fee referendum posted to pay for a new recreation center. Previous development plans have tied the building of a new recreation center with the redevelopment of Section A as a commercial area. Paying for the recreation center with other funds might open up more possibilities for Section A.

- We would need 3000 votes to pass it; we have 1500 students in the Village. Perhaps we could partner with the dorms to work on a referendum that would be mutually beneficial.
- We would like to set up a group of residents to discuss the feasibility of working toward this kind of goal. If you are interested in joining a panel to talk about this option, contact the VRA Secretary at vra@calmail.berkeley.edu.

Pepper Black, head of Residential Programming in the Village, had a few things to say:

1. **Emergency preparedness.**

- Residents need to know that the Village Office does NOT have emergency water and food for residents in case a disaster occurs. Each family needs to be prepared to take care of themselves until emergency assistance arrives. Families should be able to self-sufficient for a week in the case of an earthquake.
- In addition to having a store of water and food, you should also have iodine or something that can treat tainted water. Look for more information at the Heath Fair.

2. **RAD Kids.**

- There will be a 10-hour RAD Kids class series (safety training for children) in the Village in May. The VRA will send out an email announcement about it when the class has been scheduled.

3. **Mediation.**

- Pepper and all the RAs are trained mediators. If you have a dispute with a neighbor or someone else in the Village, feel free to call Pepper or one of the RAs for help in resolving the issue.

Prepared by:
Maile Urbancic
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