

FRIENDS OF THE HILLS

HILLS 2000

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

FALL 2000

Volume 3, Issue 1

WAKE UP LOS ALTOS HILLS! "BALANCE" IS NEEDED ON THE CITY COUNCIL

Hills 2000 - Friends of the Hills *is dedicated to reaffirming the founding principles of good government and to advocate for ordinances that will ensure the continued preservation of the rural ambience of the Town of Los Altos Hills. Our mission is to alert the residents to significant changes and issues in Town Government and respond to biased and distorted communication.*

The result of the Special Election in March 2000 clearly demonstrates how important your vote is - the swing of the election by 40 votes has changed the balance on the council so dramatically that 49.6% of the Town is no longer represented.

We now have three council members who vote as a block. That result is of great concern to our organization (over 1800 supporters) and to many other residents of the Town.

Property rights and fairness have given way to favoritism for developers and special interest groups.

While our Mayor views his efforts as positive, progressive and exciting - a quick reality check with his goal statement reveals the following:

Goal # 1: Timely and cost effective delivery of services.

Facts: The increased timelines to bring projects to fruition have been undermined by the lack of key personnel to accomplish the work. The Town has never been in worse shape. Turnover of key leadership positions has increased because of clashes with and lack of support from the new city council block. The part-time City Manager works about 2 days per week and cannot possibly provide adequate leadership or support for a city council where the sitting Mayor is out of Town 4 days per week. There is no Director of Engineering. Only within the last month an assistant planner with only one year's experience in LAH was promoted to the Director of Planning position.

Currently, a head hunting organization is looking for a new City Manager at a cost of \$20,000. (See article on page 2 re: Town Adrift)

Goal #2: Maintenance of a set of codes and policies that preserve the desirable attributes of the Town.

Facts: Codes and policies are not uniformly applied. Conservation easements have been lifted and hillside are being destroyed. Off-road pathway linkages have been subverted to appease campaign con-

tributors. Sacrificing compliance with the rule of law by engaging in work without permits and then asking for forgiveness is the rule and not the exception. No monetary penalties have ever been applied. (By the way, our current Mayor still has not received a building permit for the wall constructed without a permit. The decision requiring that he obtain a building permit to make the wall legal was made 8 months ago in February 2000.)

Appreciation for community volunteerism has given way to appointments being handed out as political favors. Applicants to committees do not even have to live in Town or show up for an interview before the City Council. (See article, page 4 re: Committee Appointments.)

Goal #3: Maintenance & Infrastructure Improvement:

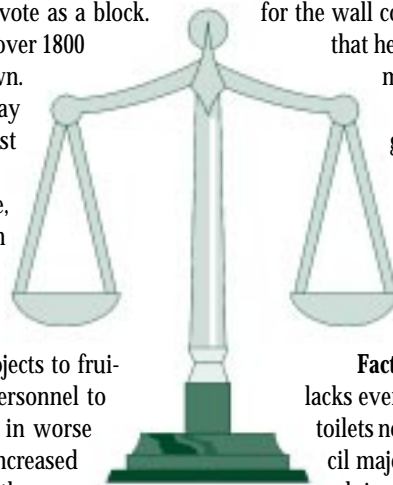
Facts: The Town Hall structure is in very bad shape and lacks even the most basic amenities (sewer lines overflowing, toilets not working, electrical deficiencies). The current council majority tabled the recommendation of their Town Hall advisory committee to hire an architect to do conceptual plans (after an architect had already been selected).

WAKE UP LOS ALTOS HILLS

We hope that during this next election all residents heed a wake up call - to evaluate the sad shape that the Town is in.

If you believe the "happiness propaganda letters" that the Mayor has generated, then you have obviously not yet been affected by the problems listed above.

If you want BALANCE on the city council, to preserve the rural ambience of the Hills, have our codes fairly and impartially applied, and return our Town government to a workable, efficient condition - then you should cast your vote for "BALANCE" and vote for Humphries, O'Malley and Fenwick. ★



Kern House Issue and Council Decision Regarding Ridgelines

(The following is excerpted from Former Mayor Sid Hubbard's letter to the City Council at the Kern House Hearing on August 17, 2000.)

Our Town has had a long history of protecting its ridgelines and making home sites as unobtrusive as possible. The wording in our general plan and ordinances are more than just words. Carrying out these objectives is what has helped make our community such a desirable place to live. In this case we have a 7,200 sq. ft. house squarely planted on a prominent ridgeline and a lengthy driveway with retaining walls above and below traversing across a highly visible hillside.

Our ordinances state the following:

Sec. 10-2.701. Purposes.

"The purposes of this article are to insure that the site, location and configuration of structures are unobtrusive when viewed from off-site; that scenic views are retained; that buildings do not dominate the natural landscape; that ridge lines and hilltops are preserved; and that the siting of structures is consistent with other provisions of this chapter concerning grading, drainage, and erosion control."

Sec. 10-2.702. Siting.

"The location of buildings and structures shall be selected so as to minimize run-off from the site, the volume of off site drainage created, the destruction or alteration of natural vegetation, and the impairment of scenic views from off the site. The location of all structures should create as little disturbance as possible to the natural landscape."

This project does not come close to meeting these objectives. This parcel of land has an alternative location for a home site - one that the applicant has sought and obtained approval from this Council.

This project is also inconsistent with our Town's policies regarding the grade of the driveway, retaining wall heights, two-story home on ridgeline and the secondary unit ordinance. The Town's staff has consistently recom-

mended denial of the repeated applications for this project. Prior Councils and planning commissions have denied this application.

As Councilmembers, you are charged with the responsibility of upholding our ordinances. When you are elected to office, you have an obligation to uphold the Town's general plan and ordinances whether you agree with specific ordinances or not. You have the right to try to change the ordinances but until you do so, you must uphold the laws and rules of this community.

It is nice to hear that a majority of the councilmembers are referring to themselves as the "New Guard". I'm glad - as the implication is that you will be guarding and protecting our ordinances and helping to assure that we maintain our beautiful community.

As for the Kerns, when they build their home on the lower site, they will still be able to enjoy the fantastic views from this property. They can take a nice healthy stroll to the ridge and have an unobstructed view of the Bay Area and at the same time know that the views have been maintained for the rest of the community.

Your vote will send an important message to the community and will affect the look of this community forever. I appreciate your time and diligence in reviewing this application.

Sid Hubbard

Former LAH Mayor & Councilmember

The Kern's application was approved August 17th on a 3-2 vote:

Yes - Finn, Casey, Cheng

No - Dauber, Johnson

So Much For Guarding and Protecting Our Ordinances! ★



Staffing Losses Leave the

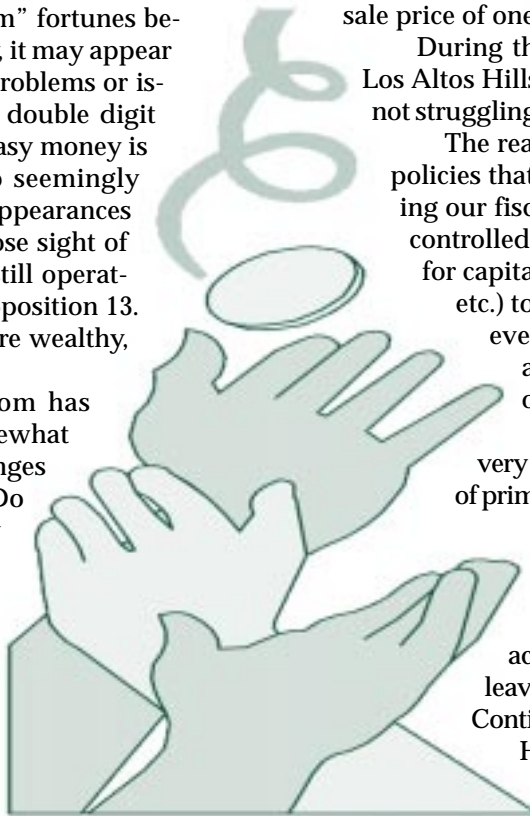
It's always traumatic for the Town when there is a change of staff. Since the 1998 election when Casey and Finn were elected, three planners and two city managers have left the Town service. The same thing happened during Casey's first term (1988-92): three head planners and two city managers left. Is there a pattern here?

Our planning ordinances are complicated. They evolved from dozens of years of study and analysis. As a matter of fact, our slope density ordinance (devised by Art Lachenbruch and Bill Perkins) dates from 1967, and its principles are now used in planning throughout the country. Its fairness has been upheld in a court trial. Our ensuing planning ordinances have had their effectiveness

Municipal Finance in the World of Proposition 13

With so many new “dot.com” fortunes being made in Silicon Valley, it may appear that our town should have no problems or issues concerning finances. With double digit increases in real estate values, easy money is coming to many of us, and so seemingly should it be for our town. But appearances can be deceiving. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that Los Altos Hills is still operating under the constraints of Proposition 13. So while many of our citizens are wealthy, our city government is not.

While the real estate boom has helped our town finances somewhat by revaluing property that changes ownership, it is no panacea. Do you realize that out of every \$100.00 you pay in property taxes, Los Altos Hills receives only about \$4.00? The remainder of your taxes go to the County, to Schools, Water District funds and Library funds. Los Altos Hills’ annual operating budget is about \$4.5 million, basically less than the



sale price of one moderately large home.

During the recession of the early-to-mid-1990’s, Los Altos Hills was one of the few local communities not struggling with badly unbalanced deficit budgets.

The reason for this was the solid management policies that our City Council employed in managing our fiscal resources. We carefully planned and controlled our costs, put aside 20% of our income for capital improvements (major street repaving, etc.) to avoid deteriorating infrastructure, and even managed to put aside a few dollars for a “rainy day”. This yielded us a “reserve” of about \$6.7 million as of June 30, 2000.

The City Council is now entertaining a very ambitious capital improvements program, of primarily road and on-road pathway construction, that will spend down these reserves by \$4.27 million by the year 2007. This program will almost completely drain the Capital Improvements account and the Future Operations account, leaving us with only the Emergency fund, the Contingency fund and a very inadequate Town Hall replacement fund. This will make additional unforeseeable project needs (landslide and storm drain repairs, etc.)

very difficult to fund, and leaves the town in a precarious financial condition.

HILLS 2000 believes that the City Council has not adequately prioritized its programs since the need to replace Town Hall is becoming more critical by the year. This replacement cost has risen dramatically since the first \$750,000 estimate was made over two years ago, and may possibly cost as much as \$2.0 million.

HILLS 2000 strongly urges the City Council to make careful plans for all of our capital needs while continuing the prudent fiscal policies that have served us so well in the past. Let’s all remember that additional funds are very difficult to come by. Proposition 13 is alive and well! ★

These General Fund “reserves” are designated to the following accounts:

General Fund Account	Amount
Emergency (Fire, earthquake, etc.)	\$1,250,000
Contingency (Unanticipated major expenses, etc.)	350,000
Capital Improvements (Roads, pathways, etc.)	3,060,000
Town Hall Replacement	750,000
Future Operations (Unassigned surplus)	1,333,691
Pathway Construction (In lieu fees)	14,124
TOTAL:	\$6,757,815

Town Adrift - Deja Vu, all over again!

meticulously measured and evaluated through the years by countless commissioners, councilmembers, and planning staff.

It is no wonder that loss of staff in the planning department is serious. The current loss of three planners (in a department of three) leaves us bereft of experience. The former department, which represented ten years of service to Los Altos Hills, now has as its head Carl Cahill, with just one year of town experience, aided by an assistant who is a recent Stanford graduate, and contract help.

Town manager positions are extremely important. And precarious. Ours is currently unfilled. Jeff Peterson, our able manager who had risen through the ranks and

was intimately familiar with the town, departed in early 1999. The council then hired Mark Miller. He fell out of favor with the council majority and left shortly after the March 2000 election. The council has had a difficult time finding a satisfactory candidate since then. A headhunting firm has been hired at a cost of \$20,000 to assist in the search. Bob Quinlan, a retired city manager from Cupertino is working for us on a part-time basis.

The council’s job is to set policy, not to run the town. It is the duty of the city manager to implement the council’s policy. Currently, we are adrift just as we were in 1988 following the election of Toni Casey.

Deja vu, all over again. Haven’t we endured enough? ★

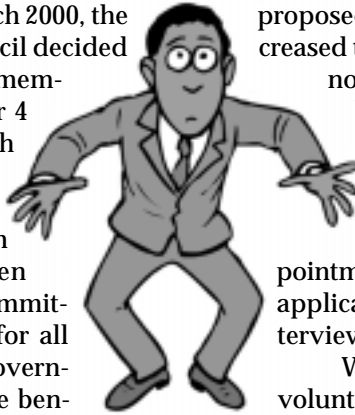
Are Volunteers Now Political Appointments?

Volunteerism has always been alive and well in Los Altos Hills. Our Town has eight standing committees. In spite of the fact that terms of appointment vary from 2 years to 4 years, dedicated volunteers serve on these committees usually until they are ready to step down.

Following the Special Election in March 2000, the mayor and mayor pro tem of the City Council decided to review appointments to committees for members who have served more than their 2 or 4 year appointments and to replace them with "new blood."

Prior to Sept. 7th, the Pathways Committee had nine active members, all of whom wished to remain on the committee even though four members had served on the committee for more than four years. As is true for all committee volunteers, learning the rules governing their activities takes a long period. The benefit to committees in having seasoned veterans who know the intricacies of the tasks is considerable. Members of the Pathways Committee were surprised to learn that three people had applied to join shortly before the Council final filing date for reappointments, as this committee had had no new applicants for over one year.

Pathways Committee members all agreed that adding three new members to the Pathways Committee would be of benefit to the community. The Committee welcomed new ideas from novice members, but wished to retain the expertise of long-time members of this committee.



At the Council meeting on Sept. 7th, Council learned that all of the existing members of the Pathways Committee to be reviewed wished to remain on the committee and that they wished to increase the size of the committee to twelve members. Councilmember Elayne Dauber proposed that the Pathways Committee size be increased to twelve members, but her motion received no second from any of the other Council Members present (Toni Casey, Emily Cheng, and Steve Finn). The Council majority then voted to admit the three new applicants to the Committee, but not to reappoint three of the long-time members. The appointments were made even though two of the new applicants failed to appear for the customary interview before the council.

Whoever heard of turning away dedicated volunteers? Other committees have associate members, e.g. Community Relations. We ask ourselves why did the three Council members refuse to accept the Committee's request to increase its size? Is there a hidden agenda? Are volunteers now political appointments? As a community, is this what we want?

Remember, Your Vote on November 7th counts! ★



Voting Irregularities in Los Altos Hills!

California Election Code section 2024 provides: "The mere intention to acquire a new domicile, without the fact of removal avails nothing, neither does the fact of removal without intention."

While this language may seem somewhat archaic, according to the Legal Division of the Elections Division of the California Secretary of State's office it means that people cannot register to vote in a place where they intend to reside until they have in fact "removed" to the intended residence.

Unfortunately, it appears that recently some people have violated this provision of state law by registering to vote and voting in Los Altos Hills elections before they have actually moved here.

While we welcome new residents to Los Altos Hills, we believe they should vote here only in compliance with, and not in violation of, state law. ★



Do You Like the Town Logo Used for Political Campaign Mailings?

I have received so many phone calls questioning the legality of a recent election endorsement letter on Town of Los Altos Hills letterhead that I would appreciate printing my response:

State laws are written to ensure that taxpayer funds are not used to benefit particular candidates. This letter was legal as far as the state is concerned because it was paid for privately. The integrity of the Town logo is protected by the city council. In the past, no council member has ever used Town stationery (or a facsimile thereof) for anything but Town business. I concur with that "old-timer" ethic.

The current council majority (Finn, Casey, Cheng) thinks it is fine to use the Town logo on personal campaign letters.

If the residents are not happy with that opinion, they need to vote in a different city council. ★

Elayne Dauber
Retiring council member
Los Altos Hills

Dear Los Altos Hills Residents:

This council election on November 7th will determine if the current, divisive form of government will continue in LAH or if new council members will start to reunite this wonderful community again.

For a few years now, this town has been UN-NECESSARILY divided by council members who have been defining town residents as "Old Guard" and "New Guard". This stereotyping of residents then became the rationale for ignoring the input and concerns of half our population.

The new Town Council majority so politically charged and divided the Town that residents are often even afraid to sign candidate endorsements fearing that endorsement might impact future planning decisions for their future remodel plans.

There is something wrong with our current Town Government and it needs to be changed.

Our current council majority-voting block would like to continue this division since it helps to promote their agenda. Half of the town can simply be defined as "The Old Guard" and can be ignored.

We need to seat council members who do not stereo-

type residents as "Old Guard" or "New Guard", but instead bring unity by viewing all residents as equal and participating members of our community.

As an active LAH volunteer committee member who frequently attends City Council and Planning Commission meetings, I have witnessed the new political machine getting bolder in their actions and agenda, impacting every facet of our community including volunteer committees, commission appointments, planning decisions, and even Town staffing. Almost everyone who participates in the Town in any capacity will quickly discover the problem that now exists, independent of their view on the Town Government.

If only all of the residents could be more involved and so view the political process now in place, and how badly it needs to be changed it would be easy to vote in this election.

If you want to bring back unity and work to make our community "neighborly" again, it is necessary to vote for all three independent candidates who can change the current divisiveness of our town by listening to everyone. Vote for Sandy Humphries, Mike O'Malley, and Bob Fenwick.

Sincerely,
Scott Vanderlip



View City Council Meetings on Your Computer

Hills 2000 - Friends of the Hills, a voluntary non-profit Los Altos Hills civic organization, is pleased to announce that web-based streaming video and audio of the LAH City Council meetings is now available on the Hills 2000 website. This is a major step forward in making Town government more accessible for Town residents. In providing this service, Hills 2000 believes that increased visibility will make a contribution towards improved governance.

Audio and video is being made available on the website in several different formats:

1. Audio taped version as provided by the Town.
2. Video suitable for use over 56k modems.
3. Video suitable for use over DSL modems.

Video is available starting with the September 21, 2000 council meeting. Please visit our website: <http://www.hills2000.org>

This achievement has been made possible by the volunteer efforts of Roger and Ginger Summit, Scott Vanderlip, and John Harpootlian. Hills 2000 welcomes additional volunteers who will be able to video tape the meetings and/or host the audio/video content.



Residents may not be aware that Council meetings are already available in several less convenient formats:

1. Audio tapes are available at the Town Hall.
2. Video tapes are available at the Town Crier.

A primary goal of Hills 2000 is the continued improvement of communication between the residents and elected officials. Those who share these goals are invited to join and support Hills 2000 - Friends of the Hills by contacting Scott Vanderlip at 650-948-6455.

Hills 2000 - Friends of the Hills was founded two years ago with the primary mission of preserving Los Altos Hills rural lifestyle and making the Town residents aware of significant issues by providing well-researched and unbiased communications. Additionally, the organization seeks to improve communication between the residents and elected officials and encourage responsible leaders who understand and support the

founding principles of the Town.

Hills 2000 has sponsored educational forums and interviewed candidate's for elected office and maintains a website at www.hills2000.org. ★

View all the candidates debating the issues at the L.W.V. Candidate Debate. Complete video is available on the website.
<http://www.hills2000.org>



Friends of the Hills members enjoy Westwind Hoe-down.

Hills 2000 Picnic A Great Success!

On September 24th, over 80 Hills residents attended the Hills 2000 summer picnic at Barbara and Richard Lamparter's home.

There was a great time sharing the potluck and enjoying talks by the Sheriff's Office about safety concerns in the Hills. Sergeant Luther Pugh and Deputy Lance Longaker spoke on community policing efforts. Both were excellent speakers - balancing humor with the serious nature of their work. It was a good opportunity for Deputy Longaker to introduce himself to the community, since most of the residents are likely asleep while he is performing his duties on the swing shift. He stated that it was nice to be standing in "front" of the residents instead of "behind" them. His good humor was contagious.

Sgt. Pugh effectively addressed the resident's concerns about safety issues, reviewed the crime statistics, and explaining the Town's contracting relationship with

the Sheriff's Office. In addition, Sgt. Pugh pointed out why so many of the false alarms and 911 calls contribute to increasing the number of hours charged to the Town and suggested ways to mitigate them. He also discussed the recent mailbox thefts where thieves are stealing checks, washing the payment amounts and then cashing the checks. Sgt. Pugh requested that the residents be extra vigilant when reconciling their checking accounts.

Candidates Sandy Humphries, Mike O'Malley and Bob Fenwick spent time discussing their platforms with the attendees. Former Mayor, Sid Hubbard served as the emcee and introduced and recognized outgoing council members, Elayne Dauber and Bob Johnson. All of the attendees thanked the council members for their enormous contributions to the Town.

Many thanks to all of the Hills 2000 residents who made the picnic such a success! ★



Diane Barrager, Deputy Longaker, Sgt. Pugh, and Carol Kleyensteuber



Mike O'Malley and Sandy Humphries.



Sgt. Pugh discussing crime statistics.



Bob Johnson, outgoing Council member and Sid Hubbard.



Marcie and Bill Smith.

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Friends of the Hills Newsletter

Statement of Purpose

*To provide well researched and unbiased communications on significant issues to all residents of Los Altos Hills. The Friends Newsletter is published with assistance from members of the Friends of the Hills.
Editor: Barbara Lamparter*

Hills 2000 Steering Committee

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Diane Barrager | Duffy Price |
| Jitze Couperus | Bill Riffle |
| Nancy Couperus | Dot Schreiner |
| Les Earnest | Jim Steiner |
| Rick Ellinger | Jean Struthers |
| Carol Gottlieb | Ginger Summit |
| John Harpootlian | Lew Throop |
| Barbara Lamparter | Scott Vanderlip |
| Bob Lefkowitz | Barbara Vetterlein |

Walk to School Day Huge Success!



The recent Walk to School Day held on October 4th was a huge success. The LAH Pathways system provided a terrific way for kids to walk to Bullis school. Many parent leaders were very supportive of the effort and praised the benefit of the pathways system before the City Council meeting on October 5th. Parent Malcolm Clark stated, "Our off-road paths are a crucial part of the safe routes to Bullis. Nearly one-quarter of those who walked to school used the off-road paths that lead to the South end of Bullis. And off-road paths offered a safer route from Alexander and Snell to the Altadena-Manuela approach to Bullis for many students".

After the council meeting, Mr. Clark stated, "Our Pathways System must continue to be the centerpiece of our Town. The pathways benefit to our children is enormous and should not be JEOPARDIZED by candidates for office who wish to make established pathway easements voluntary."

Hills 2000 agrees that the founders of the Town knew what they were doing when they designed our Town for the future. ★

Join Hills 2000 Friends of the Hills

Membership dues are \$25 for your family. New members are welcome. Please fill out and return the form below or contact Barbara Vetterlein at (650) 941-7471 and visit our website at www.hills2000.org

NEW MEMBERSHIP OR CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

DAYTIME TEL

EVENING TEL

EMAIL

Please fill out the form above, make checks payable to:
HILLS 2000
and mail them both to the address below. Thank you.