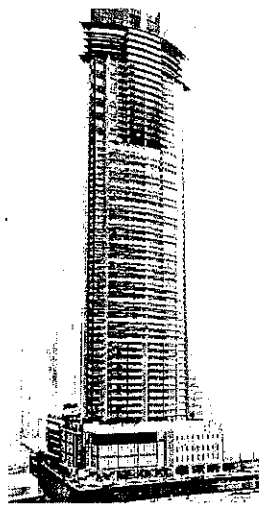


"Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..."

~First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America



# News

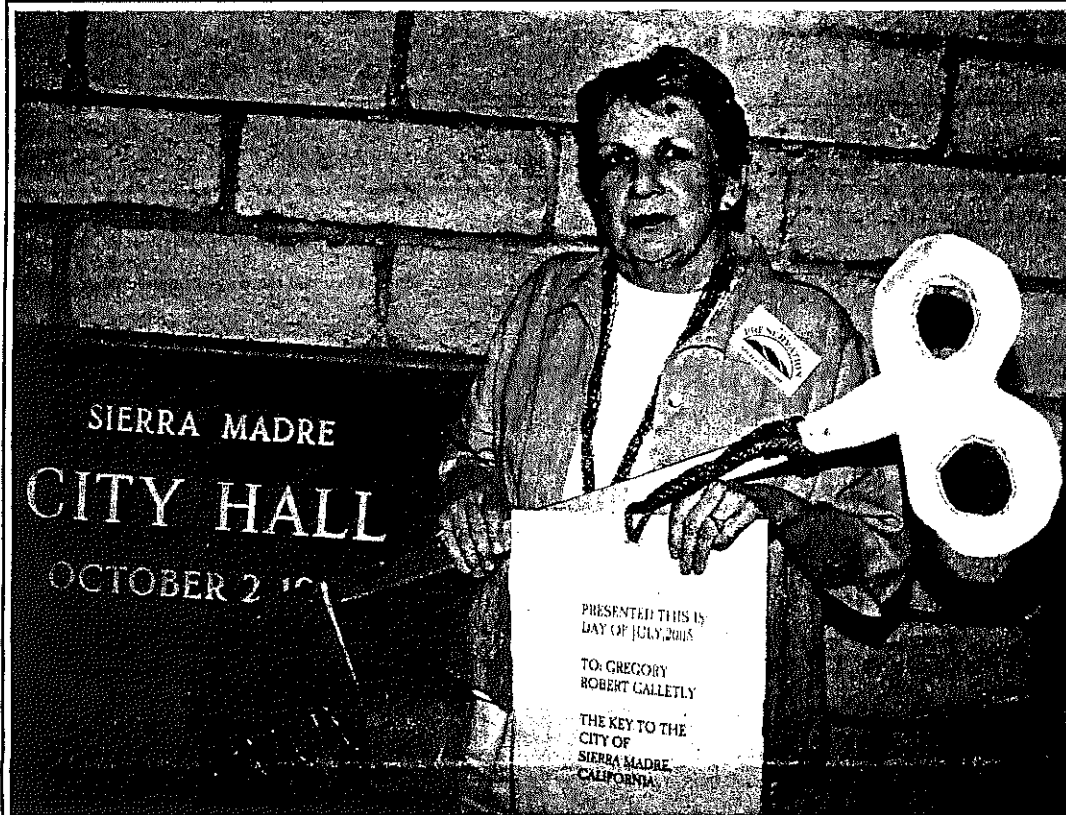
Voice of the Foothills since 1907

# Sierra Madre

Volume 2, Number 1

January/February 2006

\$2.00



Pat Birdsall: Residents for the Preservation of Sierra Madre (RPSM) steering committee member and Senior Commission board member, couldn't have been more clear as to what approval of the One Carter Development could possibly mean for the future of Sierra Madre.



Councilmember Tonja Torres, before voting to approve the One Carter Development.



## Welcome to Galletlyville (aka Glendale East), Formerly Known as Sierra Madre

**Sierra Madre Hillside From Chantry Flats Road to the Passionist Father's Retreat House Set for Future Development. Downtown Set for Possible 5+ Story Buildings. One Carter Developer Greg Galletly to Develop 110 Acre Heflin Estate in Northeast Corner of City, While Council, Manager & Attorney Write the City into a Legal & Financial Corner in the Form of the Downtown Specific Plan and New Hillside Management Zone.**

### Downtown Specific Plan to Cost \$ Millions \$

Water, Sewer & Traffic Infrastructure Needed for Future Growth to be Paid for by Current Residents.

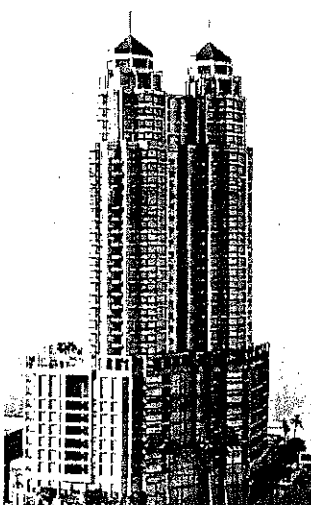
The City of Sierra Madre's "Downtown Specific Plan" (DSP) is on a fast track for approval. Unlike the Residential Canyon Zone, the Senior Housing project or Public Safety, the City Council has made the DSP a priority *uber alles* (over all). Several Site Plans within the Specific Plan have been submitted by developers and are being included in the DSP. A Site Plan is a plan for a specific piece of property or properties within the Specific Plan area. These include the former Skilled Nursing Facility, all property owned by the Sierra Madre Congregational Church and the former Howie's Market location.

Once the Downtown Specific Plan is approved, all individual Site plans within it become law as well. There is approximately 400,000.00 square feet of new construction already approved for the Downtown area alone in the form of Site Plans, with the Cotigregatunal Church making up approximately 50,000.00 square feet of it.

Site plans would not be there unless the City had already been working with the developers all along. Once passed, residents will have no recourse to stop construction of such monolithic structures. Developers would also have a legal basis for suing the City, should the City try to stop them.

According to the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

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### Hillside Task Force 'Developing' Sierra Madre's Future

Voice of Hillside Preservation Squeeks while Voice of Development Roars.

Sierra Madre's Hillside Ordinance Task Force committee started meeting twice monthly (on the first and third Thursdays) in January 2006.

The Task Force consists of councilmembers John Buchanan & Tonja Torres, former councilmember Maryanne MacGillavry, former RPSM member Marguerite Schuster, former Los Angeles City Planner Gurdon Miller, Planning Commissioner John Hutt, Tree Commissioner Caroline Brown and builder Christopher Allen. City Manager John Gillison is the staff and Sandra Levin is legal counsel.

Caroline Brown, John Hutt, Gurdon Miller and Marguerite Schuster each own hillside property in Sierra Madre.

Thus far, it is difficult to determine what their charge is and who is in control of the committee's direction. Members elected councilmember Tonja Torres as the Task Force chairperson and Caroline Brown as vice-chair. However, as committee member Maryanne MacGillavry stated at the February 23, 2006 meeting, "the attorneys will be writing the policy." This is understandable given that it appears the only individual giving direction is Task Force counsel Sandra Levin of Collantuono and Levin.

Cathy Teegarden, representing Dorn-Platz was at every Hillside Task Force meeting. In most cases, she was the only person in attendance besides the Task Force members themselves.

Thus far the only voice for hillside preservation appears

to be Ms. Schuster, who stated at an earlier meeting "I want to be restricted." She was immediately shot down by her colleagues, including councilmembers Buchanan & Torres.

Task Force member Gurdon Miller suggested that the "natural slope" of the hillside be defined by the oldest available records. Unfortunately, there has been considerable alteration to Sierra Madre's hillside over the last 100 years. Such a definition would provide a gaping loophole for any developer, or at least provide legal grounds by which to challenge the definition.

An individual concerned with preserving the hillside would have recommended that the definition be based on the current state (or "slope") of the hillside (given that there doesn't seem to be any interest in restoring them to their former state) in order to eliminate any possible challenges. The only portions of Sierra Madre's hillside that are still "natural" are far too steep to ever be built on. A majority of committee members concurred with Mr. Miller and the most important aspect of hillside preservation was quickly and quietly dispensed with.

Stonehouse Homes LLC represented by Greg Galletly is currently in the process of developing the 110 acre Heflin Estate, in the Northeast corner of Sierra Madre. The tentative tract map shows 35 new building sites in the canyon areas between the property's hillside. The hillside will be developed once the new Hillside Ordinance has gone into effect.

# Insights

## I Believe in (the):

~Freedom of Speech  
 ~Right to Dissent  
 ~Right to Criticize  
 One's Government

God Bless the United States of America!



Betsy Ross and George Washington

## EDITORIAL

### Zealous Christian Soldiers

For those that participated in and/or observed the events surrounding the One Carter issue, you may remember the zealous nature in which Maranatha patrons supported the One Carter development. Even after the Council approved the ill-conceived project, many fundamentalist Christians, apparently full of themselves with their recent "victory" and full of what can only be described as anger, went so far as to say on many occasions and in many forums, that "Sierra Madre got what it deserved." Essentially, asserting that God smote Sierra Madre for not allowing the High School project to go forward.

In fact, the One Carter development has little to do with religion or God, but rather more to do with the Almighty Dollar. According to the Sierra Madre Congregational Church's website, these ("born again") Christians believe that "Money is one of the resources the Lord has given us to use." I don't recall anywhere in Genesis the Lord saying "Let there be money," but extreme fundamentalists have been making it up as they go along anyway.

As clients of the Evangelical Christian Credit Union (ECCU): a non-Federally chartered, financial cooperative; they were also investors. Headquartered in Orange County CA., the ECCU financed both Maranatha's purchases of One Carter in Sierra Madre and the Ambassador College property in Pasadena. Both of which are slated for over-development. In my opinion, those people are nothing but greedy, real estate speculators cloaked in the rubric of "good will towards all."

The threat by Maranatha had nothing to do with our Hillside Ordinance or our Zoning Codes. However, the current City Attorney, (hired in my opinion by the developer-friendly City Council to foil the City's defense of the groundless lawsuit by Maranatha, and direct it into an unnecessary settlement) has stated that he believes the current Hillside Ordinance is "legally indefensible."

Who made the assertion that Sierra Madre's Hillside Ordinance was "legally indefensible?" You ask! Maranatha High School and Dorn-Platz. It wasn't a judge, an independent, uninterested third party or the residents of Sierra Madre. Instead, it was a development interest whose profits are dependent on favorable City Council votes.

Maranatha filed a (Federal) Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act lawsuit. The lawsuit had nothing to do with Sierra Madre's Hillside Ordinance. The lawsuit was predicated on the laughable assertion that the City discriminated against Maranatha's right to freely practice its religion. The property was zoned as Residential well before the high school purchased the property, but for some unknown reason, Maranatha expected Sierra Madre to make a considerable exception to its land use policy in order to satisfy Maranatha's special interests.

Maranatha simply used "lawsuit" as a means to intimidate the residents and give the developer-pleasing Council an excuse to rewrite the Hillside Ordinance in such a way that the "new" Hillside Ordinance will actually favor development instead of preserving the hillsides. It's also worth noting that the "new" Hillside Ordinance will not include the canyon areas between the hills. Given that the City has repeatedly refused to enact a reasonable Residential Canyon Zone over the last ten years, the areas between the hillsides will be completely vulnerable to unscrupulous development.

If the intent of the Hillside Ordinance be to preserve the hillsides as well as the character of Sierra Madre, and the City is also in need of raising revenue, my suggestion is to substantially increase permit and development fees. However, at the time of printing and after three Hillside Task Force meetings, neither the City Council nor the committee itself (chaired by councilmember Tonja Torres) has a stated purpose for the Hillside Task Force.

*Continued on Next Page*

*Editorial, Continued from Page 2*

With rumored starting prices for the smallest and least desirable parcels on the One Carter site starting at \$900,000.00, Maranatha High School and the ECCU stand to make a profit of approximately \$30,000,000.00.

FYI: According to the State Department of Corporations the service address for Dorn-Platz and Stonehouse Homes LLC. (developer of the 110 acre Heflin estate) is 210 S. Orange Grove in Pasadena. That address also happens to be on the Ambassador College property owned by Maranatha and slated for over development. According to the State Department of Corporations, the agent for both Dorn-Platz and Stonehouse Homes LLC is Greg Galetty.

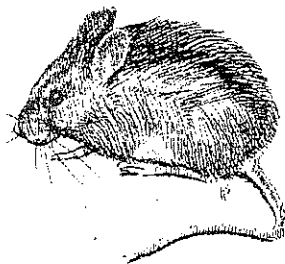
In a previous issue of this paper it was stated that Maranatha had sold the One Carter property to Dorn-Platz. However, according to the Los Angeles County Assessor's office, the property is still owned by Maranatha High School with tax bills going to Dorn-Platz's offices in Glendale.

# Downtown Lowdown

By City Mouse

## Sierra Madre Hires Chief of Police

Marilyn Diaz will become Los Angeles County's first-ever female city police chief when she joins the Sierra Madre Police Department in mid-March. We welcome her! We look forward to an equitable resolution of past issues and a seamless transition under Chief Diaz.



## Welcome to the Evangelical Village of Sierra Madre...

Readers may have heard about the Downtown Specific Plan, but have they heard about the Specific Plan within the Downtown Specific Plan for the Sierra Madre Congregational Church? If you aren't a member of the SMCC, you probably aren't aware of the tens of thousands of square feet of renovated and additional space to be built over the next three years, establishing SMCC as the preeminent Evangelical Christian church in the San Gabriel Valley.

Reminiscent of Herbert W. Armstrong's former World Wide Church of God's site in Pasadena (Ambassador College), SMCC envisions a campus which would include dormitories, classrooms, assembly halls, a gymnasium, and commercial operations to support thousands of Evangelical Congregationalists and its worldwide missions.

Favorable constructability assurances by the Planning Department led SMCC to sign a 4,700 square foot sub-lease with R/C Modeler. This space will be used as classroom and assembly spaces for its SMCC Ministries. Also planned along the boulevard are a canteen, coffee shop, Christian news stand, florist, and shops, as well as specialty boutiques offering handcrafts from the many countries in which the church operates. Local Christian merchants have been approached about relocating to the soon to be built SMCC retail complex. Help Wanted ads have been placed and interviews have been taking place.

According to Tower Notes, October 20, 2005, a publication of the SMCC, construction has already begun:

*The first smaller projects have already begun, starting with the seismic upgrade and remodeling of the Hospitality House. A new kitchen is being installed, and new doors added for convenient access to classrooms and officespace. Servicing windows will enable snacks to be dispensed from the kitchen to people outside.*

*Also underway is the engineering work for relocation of power lines and the placement of other utilities that will be needed as we build out the north side of our campus.*

*The next visible project will be the remodeling of New Life Center and the addition of a second floor over the one-story part of the building to add several new children's classrooms. Besides adding classroom space, this project will make the building stronger, provide for more usable spaces in the existing areas, and provide safer exiting from the upstairs.*

SMCC claims to have raised more than \$3,500,000 of the estimated \$7,000,000 (for Phase I) necessary to build up and out on both the north and south sides of Sierra Madre Boulevard, and east along the boulevard.

Kurt Christiansen, former Director of Development for the City of Sierra Madre, reviewed SMCC's master plan (called a Specific Plan by the City) prior to leaving to work for the City of Yorba Linda, and according to Ken Cromeenes, SMCC Business Administrator, Kurt indicated that once the City had passed the Downtown Specific Plan, it would generally mean a green light for SMCC to build under the expedited approval process. The Downtown Specific Plan is expected to be approved by the end of this month.

Be very clear -- once the Downtown Specific Plan is approved, the Master Plan/Specific Plan for the expanded SMCC campus is automatically approved. That is the meaning of "expedited approval process". No noticing, no public hearing, no Planning Commission, and no City Council appeal.

## Traffic Signals

Last month the Public Works department very quietly continued with downtown traffic studies. Reliable sources within the City indicated that RFQ's

(Requests for Quotes) will be initially solicited for traffic monitoring devices at the intersections of Baldwin Avenue and Sierra Madre Boulevard, as well as two other locations.

## Churches, Schools, and the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages

The owners and proprietors of three package liquor stores and a lounge are anxiously awaiting the outcome of the planned classroom and gymnasium expansion on the SMCC campus. Impact could range from forced closure to limiting window advertising.

## Extra Extra!

City's First Private Gated Development

Dorn Platz submitted Tentative Tract Map 06-01, Conditional Use Permit 06-02 on Thursday, January 19, 2006 to the City with the intent of building 35 homes on the hillside known to the community as the Heflin Estate. Are you a nearby property owner? Be aware that a Homeowners' Association is being formed and that a private road will be built to access what can only be described as luxury estates. Anne McIntosh, Development Services Director informed Cathy Teegarden, Dorn Platz that the application was incomplete and will need to be re-submitted.

## Reason for Foot Dragging on Canyon Specific Plan Revealed

Connect the dots: the Heflin-Dorn Platz application for the 1935 Stonehouse Road development would be impacted by a Canyon Specific Plan as well as a Hillside Ordinance.

Former Mayor Bart Doyle declared three years ago that he expected the Planning Commission and Development Services to present the plan for adoption prior to his leaving office. Former Development Services Director Kurt Christianson agreed to act as a consultant to finalize the Canyon Specific Plan for presentation in December 2005. It's almost spring 2006 and still there is no Canyon Specific Plan.

Who in the City has enough juice to sand bag before the Community connects the dots? Will the Heflin-Dorn Platz application for the 1935 Stonehouse Road development be impacted by a Canyon Specific Plan as well as a Hillside Ordinance.