

FALL NEWSLETTER 2022

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FIG · GARDEN
HOME · OWNERS
ASSOCIATION

Annual Fig Garden Dinner

Sunday, October 9th 5:30pm, dinner served at 6:00pm

Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club

4722 N. Maroa Ave.

RSVP with check by Friday, October 3rd

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This year is the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association, which was created in 1947. It is amazing the Fig Garden HOA has been serving the neighborhood for these many years! We have voluntary membership available to all Fig Garden neighbors who elect its nine non-paid board members to oversee the Association and its primary objective of maintaining the quality of life within our neighborhood. Over the years, the Fig Garden HOA has taken the lead in preserving the neighborhood's interests by fighting the City's attempts at annexation, preventing the widening of Ashlan Avenue, working with the County to create a sufficient minimum lot size to maintain our country-style living within an urban area, and assisting with traffic calming along Ashlan Avenue. The Fig Garden HOA is YOUR voice in how we want our neighborhood to look in the future.

Fig Garden Changes

As a Fig Garden resident for 30 years, I have seen changes within our neighborhood. They were predominantly in the remodeling and construction of residences. Major changes involved Ashlan Avenue, the main east-west thoroughfare that transects our neighborhood, and include the recent addition of a median and pedestrian crosswalks at the intersection of Ashlan Avenue and Van Ness Boulevard. Older changes along Ashlan Avenue include removing the stop sign at Van Ness Boulevard and making Wishon Avenue a right turn only. Improvements to the turn lanes at the intersection of Ashlan and Palm Avenues to reduce traffic congestion are planned for the near future. Other changes in our area over the years include the installation of storm drain lines and water lines with water meters (many of the new residents are not aware of flooding in the streets within our neighborhood prior to installation of the storm drain lines).

Over the years our boundaries have been reduced by incorporation into the City of some of the properties along the perimeter of Fig Garden, but surprisingly, as a whole, the Fig Garden neighborhood has been relatively unchanged for the past 50 to 60 years. Keeping the Fig Garden area as a semi-rural setting has been a long-term goal of the Fig Garden HOA and its residents. It is my and the Board's desire to protect and plan our neighborhood for the future so our children and grandchildren will have a wonderful Fig Garden neighborhood in which to live and raise their families.

As indicated in previous newsletters and E-Alerts, we have expressed concerns regarding sober/transitional housing developments, the new SB9 regulations passed by the state Senate which will allow multiple housing dwellings on residential lots, and the Shaw-Glenn project, located within the City of Fresno adjacent to Fig Garden, which has an excessive number of residential units per acre. Below is an update to our actions on these items.

Sober/Transitional Housing Developments

First, we have hired an attorney to help with obtaining changes to the County Zoning Ordinance to add sober/transitional housing developments to the Fresno County group homes category, which would allow regulations on this type of development. Our attorney has had two meetings with Fresno County Counsel and hopefully we can get some resolution to this matter.

SB9 Regulations

Regarding SB9 regulations, the Fig Garden Neighborhood has a Historical District Designation issued by the Board of Supervisors in 2010 to recognize our important historic contribution to the Fresno Community for over 100 years. SB9 excludes Historical Districts from the Senate Bill requirements.

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Presently, Fresno County Counsel is indicating that the Historical District Designation is ceremonial and does not exclude our neighborhood from SB9 regulations. We have met with Supervisor Steve Brandau and the Fresno Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission to discuss actions that the Fig Garden Neighborhood can take to remove the ceremonial classification to our Historical District Designation. The Fig Garden Home Owners Association will continue to look at methods to solidify our Historical District Designation.

Shaw-Glenn Project

Lastly, the Shaw-Glenn housing project has received approval from the City of Fresno Planning Commission. The Fig Garden HOA filed an appeal to the Planning Commission's approval for the development. The appeal is based on the project being at too high a density (at 55 units/acre it is almost double that allowed) to provide a safe and livable environment for its residents as well as for neighboring Fig Garden residents with regards to traffic, fire safety, access to schools, parks, shopping, etc. We will continue to work on making the Shaw-Glenn project compatible with our neighborhood. Voices of many are louder than a single voice and will be heard by our local and state representatives.

Please stay involved and carry a torch on these endeavors so we can keep Fig Garden as the wonderful place we know it today.

Old Fig Garden History

Old Fig Garden is rich with history. The neighborhood is over 100 years old and was established as a subdivision in 1919 by Forkner-Giffen. Trolley cars traveled along Wishon Avenue in the 1920s and 1930s. The trolley routes through the Fig Garden area took residents to Pinedale and Fresno Beach, now known as Scout Island, located along the San Joaquin River. The presence of the trolley line is the reason why Wishon Avenue and Van Ness Boulevard curve north of Rialto Avenue. Actually, in the 1920s the portion of Shaw Avenue between Van Ness and Van Ness Extension was also identified as Van Ness Street. This is why there is the large separation between Van Ness Boulevard and Van Ness Extension. Monuments identifying the trolley stops are still present on Van Ness Boulevard south of Shields Avenue. I can only imagine riding the trolley down Christmas Tree Lane in the 1930s. This would have been a memorable sight. As you all know, this December, Christmas Tree Lane celebrates its 100th year of lighting the Deodar Cedars.

In closing I would like to say that we live in a great neighborhood and we as a community should protect this neighborhood's quality of life for future generations.

-Dean Alexander

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE

Christmas Tree Lane will be celebrating its 100th season this year. Sorry to say but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic we will again not be having any walk nights this year. The current State guideline for mega outdoor events (attendance over 10,000) recommends that guests attending be vaccinated against COVID-19 or have a negative test result. We have no way to ensure that all of our guests have been vaccinated or have a negative test result.

Many residents have expressed concern that I and the Fig Garden Home Owners Association are overreacting to the State guideline for mega outdoor events. COVID-19 is still very active and contagious, and incidences of flu and other contagious diseases often increase in cold weather, such as during the time Christmas Tree Lane is open. Personally, my family and I all recently contracted COVID-19. I am

vaccinated and received the booster shot. My sickness was moderate and I rate it as a bad flu. During walk nights you are shoulder to shoulder with hundreds of other guests. It is very difficult to maintain social distancing. I have no doubt that if we would have the walk nights, COVID-19 would be spread at the event. I, in good conscience, cannot be involved with Christmas Tree Lane Walk Nights and be the cause of our guests contracting COVID-19.

We are going to have the Christmas Tree Lane Event but there will only be drive nights. Our opening night will be Thursday, December 1. The Lane will be open Sunday–Thursday 6:00pm–10:00 pm, Friday–Saturday 6:00–11:00 pm through Christmas Day, December 25. Let's mark our calendars and enjoy another magical year.

THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING OLD FIG!

Please join the Fig Garden Home Owners Association. We work to protect and strengthen our unique neighborhood. The dues are **\$70/year** and go to fees associated with filing documents, projects that protect the quality of life and integrity of the area, printing and mailing newsletters to keep you informed, and running the www.oldfig.org website. Please mail your check payable to:

FGHOA
PO BOX 5796, Fresno, CA 93755
or pay on our website: www.oldfig.org

Unlike with most homeowners groups, our dues are voluntary and we depend on the generosity of our fellow neighbors. The Board of Directors and Officers receive no payment for their work on behalf of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association.

ANNUAL DINNER

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9TH
5:30 - 8:30PM

FIG GARDEN SWIM & RACQUET CLUB
4722 N. MAROA AVE.

**WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
TO THIS DINNER—IT'S A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE
TO COME TOGETHER AND CELEBRATE OLD FIG.**

CATERING BY:
FIG GARDEN SWIM AND RACQUET CLUB
DINNER WILL BE SERVED AT 6:00PM

As in the past we have invited Fresno County officials and law enforcement serving our area to attend the dinner and answer your questions. Special invitee this year will be Sheriff Margaret Mims, who is retiring after 16 years of service to the County and Fig Garden

\$55 per person
Includes dinner, wine and dessert
RSVP by sending a check in the provided envelope October 3rd

Questions? Contact Valerie LeMay @ 559.779.8691

Casual Attire | Adults only

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING RE: SHAW GLENN PROJECT



Fig Garden Home Owners Association President Dean Alexander, left, informed the Fresno City Planning Commission that many Fig Garden neighbors oppose the Shaw Glenn Project in its current form.

Around 40 Fig Garden neighbors attended the September 7 City of Fresno Planning Commission meeting regarding the Fig Garden Home Owners Association's appeal of the Development Permit for the housing project at Shaw and Glenn Avenues. Over a two-hour period, about



Fresno County Supervisor Steve Brandau opposed approval of the Shaw Glenn project if it did not have a traffic study.

20 neighbors expressed reasons for denying the project in its current status due to its unprecedented high density of 55 units/acre, as well as its 4- and 5-story height, and how that would adversely affect living conditions and safety for future residents of the housing development as well as traffic and safety for the adjacent Fig Garden neighborhood.

Among the speakers questioning the lack of

sufficient traffic studies and fire safety measures were Fresno County Supervisor for District 2, Steve Brandau, and Fig Garden Home Owners Association President Dean Alexander, who opposed the project in its present form. Many neighbors who live near the proposed project addressed the Planning Commission about how their streets would be negatively impacted as well as how potential residents of the project and all traveling along Shaw would deal with the same traffic jams at Shaw and Blackstone.

Neighbors also questioned how such a project, which is almost double the density of any other recent affordable housing developments in Fresno, and which has a high number of 2- and 3-bedroom apartments that likely will support families with children, can provide adequate and safe exterior recreational and green areas for residents and their children. Neighbors also asked whether there are safety concerns for children having to cross major intersections to reach schools which, in fact, are not located anywhere near.

The Planning Commission declined to make a final decision at the meeting, postponing it to their next meeting, and requested the developer, UPHoldings, to have a discussion with Fig Garden residents in the meantime.

FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2022

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USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Sheriff's Dispatch	600-3111 (for emergencies call 911)
Fresno Humane Animal Services	600-7387 (PETS)
Fresno County Code Enforcement	600-4550
24-Hour Domestic Violence Help	233-4357 (HELP)
Building Permit Info	600-4540
City of Fresno Water Division	621-5300, 621-5480
Fig Garden Fire Station (non-emergency)	621-4320 (for emergencies call 911)
Fresno County Library Information	600-7323 (READ)
Fresno County Public Health	600-3200, 600-6449
Graffiti Abatement	600-8107
Fresno County Road Maintenance	600-4840