

Fall 2011

Fall General Meeting, Board Elections and Pizza Dinner

**Tuesday, November 15, 2011****6:30 – 8:30 pm****Hillside Covenant Church
2060 Magnolia Way**

- Meeting downstairs – Parking OK in either lot
- Free pizza, salad, drinks and cookies
- Childcare and videos for the kids.

Come meet the new principals from our neighborhood schools:

- *Chris Reddam, Parkmead Elementary*
- *Matthew Campbell, Las Lomas High School*

It's a chance to meet the principals "off campus" and welcome them to our neighborhood. Bring your questions.

6:30— Pizza
7:00— Program
8:00— Board Elections

We need new board members—see President's Message. There are 2 current vacancies and 2 board members are "retiring." See PCA map on website www.parkmead.org for districts.

President's Message

Here we are in the early Fall again and it is getting close to the date of our Fall Pizza General Meeting and the elections for the Parkmead Community Association Board.

It is time for you to make some changes, reach out, try something, jump the gun, grab the oar, participate and be a part of your neighborhood community – *join the PCA Board!* We all have so much fun, and it is really a minimal amount of work when we have all the positions filled. We will have four vacancies to be filled at the meeting. Debra Minnigerode and Rob Weiner will not be running for reelection. We thank them for their service on the board!

I encourage you to visit one of our Board meetings to see what we are up to and about. We meet monthly at one of the member's houses. Our regular meeting evening will be set by the new board.

We also need a board member to take on the Communications Committee duties, and another to take on being the PCA Secretary.

Thanks to our neighbors on Maple Lane for allowing the summer Block Party to be held on their street again. It is one of my favorite, annual family events.

We live in a great part of Walnut Creek. I'm looking forward to seeing you on November 15th up at the Hillside Covenant Church. Call me if you are interested in serving on the board.

Richard West, PCA Board President

Upcoming Event Mark your calendars

Holiday Caroling

Saturday, December 17, 2011 — 7 pm

Meet at Parkmead Elementary School,
1920 Magnolia Way

See our website at www.parkmead.org for details and any updates

Neighborhood Meeting on proposed Chabad Child Care Center: Oct. 25, 7pm; see page 2

Facebook

Parkmead Community Association is now on facebook. Check it out. Become a fan.

Neighborhood Meeting on Chabad Child Care Center Oct. 25, 7pm

Chabad of Contra Costa has submitted plans to Contra Costa County for a Child Care Center at 1671 Newell near Circle Dr. and the freeway underpass. Chabad has been in communication with the Parkmead Community Association (PCA) in recent months and has set up a neighborhood meeting on Tuesday, October 25, at 7 pm at their facility. It will be an opportunity for interested Parkmead neighbors to meet with representatives from Chabad and their architect to review the plans and ask questions.

Since the property is in unincorporated Walnut Creek, County planning staff is reviewing the plans and the PCA has been in communication with the staff. A revised set of plans is under review now and eventually there will be a public hearing in Martinez with the Zoning Administrator. Residents within 300' of the site will be notified 10 days before the hearing and the PCA will post updates on our website www.parkmead.org

The Child Care Center will utilize the existing structure with no internal construction and will add a new playground. This is both a Jewish preschool and day care. There will be two classrooms with up to 33 children and 3 teachers plus one aide. As part of their land use permit they have described how they will handle parking and traffic.

Per their plan submittal, Chabad is "a religious organization providing services to Jews in Contra Costa County". They rented the residence for about 3 years and purchased it in October 2010. They are our neighbors and members of the PCA. For more information on Chabad of Contra Costa go to their website www.JewishContraCosta.com

In 2004 when Hillside Covenant Church expanded their facilities they held public meetings for neighbors before the final County decisions were made. Chabad is following this precedent in their plan for a child care center. The PCA role in this is to inform the Parkmead neighborhood as to proposed projects and to facilitate communication but not to take a position.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Pete Johnson PeteRPCV@astound.net

City and County Liaison

More from the History Project

Like Family: Longtime Parkmead resident recounts a downtown-less, freeway-less Walnut Creek and a very, very different neighborhood (or is it?) by Julia Cohen and Hannah Edgar, PCA Board Student Members

"Dewing Park"? What "Dewing Park"?

Living in the Parkmead neighborhood, it would be rare to hear anyone who has lived in the community for very long utter those words. But for residents of Parkmead in the Sixties, when John F. Kennedy was President and the world teetered on the cusp of conservatism and the impending counterculture revolution, such a question could be asked with all fairness: after all, construction on the now-prominent Parkmead fixture hadn't yet begun.

Resident Phyllis Wirth recalls these days with fondness. As a young woman, Wirth moved to Parkmead about 50 years ago from Oakland, but was born in Clydebank, Scotland, coming to America on her own when she was 18 years old. Having lost both her parents and a sister during World War II when she was only 12, Wirth had to wait until the war was over to live with her aunt and uncle in the United States.

Of Parkmead in the 1960s, Wirth recounts a scene very different from that of today, with "no freeways [and] no downtown Walnut Creek." When asked how she would describe the community at the time, Wirth briskly sums it up in one warm word: "wonderful." At one point, Wirth recalls there being 42 kids living on Maple Lane alone. However, this prosperity of children also meant that there was not enough room for some of her children to enroll at Parkmead Elementary, nor the then-existing intermediate school (currently Dorris Eaton) of the same name. In the end, two of Wirth's children attended Tice Valley Elementary and Del Valle High School—both now closed—but her third did end up attending Parkmead, from there going on to Las Lomas High School.

Exempt from the technological distractions of the current day, all the children opted to play in the cul-de-sac after school. "There

were no cars on this side of the street. Each family had one car, and dad usually had that; most moms stayed home then," Wirth recalls. She also emphasized how tight-knit of a community she and her neighbors formed, noting that all the kids on the street were the same age and recounting instances that brought even the adults together: "Jack LaLanne was on television in the mornings; all the young mothers would congregate in one of their houses doing [exercises]." Babysitters were unneeded because parents simply sent their kids to a neighbor's house, and those who moved away would stay in contact through an annual lunch together with all the mothers from the street—who, in fact, still remain in touch to this day. Dewing Park had not been built when Wirth moved into the neighborhood, but she knew the woman who founded it well—in fact, all three of Wirth's children had her as their schoolteacher at some point before graduating.

Beyond Parkmead, Walnut Creek as a whole was also radically different in the '60s. The future site of Broadway Plaza's Neiman Marcus was once a JC Penney, which was across the street from Sears; nearby was the local movie theater. At the end of Newell, there was once a Safeway, and the space where Olympic Boulevard's Martinez Market now stands was occupied by Slow Sounds, another—albeit smaller—grocery store. However, outside of these, there was no focal "downtown" to speak of in Walnut Creek, a startling contrast to the lively outdoor mall which sprawls in the heart of the city today.

Many things may have changed in Walnut Creek with the passage of time, but Wirth is certain of one constant: Parkmead, at least as long as she's known it, "has just always been a wonderful, family-oriented neighborhood... It's a great place to raise children, and we've been lucky enough that all the neighbors have always been friendly... like family."

City-County News

Left Turn Arrow at Newell and South California Blvd. Coming Soon

"When will we get our left turn signal by Trader Joe's back?" they ask. The city approved funding in June 2010 and said then that it would be installed in the next two years. Coming soon? We hope it will be operational by late November 2011, weather permitting.

Background: We had a left turn arrow at Newell and S. California for years, but it was removed in 2002. When the Village@1500 Newell (at S. Main) was under City review in 2009 we were concerned about increased traffic from the proposed four-story mixed-use residential and retail project. The City determined there would be no traffic increase but offered us a new left-turn arrow anyway.

City staff proposed modifying the Newell/S. California signal to add what is called a "protected/permissive" arrow which will allow a few seconds for left turns before the west-bound traffic gets a green light. The left-turn arrow will only be triggered if there are cars in the left-turn lane.

Next question? When will the high rise be demolished and new construction begin at 1500 Newell at S. Main? No time soon in this economy with all the apartments and condos projected for Walnut Creek. The owners may be looking at other uses. City staff promises to keep us informed.

For more information and updates go to our website www.parkmead.org and click on City-County News.

Pete Johnson

City and County Liaison

Parkmead Gets "New" County Supervisor

Based on the 2010 Census, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors has approved new County Districts effective Sept. 9, 2011. For the last 10 years, Parkmead was in 2 districts (mostly in District 3 under Mary Piepho, some in District 2 under Gayle Uilkema) and Walnut Creek was in 3 districts, both the result of the 2000 Census. Walnut Creek lobbied hard to be in one district but lost and is now split in 2 districts. Most of the City is in District 4 where Karen Mitchoff is the current Supervisor. Parkmead, along with Rossmoor, Saranap and Tice Valley, is now all in District 2 with Gayle Uilkema as our County Supervisor. The line runs down Main Street so Las Lomas is in #4 and Kaiser and Parkmead are in #2. Mary Piepho no longer represents part of Walnut Creek but is still District 3 rep. Our District 2 supervisor will be up for election in 2012.

City Bike Plan and impact on Parkmead

Goal number 5 in the Transportation chapter of the Walnut Creek General Plan is poetry to my ears, "Provide a safe and attractive environment for bicycle travel throughout the community." Action 5.5.1 states, "Develop a bicycle master plan with measurable objectives and incorporate this plan into a new trails master plan."

After four years of planning, the City recently approved the 2011 Bicycle Master Plan. I attended almost all of the planning sessions and would like to report on the process and the outcome as it relates to the Parkmead area.

The process involved a high level of involvement by Walnut Creek staff and involved citizens. On the committee were members of the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, the Bicycle Advisory Committee and city staff from Transportation and Planning. I attended as a member of the general public. However, as the months progressed and attendance by the public waned, I often was the only "public" there and was included in the discussions and informally in the voting.

What can we expect in the Parkmead area? Well, first of all, most of our area is not in the City proper, but in an unincorporated part of the County under the sphere of influence of the city of Walnut Creek. So, there will be no changes within our area to Newell Ave., our main route to downtown, or to Olympic Blvd. However, these two streets are listed in the plan under "Highest priority" for changes to Olympic - bike lanes under the 680 freeway; and Newell - a narrow bike "Thru Lane" between the right turn lane and the traffic lanes at the Main Street intersection. Newell is recognized as a "gap connector provides link to downtown, Iron Horse Trail, Kaiser Hospital and Las Lomas High School." Outside of Parkmead, because the City now has a plan, it allows it to apply for various funds, and hopefully the community we live in will become "...a safe and attractive environment for bicycle travel."

For more details see http://www.walnut-creek.org/citygov/depts/cd/transit/2011_bicycle_plan.asp

Tony Almeida

Former PCA President

The Annual Block Party in August drew a lively crowd.



We enjoyed a tasty potluck along with burgers and hot dogs.



The rhythmic melody of the steel drums provided a welcome background.



Thanks to Rob Weiner for manning the grill.

Walk to School on October 3



Thanks to Steve Statler and his team of parents for organizing the annual event. And, most importantly, thanks to the children who walked and biked to school. A great time was had by all.

PCA Board 2011

Name	Board Position	Officer/Committee
Richard West	District 4	President
Terri Almeida	District 1	Vice President/Secretary
Mary Andre	At Large	Treasurer/Web Master
Julia Cohen	At Large	Student Representative
Hannah Edgar	District 5 acting	Student Representative
Ann Hinshaw	District 7 acting	
Pete Johnson	District 6	City-County Liaison; Communications Chair
Barbara Martinez	At Large	Events Chair
Debra Minnigerode	District 3	
Chris Sherwood	District 2	
Rob Weiner	At Large	Garage Sale Coordinator

There are 2 current vacancies; see PCA website for map of districts

Contact us at parkmead@parkmead.org