

History of the Mar Vista Community Council

(contributions from Rob Kadota, Tom Ponton, and Bill Scheduling,)

On October 12th 2000, Bill Scheduling and Tom Ponton first crossed paths at a meeting organized by the new Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to discuss the creation of Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles, which were now mandated by the new City Charter. As Mar Vista residents and somewhat conservative community activists, Bill and Tom set out to create a Mar Vista Council that would within the next few years apply for certification as the Mar Vista Community Council. On August 13th, 2002 the MVCC became the 41st. Neighborhood Council in Los Angeles to be certified.

Primarily using their own email lists of neighbors and Neighborhood Associations, Bill & Tom got the word out to Mar Vista stakeholders about plans to organize something new to improve stakeholders voice with the city. The first meeting was held on November 15th, 2000, at the WLA Parking Enforcement Building and was primarily an attempt to get organized and talk about boundaries, bylaws, and future outreach. Many meetings would follow to discuss the new concept and its participants were later referred to as the Organizing Committee. This group of early organizers quickly formed an Outreach Committee and a Bylaws Committee. Soon after came a Website Committee, then a Certification Committee and Election Committee. Leadership of the original committees was unofficial and fluid, but committee leaders included Ken Alpern, Marty Rubin, Marie Wallace, and Carl Beierle on Outreach; Cathy Bekian, Bryan Gordon, Tom Ponton, Stacy Brown, and Dorris Isolini Nelson on Bylaws; Bill Scheduling on Web Site; Tom Ponton on Certification; Jerry Gotlieb, Dorris Nelson, and Evelyn Dravecky on Elections. Minutes were taken by various volunteers such as Lillia Singer, Tina Esposito, Bill Scheduling, Carl Beierle and Amy Lawrence.

Early organizing support also came from leadership of the Mar Vista Neighborhood Association, the Hill Top Neighborhood Association, the Westdale Home Owners Association, the North Westdale HOA, the Ven-Mar Neighborhood Association and the Westside Village Civic Association. Email continued to be the strongest outreach tool of early organizers as well as the Neighborhood Associations. Although some in these associations feared their own groups might lose clout with city politicians, most understood the different nature and the potential strengths of joining together.

One of the biggest challenges for this early assortment of community organizers was coming to an agreement on the structure and rules by which the council would be governed for years into the future. The City Charter left most of this up to each individual council to resolve on it's own, and as was the case around the city, Mar Vista invested a lot of time working out these details.

But as can be confirmed by the minutes of the early meetings, discussion of community issues was frequent at the meetings, and may have been one of the strongest outreach tools used by early leadership to inspire stakeholders to get involved. Early issues included discussions and votes involving; the Exposition Light Rail, Playa Vista traffic impacts on Mar Vista, proliferation of WLA Strip Clubs, Santa Monica Airport noise and pollution, LA City Council Redistricting, Venice Blvd improvements, and Viacom Street Furniture installations.

Even the name of the new council was a hot topic for several months. “Mar Vista Neighborhood Council” was an obvious consideration, but possibly confusing due to the already existing Mar Vista Neighborhood Association. “Westside Neighborhood Council” and “North Mar Vista Neighborhood Council” were other choices popular with some. Final agreement on “Mar Vista Community Council” as the official name came after first being proposed by Bryan Gordon, who pointed out that two of the oldest and most respected councils around, although not certified, were the Brentwood Community Council and the Pacific Palisades Community Council and that “Community” might best described the collection of neighborhoods joining forces in Mar Vista.

The terminology “Organizing Committee” came into use in early 2002 and began as a separate committee of the yet unofficial MVCC, which had already been meeting since April 10th, 2001. The original uncertified MVCC, later referred to as the MVCC Organizing Committee, held a total of 28 monthly meetings and 60-70 committee meetings. The first 11 monthly meetings were co-chaired by both Bill and Tom. On March 5th, 2002 the group elected interim officers placing Bill Scheduling as pro-tem Chair, Tom Ponton as pro-tem Vice Chair, and Tina Esposito as pro-tem Secretary. The MVCC was eventually certified at a meeting of the LA City Board of Neighborhood Commissioners on August 13th, 2002, at Daniel Webster Middle School. The first official election was held on March 27th, 2003 and first official thirteen Directors were elected from among 47 candidates with 389 stakeholders casting votes. At the installation ceremony on May 13th 2003, the first Election for officers was held and Tom Ponton was elected the Chair, with Bill Scheduling as First Vice Chair, Evelyn Dravecky as Second Vice Chair, Amy Lawrence as Secretary, and Tony Navarro as Treasurer.

People involved in the Organizing committee:

- Alex Utas
- Amy Lawrence
- Bill Scheduling
- Bryan Gordon
- Carl Beierle
- Charlie West
- Doris Isolini Nelson
- Evelyn Dravecky
- Evon Gotlieb
- Jerry Gotlieb
- Ken Alpern

Lillia Singer
Marie Wallace
Marty Rubin
Paul Thompson
Stacy Brown
Tina Esposito
Tom Ponton

Mar Vista Community Council certified August 13, 2002.

Population within MVCC boundaries estimated to be 50,417 with 22,247 households (apts. & homes) based on 2000 US Census.

Initial Election March 27, 2003 – 47 candidates ran for election, 389 stakeholders voted.

May 21, 2003 1st Meeting of MVCC Board of Directors

Ken Alpern*
Barbara Corry
Evelyn Dravecky 2nd Vice Chair
Bryan Gordon
Rob Kadota*
Amy Lawrence* Secretary
Tony Navarro* Treasurer
Tom Ponton* Chair
Maritza Przekop*
Bill Scheduling* 1st Vice Chair
Amanda Seward
Andy Shrader
Christine Taylor

*(Elected to a 2 year term '03-'05)

Zone Directors Elected - March 16 2004, 145 stakeholders voted (terms run '04-'06)

Bobby Holliday (Zone 1)
Bahaa Mikhail, (Zone 2)
Ken Marsh (Zone 3)
Christine Taylor (Zone 4)
Vanessa Solomon (Zone 5)
George Chung, (Zone 6)

Join the sitting MVCC At Large Directors (terms run '03-'05):

Ken Alpern,
Bryan Gordon
Rob Kadota 1st Vice Chair
Amy Lawrence Secretary
Tony Navarro Treasurer

Tom Ponton Chair
Maritza Przekop
Bill Scheduling 2nd Vice Chair

Spring 2004 1st Quarterly Newsletter hits the stands

May '04 MVCC provided a 17 page **Response to the Final Environmental Impact Report** for the second phase of the **Playa Vista Development**. The report included a discussion of a variety of adverse impacts on Mar Vista Stakeholders but was especially critical of the traffic impact and primarily the lack of analysis of traffic cutting through local Mar Vista streets.

July '04 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting: **Neighbors Helping Neighbors-Building Community**

Capt. Williams, LAPD Pacific Division addresses the auditorium of stakeholders about safety and security issues and resources. Event was taped and broadcast on Channel 36 via city cable service. Federal, State, County, City and NGO's participated in the information fair and safety expert presentations.

Oct. '04 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting: **Mar Vista Voices: Building Our Community Voice**

Panel presentations made by a diverse group of local Mar Vista organizations (Mar Vista Senior Citizens Club, Westdale Homeowners Assoc. Taco Bell Neighbors Action Group, MVCC Commercial Corridor Planning Comm., Gregory Ain Historic District) shared how they have worked to improve our community around special topics and issues. Greg Nelson and Neal Richmond shared their thoughts about people working to make a difference on the local neighborhood level

Jan. '05 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting: **The Mar Vista Blue Print, Planning Our Community**

Urban planning experts made presentations to the community followed by community discussions by the six MVCC zones to identify community resources, issues, opportunities related to current and future uses of our urban landscape.

Mar Vista Arts Guild Launches Inaugural show Jan.-March 2005 of 25 Mar Vista Artists at Kraft Gallery.

Co-Sponsored LA City Council District 11 Candidate Forum, Tuesday, February 15, 2005 at 7 P.M. with West LA Chamber and League of Women Voters at Venice High School Moderated by KPCC FM 89.3 's Larry Mantle, host of Air Talk, the longest continuously airing daily talk program in Southern California. CD 11 Forum scheduled to be broadcast on Air Talk Wednesday, February 16, 2005, 10 AM– 12 Noon and cable TV channel 36 (www.LA36.org)

At Large Directors Elected - March 15, 2005, 360 stakeholders voted (terms run '05-'07)

Ken Alpern,
Claudia Border
Rob Kadota, 1st Vice Chair
Renee Marcus
Tom Ponton Chair
Matthew Vodnoy
Bill Scheduling Treasurer

Join the sitting MVCC Zone Directors (terms run '04-'06):

Robert Mednick (Zone 1)
Bahaa Mikhail (Zone 2)
Ken Marsh (Zone 3) 2nd Vice Chair
Christine Taylor (Zone 4)
Amy Lawrence (Zone 5) Secretary
George Chung (Zone 6)

March 16, 2005 Mar Vista Community Council's Education Committee presents, **Our Schools, Our Community**. A public forum at Venice High School Auditorium with a renowned Education Assessment Expert and presentations from all 13 public schools within the Mar Vista Community Council's boundaries.
* Beethoven St. Elementary School * Charnock Rd. Elementary School * Clover Ave. Elementary School * Grandview Blvd. Elementary School * Mar Vista Elementary School * Richland Ave. Elementary School * Walgrove Elementary School * Mark Twain Middle School * Palms Middle School * Webster Middle School * Venice High School*

April '05 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting – Installation of new Board and Farewell to CD 11 Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski.

Dec. '05 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting features City Councilman Bill Rosendahl and Holiday Toy Drive

March '06 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting focuses on Caltrans projects, Widening of 405 and Venice Blvd. Improvements

MVCC Zone Directors Election - June 5, 2006, 209 stakeholders voted (terms run '06-'08)

Roberta Schiller (Zone 1)
Laura Bodensteiner (Zone 2) Secretary
JD Gaydowski (Zone 3)
Curt Steindler (Zone 5)
Stephen Boskin (Zone 4 – appointed)
Keith Lambert (Zone 6)

Join the sitting MVCC At Large Directors (terms run '05- '07):

Ken Alpern

Claudia Border
Rob Kadota Chair
Tom Ponton 1st Vice Chair
Bill Scheduling Treasurer
Matthew Vodnoy 2nd Vice Chair

August '06 **Mar Vista Farmers Market** located on Grand View Blvd. just south of Venice Blvd begins. Open every Sunday from 9-1pm (hours expanded to 2pm). MVCC opens a community outreach booth at the market.

Sept. 30, 2007 MVCC Joins CD 11 Councilman Bill Rosehdahl in kick off of LA City's **Million Trees LA project** at the Mar Vista Park Rec. Ctr.

Nov. '06 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting features **Traffic and LA City Budget**. Traffic Survey's distributed to every household in Mar Vista. Impressive number of survey's returned.

Feb. '07 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting focuses on **Safety and Security** – Identity Theft, Cyber Stalking and Crime in Mar Vista

May '07 Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting focuses on developing a shared vision for the Mar Vista of Tomorrow – **Updating the Mar Vista Concept Plan**, by utilizing urban planning tools and processes.

At Large Director Elections June 25, 2007, 537 stakeholders voted (terms run '07-'09):

Ken Alpern
Sharon Commins
Bob Fitzpatrick 1st Vice Chair
Colin Hatton
Rob Kadota Chair
Albert Olson 2nd Vice Chair
William L. Scheduling

Join the sitting Zone Directors (terms run '06-'08)

Roberta Golan Schiller (Zone 1)
Laura Bodensteiner (Zone 2) Secretary
J.D. Gaydowski (Zone 3)
Stephen Boskin (Zone 4)
Curt Steindler (Zone 5) Treasurer
Keith Lambert (Zone 6)

August 5, 2007 **Mar Vista Celebrates** – A celebration of Mar Vista's annexation to the City of Los Angeles and 1st year anniversary of Mar Vista's own Farmers Market in conjunction with the Mar Vista Historical Society, Councilman Bill Rosendahl, Mar Vista Landkeepers Preservation and the Mar Vista Community Council. www.marvistacelebrates.org

MVCC Zone Directors Election June 21st, 2008. 537 stakeholders voted (terms run '08-'10):

Babak Nahid	(zone 1)
Bill Koontz	(zone 2)
Kate Anderson	(zone 3)
Stephen Boskin	(zone 4)
Christopher McKinnon	(zone 5)
Marilyn Marble	(zone 6)
Rob Kadota	At Large Community Director

Laura Bodensteiner Later appointed to fill vacancy created by Colin Hatton resignation