

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council



MINUTES PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

SHERMAN OAKS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

November 4th, 2010 6:30PM

VIVA Gallery Moorpark & Fulton

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Present: Norm Beale, Janet Richmond, Jay Blickman, Max Caln, Council Deputy Pat Davenport, Anthony St. John

Absent: Alan Taylor, Jeff Berk, Malissa Kahn, Lisa Charnes

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The main topic on our Agenda was Pedestrian Safety. As our meeting began, Pat Davenport called us from the scene of last night's accident involving 2 young girls hit in a crosswalk at Laurel Canyon at Archwood St.

This issue has been discussed by the Committee the past several months. At last month's meeting, we discussed the idea of an awareness campaign similar to the "Leave It Loose It" campaign from LAPD.

Janet suggested PSA's and awareness campaign and to push this concept in the schools.

Anthony mentioned the "sting" operations of the LAPD where plain cloths officers pose as pedestrians in crosswalks and when cars refuse to stop, they are picked off by motorcycle officers down the road.

Janet said the pedestrians have the right of way and this gives them the "false sense of security" that was cited by the DOT in their decision to remove mid-block crosswalks and raise the speed limits on some streets.

Jay pointed out that the law in the code is vague. What is "yield" to pedestrians and at what point? As they step off or as they stand on the corner or as they enter the crosswalk or middle of the street?

In looking for a trend in the timeline of the last 2 years of data, we found that most of these accidents occur near or nearby a school and most of the drivers at fault are 18-22 years old.

Educating students at school assemblies beginning in Elementary School through High School was discussed.

Anthony questioned why Notre Dame HS does not have crossing guards even at intersections with lights.

Jay suggested the portable signs that are placed in the center of the crosswalk to get drivers attention. But that he has seen cars blow through crosswalks even when a crossing guard is present. Suggested the overhead flashing

lights could be deployed, but we all have heard stories of near misses and there of course is no funding.

Pat read a statement to the Committee from Councilmember Paul Krekorian stating that speeding is a recurring element in these accidents and that all drivers should slow down".

Anthony points out that DOT had raised the speed limits on some roads to comply with State recommendations and to make enforcement by radar possible.

Max said that radar enforcement is ineffective, can't be all places at all times and that talking to kids may work for a brief period until they just forget about it.

Norm said that kids in school assemblies are captive audiences and should be "scared straight" and shown "gory movies" or interviews with drivers who caused these accidents.

Pat said that now this issue is too emotional to deal with quickly, but that it might be an opportunity to reach the kids.

Max said no one obeys the traffic laws anyway and why did the City spend money on bicycle lanes and not pedestrian safety? Because it was the Mayor's pet project. That we need to collect the data on these accidents and expose people to it.

Pat suggested signs at bus stops similar to the "watch the road" program to promote pedestrian safety.

Max pointed out that the posted 25mph when school is open sign was ignored by the 18yr. old female driver who killed the boy crossing at Notre Dame HS last week.

Anthony read an e-mail he received from the Uncle of the boy who was killed at Notre Dame HS who is a DOT engineer asking for support for more crosswalks near the school.

The Committee concluded that the Neighborhood Council partner with LAPD, area schools and Valley Driving Schools to promote and educate school age kids and new drivers about pedestrian safety. And that we petition Assemblyman Mike Fuer to introduce a Bill mandating pedestrian safety education in schools and Driving Schools.

Jay was assigned the task of collecting data from the past 2 years on pedestrian accidents.

Adjournment: 7:45PM