



FIG · GARDEN
HOME · OWNERS
ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020

www.oldfig.org

Annual Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 7:00pm

Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club

4722 N. Maroa Ave.

Meeting Agenda:

1. Call to order
2. Introductory Remarks
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Nomination of Directors & election
5. Discussion of matters of general interest
6. Adjournment

Come to our annual meeting. Hear the news, meet neighbors, ask questions of County and City officials, and show that you are a part of Old Fig.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DEAN ALEXANDER

Dear Friends and Neighbors,
My family and I have lived in the same Van Ness Blvd house for 30 years, have raised four fantastic kids, endured two building additions, recently added solar to our house, are on the verge of a kitchen remodel and have experienced 30 wonderful seasons of Christmas Tree Lane. Without any hesitation, we choose to live in Fig Garden due to its unique character, cohesiveness and pride of living in this special neighborhood.

Life for us here has been calm and idyllic, though over the last 30 years the area had issues challenging the nature and character of the neighborhood. Neighbors worked together to protect Fig Garden, including preventing the widening of Ashlan Avenue, rebuffing the threat of annexation into the City of Fresno, preventing the splitting of lots into smaller parcels, and the threat of replacing single family residences with multi-family dwellings. Through all that turmoil, the Fig Garden Home Owners Association was your voice and took action to preserve our way of life for the future.

We are experiencing a new threat to our Fig Garden neighborhood, partially due to the unique nature of our larger homes and oversized building lots. New state laws appear to allow twelve non-related residents in a three-bedroom "Transitional" or "Sober Living" house with the appropriate square footage. In the past, regulations restricted group homes to six occupants; homes holding more required applying for a conditional use permit from Fresno County that would involve public input, and, if approved, the County would also set requirements for running the group home.

The new laws require the County to treat the occupants within the transitional housing unit as a family, not a business. This classification requires no County permitting to run the business and allows unlimited occupants within the home, subject to building, safety and fire

codes. A conditional use permit is not required to run such a home no matter how many occupants live within the residence.

The Fig Garden Home Owners Association (FGHOA) is aware of two transitional housing facilities within the neighborhood and one additional transitional house being proposed. The Association is diligently working with residents and County representatives to minimize the impact of the transitional housing on immediate neighbors and the neighborhood. It is the FGHOA's desire that these transitional housing facilities be treated as businesses since they are de facto run as businesses in a residential area with unrelated adults as occupants.

It is our opinion that these homes with six or more occupants should require a conditional use permit, due to their significant impact on our neighbors. Our County representatives indicated that their hands are tied because of a state mandate. The FGHOA will continue to work with County and state representatives to reestablish appropriate regulations for transitional housing. We request that our County representatives ensure that existing and proposed transitional housing does not exceed occupancy based on health, safety and fire codes.

Meanwhile, we ask our neighbors to be neighborly and tolerant to our new residents. However, if they, like any other residents, are not law abiding, they should be reported to the appropriate enforcement agency.

Until the homeless issue is resolved, we can anticipate more of these transitional housing homes being created throughout California, including our neighborhood. The FGHOA will continue to work to make the best out of this situation. We are forming a committee of interested neighbors who would like to help with this issue, so please volunteer to help. We will continue to live in one of the best neighborhoods in California, and I am so proud to be part of it and have the honor to serve another year as President of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association.

—Dean Alexander

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 5796, Fresno, California 93755 · www.oldfig.org · March 2020

FIG GARDEN NEEDS YOUR INVOLVEMENT

To engage more neighbors in issues concerning our area, we are creating several committees that will focus on pertinent issues. We are looking for volunteers and hope you will join to serve the neighborhood in a bigger and more active fashion. What better way to meet your neighbors and contribute to the Old Fig legacy!

The committees are as follows:

1. Neighborhood Tree Issues
2. Transitional Housing Research
3. Fresno County Contacts and Liaisons
4. Traffic Calming
5. Neighborhood Beautification
6. Neighborhood Watch – E-Alert Program
7. Neighborhood Welcome Committee

Please contact Angie Hyatt if you would like to join in to enhance the vibrancy and safety of our area—whether you live in the Core or in the East (E of Maroa) or West (W of Palm) Wings of the larger Fig Garden area. Don't stand back and watch. Join and help! Email: angie@hyattre.com



2020 HOME VALUES & SALES

BY ANGIE HYATT

As has been said many times before, our neighborhood remains vibrant, wonderful place to live. There are many reasons, but to name a few, our beautiful trees and the proximity to Fig Garden Village. But the main reason people continue to want to live here are the homes—the character, charm, quality, lot sizes and so on...but all of you know that!

For reporting the sales, the neighborhood is divided into three areas. On the west side of the neighborhood the borders are Palm to Fruit and Shaw to Ashlan (West Wing). The middle section (Core Area) is Shaw to Lansing (South of Lansing is the City of Fresno, although Circle Drive is included in our map, and Palm to Maroa. (minus a small area of homes south of Griffith and east of Wishon to Maroa, which are in the City of Fresno, but again considered to be a part of expanded Old Fig.) The third section is Shaw to Ashlan and Maroa to Blackstone (East Wing).

During 2019, there were 89 home sales in the entire Old Fig Garden Area. 2019 was a great real estate year for Fresno as a whole. Inventory has been low and interest rates have also remained low. Below is a breakdown of sales in the areas identified above. As always, in marketing a home the things that help sell it quickly and for the most money are the condition of the home and the pricing. A fresh coat of paint and sprucing up the landscaping are a plus. New bathrooms and kitchens play a major role in pricing, as those two rooms are the most expensive to renovate and a buyer will usually pay more if those are updated.

It appears that 2020 will bring steady interest rates, which will have a positive effect on our overall market.

Now for the 2019 statistics:

2016 FIG GARDEN HOME SALES STATISTICS

	# of Sales	Median Sales Price	Avg. Sq. Ft. Cost
Palm to Maroa and Shaw to Lansing /Circle Dr.	43	\$500,000	\$189.99
Shaw to Ashlan and Palm to Fruit	22	\$283,750	\$170.47
Shaw to Ashlan and Maroa to Blackstone	24	\$339,000	\$176.15

The highest price home sold was \$1,325,000. The lowest home/condo price was \$117,000. The highest s.f. cost in Old Fig Garden was at \$267.94 The lowest s.f. cost was \$102.04. Homes sold for an average of 97.74% of their asking prices.

We live in a neighborhood where people walk and stop to talk to their friends and neighbors. We are truly fortunate!

ROSE DROP

- Recipe -

Soon roses will be bursting into bloom and the air will smell divine. The feast can be not only for your eyes and nose, because roses can also tickle your taste buds. Here is a recipe for a delicate, delicious drink infused with rose petals:

- 1 cup pesticide-free pink rose petals (8-16 blooms)
- 1 cup vodka
- 2 ¼ teaspoons of lime juice (or 1 tbsp lemon juice)
- 1 ½ tablespoons simple syrup

Place petals in a lidded jar. Add vodka to cover the petals. Close lid and chill for 1 hour. Shake and chill again until petals are drained of color (about 2 more hours). Strain into another pint jar and discard the petals.

Pour ½ cup of the infused vodka into first pint jar (save the rest for a future round), add lime juice and simple syrup. The color will change from brownish to pink. Drop in several ice cubes and shake until cold. Drain into 2 cocktail glasses and garnish with a rose petal and a lime/lemon rind.

(To make simple syrup: Measure same amounts of water and sugar. Bring to a simmer and stir until sugar is dissolved. Then chill.)



E-ALERT SYSTEM

TRANSITION

BY MIKE CHEN

Louise Yenovkian has done outstanding work over the past decade in establishing and running the Fig Garden E-Alert system that notifies the residents of timely safety issues as well as important news of concern to the neighborhood. It is a job that involves not only forwarding information to those on the E-Alert mail list, but requires many hours of tracking down relevant information for residents, verifying law enforcement information, searching other neighborhood websites and linking Fig Garden residents together. Louise did it all as a volunteer, and the Fig Garden community owes her recognition and thanks for her many years of service to the neighborhood.

Due to challenges involved in maintaining such a large mailing list and the limitations in sending out mass mailings, there are plans to transition the E-Alert system into an on-line group website where residents can check for the latest news when they want. The Fig Garden Home Owners Association is looking into options involving creating a Fig Garden group on Google, Facebook, or another social media site where neighbors can be updated on the notices important for them.

Some residents may still prefer to be contacted by e-mail for these alerts. There will also be an e-mail option, and we request residents interested in continuing to receive E-Alerts by e-mail to send a message saying SUBSCRIBE to this address: oldfigalert@gmail.com



FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2020

President	Dean Alexander	dalex215@gmail.com
Vice-President	Tony Pings	Anthony@pings.com
Treasurer	Valerie LeMay	vlemay@hotmail.com
Secretary	Jack Jensen	roy_jensen@comcast.net

Board of Directors:

Merilee Amos	merilee.214@gmail.com
Mike Chen	mikechenfgha@gmail.com
Magda Gilewicz	mgilewicz@gmail.com
Angie Hyatt	angie@hyattre.com
Prudence Zalewski	pru@softsyn.net

Slate of Directors:

The Board of Directors nominates the following people for three-year terms on the Board:

(all are incumbents):

Magda Gilewicz, Angie Hyatt, Prudence Zalewski

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE

BY DEAN ALEXANDER

Christmas Tree Lane event this past year was fantastic! Shawn Caglia again performed magic decorating our Deodar Cedars. Our residents put out outstanding displays and our high schools create beautiful artwork year after year. I know that I am biased but I think this year was the best year ever for our Christmas displays.

Last year, Christmas Tree Lane received the Fresno Bee People's Choice award for best local festival/event. It was also recognized by the Los Angeles Times in their article "Best Holiday Lights in the West." This event, put on by your Fig Garden Home Owners Association, provides great recognition for the Fig Garden, and this is how our Fig Garden residents give back to our community.

The Christmas Tree Lane event is a big commitment performed by a few individuals who I would like to recognize: Terry and Christa Cole, who have played a major part in the Lane's success for the past 25 years. Terry Cole has been the heart of Christmas Tree Lane. The other major volunteers include Russ and Beck Lundquist, who coordinate our nightly volunteers for donations during the drive nights; Lori Leoni, who coordinates the Lane Keepers who turn the lights on and off every night; Erin Cook, who coordinates the wonderful musicians who serenade our guests during the walk nights; Boy Scouts Troop #95, which predominantly staffs the drive night donation booth; Dan Gallagher, who assists in the walk night activities and closure of the Lane during the drive nights; Gary Catron, who graciously allows us to store our lights and displays in the storage building; and, most of all, to our law enforcement agencies: the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, the Fresno Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol who provide traffic control to allow this event to occur.

We are looking forward to another great year. I am so pleased and honored to be part of this event and will strive to make the 2020 Christmas Tree Lane event magical again.



LEMONS, LEMONS, LEMONS

What to do with all of them?! This winter has given us a bounty of citrus. You can juice lemons and freeze the juice for the summer when we are most thirsty for lemonade but just a couple of them will cost you a dollar. Freezing one pint of juice now will give you a perfect amount for a jar of lemonade in the summer. But did you know that charring lemons before squeezing them enhances their flavor? Simply slice a lemon in half crosswise and place the halves cut-side down on a hot grill or pan. Let them cook until they begin to char, about five minutes (or roast them in the oven). Then remove them from the heat and use the juice in anything from vinaigrette to a bowl of rich pasta, or roast slices and use them in a salad meat dishes, drinks.

You can also preserve them, as Paula Wolfert suggests:

- 4 lemons (preferably Meyer), scrubbed
- 2/3 cup coarse salt
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- olive oil (optional)



Dry lemons well and cut each into 8 wedges. In a bowl toss wedges with salt and transfer to a glass jar (about 6-cup capacity and rinsed well with boiling water to sterilize). Add lemon juice to cover the lemons completely, and close jar with a lid. Let lemons stand at room temperature 7 days, shaking jar each day to redistribute salt and juice. Store, covered and chilled, up to 6 months. Rinse salt before using for meats, salads, bloody marys, etc.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



FGHOA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, March 18

Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club

7:00 p.m.



FGHOA Fall Dinner

Sunday, October 4

Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club

Starting at 5:30 p.m.

More details will be posted in our Fall Newsletter and on the www.oldfig.org website

NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Neighborhood Beautification Overlay District (NBOD) is an overlying zone district intended to assist in protecting and preserving the integrity of Fresno County's urban neighborhoods, such as Fig Garden, within the Fresno/Clovis Metro areas which have a history of and reputation for well-kept and verdant properties. Poorly maintained properties are contributing factors toward declining property values and trigger criminal acts. The NBOD was created as a way to help neighbors keep their community a safe and pleasant place to live and to give guidelines for how neighbors can resolve questions concerning their properties. For more information about the NBOD, please search online for "neighborhood beautification overlay district," or go to this link: <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=8274>

One of the main issues Fig Garden residents should be prepared for this spring is weed abatement. After the spring rains end, some properties that are not maintained closely may have overgrown weeds that dry out at the end of spring. This creates a serious fire hazard, and all of us know the devastation fires have caused in California after they spread to residential areas.

If you are aware of properties that have overgrown and dry weeds and grasses after the end of May, please call County Code Enforcement (559) 600-4550 or Fresno County Fire: (559) 493-4323

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.

Please mail your check payable to:

FGHOA
PO BOX 5796
Fresno CA 93755

or pay on our website: www.oldfig.org

Unlike most homeowners groups, our dues are voluntary and we depend on the generosity of our fellow neighbors. Dues money goes to pay fees associated with filing documents that protect the quality of life and integrity of the neighborhood, printing and mailing newsletters to keep you informed, and running the www.oldfig.org web site.



USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

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