



FIG · GARDEN
HOME · OWNERS
ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

www.oldfig.org

Annual Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 29, 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.

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 5796, Fresno, California 93755 · www.oldfig.org · March 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dean Alexander

Hello friends and neighbors,

I am honored to serve another year as your president of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association. Let me start on a personal note. After being confined to the Fig Garden neighborhood for 3 months due to setting up, running, and tearing down Christmas Tree Lane, my wife Shawn and I were able to take a week-long winter vacation in Canada. The trip included two days in Niagara Falls and a train ride across Canada through the Canadian Rockies. We started in Toronto and after four days of relaxing and enjoying the scenery we arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia. We stayed in a sleeper cabin consisting of bunk beds, a sink and private toilet. There was a communal shower in the train car. The cabin was very tight but the beds folded up during the day which provided two sitting chairs. There were two panoramic view train cars which allowed us to observe fantastic views of the Canadian scenery. Three meals per day were included in the fare and the food was excellent. Shawn and I had a wonderful time and it provided a check-off on the bucket list.

During our stay in Niagara Falls, we saw several commercials regarding anxiety associated with COVID-19 and getting

back to daily life interacting with other people. One particular commercial showed a teacher sitting in a classroom hallway afraid to enter a classroom filled with his students. Although much of the crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic is over, it is still going to take a long time for some to feel safe interacting with other individuals. We still have several governmental agencies that require you to wear a mask while inside their facilities. Also, it is very difficult to meet in person with government agencies and private businesses due to COVID-19 precautions.

Let's understand that these fears of interaction are widespread and are not limited to a few people. Let's do our part in understanding and helping our friends and neighbors through this crisis. Fig Garden is a close-knit neighborhood and we can all be considered family. So, within our neighborhood and within life, let's pay it forward—let's help our fellow neighbors. One way is to join and be diligent in the Neighborhood Watch program. If you see something suspicious – report it (Sheriff's non-emergency #: 600-3111). We live in a great neighborhood so let's continue to enjoy its uniqueness.

A MESSAGE FROM FRESNO COUNTY SUPERVISOR STEVE BRANDAU

Hello Fig Garden neighbors!

It's spring again in Fresno County, and nowhere in Fresno is nearly as verdant as Fig Garden! I'd like to thank the Fig Garden Home Owners Board for the opportunity to give you a county update as your County Supervisor.

In 2022 I told you how committed I was, and the entire Board of Supervisors, to increasing our Code Enforcement capacity. We had heard many complaints about slow response times and frankly it's because we had way too few officers for a county of our size. To better respond to your complaints, we expanded our Code Enforcement department. And while there is still work to do to build out that team, the County has made significant strides in improving our response time to major code complaints, including several problem properties in Fig Garden which had major actions taken against their delinquent owners in the last year.

Regarding Crossroads Village at Blackstone and Dakota, this property is being transformed once again. It will become the permanent home for families and people who were previously homeless. It will no longer be for temporary placement of homeless folks. I hope this permanency will make it even more stable than it is today and certainly over what it was a few short years ago. RH Community

Builders, the operators of Crossroads Village, expect to start the remodel by May and are currently moving people out to prepare for the construction. Simply put they are now turning hotel rooms into apartment units.

Also, I wanted to provide a quick update to the planned signal improvement at Palm and Ashlan Avenues. Delays stemming from state partners delayed the project from starting last year as planned, but those delays have been resolved and our Public Works team is preparing the project for construction early this summer.

I wanted to again recognize the residents of Fig Garden for the success of their 100th Christmas Tree Lane. The event continues to be a cherished part of Christmas tradition in our community, and I thank the neighbors for their hard work to make this event possible every year!

Speaking of 100-year anniversaries, I would like to invite you all to celebrate with the historic community of Pinedale, who will be holding a centennial celebration and parade to celebrate their founding on March 25. Come celebrate and share the history of Pinedale! More details can be found at www.facebook.com/Pinedale93650.

I remain committed to serving the residents of Fig Garden and my staff is available to help you with County services. You may contact them at (559) 600-2000 or by email at district2@fresnocountyca.gov.

FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2023

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
Dick Goodwin	jagret@gmail.com
Angie Hyatt	angie@hyattre.com

Slate of Directors

The Board of Directors nominates the following people for three-year terms on the Board:
(all are incumbents): Dean Alexander, Mike Chen, Jack Jensen

In order to vote for the Directors at the Annual meeting, members must have paid their Home Owners Association dues

FIG GARDEN HISTORIC DESIGNATION

We would like to share with Fig Garden residents the letter the FGHOA sent to Supervisor Brandau regarding Historic Designation of our area:

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors, on May 25, 2010, approved "...designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places," and issued a Certificate of Designation approving "... designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places."

The Fresno County Administrative Office, on May 25, 2010, noted the action was "APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED" and further stated "Approve recommended actions, including adding the Fig Garden Place condominiums located along E. Fairmont Avenue and the residential subdivisions located at the Southwest corner of E. Ashlan and N. Palm Avenues to the Historic District boundary, with the understanding that the designation itself would not require additional property and building regulations."

According to the administrative record, "The Historical Landmarks & Records Advisory Commission approved the designation on January 21, 2010. The Commission followed Fresno County Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission Historic Districts guidelines adopted in 1995."

According to a review by the Fresno County Administrative Office on May 25, 2010, the designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District was UNANIMOUSLY approved by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors.

The designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places was clear and unequivocal.

The designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places contains NO limiting or qualifying language

The designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places has NOT been modified or revoked since 2010.

The community of Fresno County has relied, in good faith, on designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places.

Fresno County is prevented and/or estopped by laches and other legal means from going back on its word or contradicting the action of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors on May 25, 2010 which approved the designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places.

The designation and placement of Old Fig Garden as a Historic District on the County's List of Historic Places does NOT contain the words "Honorary" and/or "Ceremonial."



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**

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.

TO OUR FIG GARDEN POLICE PROTECTION DISTRICT RESIDENTS

from Frances Morrison



Deputies Eric Colegio and Jacob Woesner are assigned to patrol the Fig Garden Police Protection District

The Fig Garden Police Protection District has had two full-time deputies assigned to our contract since 2010. Our current deputies are Eric Colegio and Jacob Woesner.

Deputy Colegio comes from a law enforcement family and was raised in Fresno County. His brother is also a deputy sheriff and influenced his career path. He likes being able to have the time to investigate the reports he takes. Working in the contract where there isn't a high volume call rate affords him the time to research and often solve his own investigations.

Deputy Jacob Woesner was raised in a neighborhood close by and attended school with many of the young people who were growing up in Old Fig Garden. His background was in business and banking. Deputy Woesner has a gift for finding felons in possession of firearms. He has recovered forty (40) stolen firearms since working here.

Both deputies keep us safe. Our daytime deputy, Eric Colegio, has had the opportunity to get to know some of the Old Fig Garden residents during his day shift. Unless there is an emergency response call to a residence you will not see Deputy Jacob Woesner, our night time deputy. In the middle of the night there is less opportunity for Deputy Woesner to meet our residents. However, there is a much greater opportunity for him to observe and intercept the unwanted

criminals who travel at night through our neighborhood. It is also easier and safer to pursue them, and he will if he has the opportunity to do so.

These two gentlemen are professionals and hard workers. They are both passionate about their jobs and keeping the criminals out of our neighborhood. Both are well respected by their supervisors and peers, and we have been told by their supervisors how fortunate we are to have them.

Both deputies have stated they appreciate the kindness and respect they have received from our residents. We recognize that we are indeed fortunate to have them as our Fig Garden Police Protection District deputies and hope they remain with us for as long as possible.

If necessary you may contact them at:

eric.colegio@fresnosheriff.org

Jacob.woesner@fresnosheriff.org

Fresno Sheriff's Office; (559) 600-3111

Frances Morrison

Fig Garden Police Protection District Board

100 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS TREE LANE

by Dean Alexander

Christmas Tree Lane celebrated its 100th year of operation last year. Although we did not have any walk-only nights, the event was spectacular with homeowners providing wonderful, better than ever displays. The placement of high school displays located throughout the Lane created an even more grand experience., with the addition of four Pop Laval historical photographs showing Van Ness first being developed and the other photographs showing Christmas Tree Lane from the 1930s to the 1950s. These Pop Laval photos are a wonderful addition to Christmas Tree Lane exhibits. I would like to thank Elizabeth Laval and the Pop Laval Foundation for allowing us to display these historic photos.

I have been in charge of Christmas Tree Lane for the past 20 years. I start decorating my house in the middle of October and start decorating the Lane in the last two weeks of November; then I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Lane which involves setting the Lane up and shutting it down each night. After Christmas Tree Lane closes for the season, it takes one week to remove all the displays we placed on the Lane. In addition, it takes two weeks to remove the displays from my house. That being said, after this year, I am stepping down as Chairman of Christmas Tree Lane. Dan Gallagher, the former president of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association has volunteered to take over the responsibilities. This is a huge time commitment and he will need other volunteers from our neighborhood to assist him in this endeavor. I will assist him, but in a secondary capacity.

Hopefully we will have walk-only nights this year but I will not be involved with the walk-only night functions. Walk-only nights are a major event that requires a large team to put it on. Dan Gallagher said he will spearhead the walk-only night team this year. Again, he needs help in this and if you can provide any assistance, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you are wondering if I will still decorate my house after this year, the answer is yes. My stepping down from being in charge of Christmas Tree Lane does not mean I am moving away. I decorate my house for the love of Christmas Tree Lane, for the love of Christmas and the

Fresno community. It is my desire that Christmas Tree Lane be strong for another 100 years.

Greg Pratt, who owns the Winning House where the first tree is located ,has done a wonderful thing. He has cloned the first tree and has created 100 seedlings. He has donated a portion of these trees to Christmas Tree Lane for planting along Van Ness Boulevard. The first tree is dying and he has done extensive work to keep the tree alive. A portion of the tree has new growth but it is not known if it will survive. These new seedlings once planted on the Lane will continue the Christmas Tree Lane legacy. A very appreciative Thank You goes out to Greg Pratt!

100 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS TREE LANE - PROCLAMATION

2022 marked Christmas Tree Lane's 100th Anniversary of a lighted lane. The County Board of Supervisors, led by our Supervisor Steve Brandau, presented Dean Alexander and the Fig Garden Home Owners Association with a proclamation recognizing "100 Years of Christmas Tree Lane" at the November 29 Fresno County Board of Supervisors meeting. Mr. Brandau pointed out that the lane has actually been running for 102 years but was not celebrated in 1941 and in 1973.



The Fresno County Board of Supervisors on Nov 29, 2022, presented a proclamation recognizing "100 Years of Christmas Tree Lane" to the Fig Garden Home Owners Association.

In the back row are County Supervisors Buddy Mendes, Steve Brandau, Brian Pacheco, Sal Quintero, and Nathan Magsig. In front are Fig Garden Home Owners Association Board members Angie Hyatt, Merilee Amos and Dean Alexander, and Fig Garden residents Shawn Alexander and Dan Gallagher

FRESNO FIRE STATION 20

by Jonathan Lopez

Firefighter Specialist
Public Information Officer
Fresno Fire Department
(559) 621-4132 Office

Located in the heart of Fresno's historic Old Fig Garden area, Fresno Fire Station 20 serves as the home base for the firefighters who protect the homes and residents of this idyllic neighborhood. The location at 4537 N Wishon has housed firefighters and firefighting equipment from both volunteer and professional departments since a building was first built by the Fig Garden Fire Protection District in 1942. Over the years, as development increased and more adequate fire protection services were required, renovations to the station were made and arrangements were made to staff the station with California State firefighters from Fresno County.

In 2006 the District entered into a 30-year agreement with the City of Fresno that provides fire, medical, and other emergency services, fire prevention and code enforcement, arson investigation and record keeping. Station 20 currently houses a fire engine, staffed with 3 firefighters and an on-call arson investigator. But what does an average day Fire Station 20 consist of?

Fresno firefighters are split into 3 separate platoons (A, B, and C shifts.) Each shift begins at 8am in the morning and lasts 48 hours. Firefighters at the end of their shifts are not relieved of their duty until their oncoming replacements have arrived. That way, the fire crew is fully staffed and available to respond to emergencies 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

Each firefighter gathers any relevant information about the previous shift from the person they are relieving, including any major calls or mechanical issues. They then set about checking all of their personal protective equipment, including the self-contained breathing apparatuses that they wear when engaged in structural firefighting. All of the medical equipment and tools stored on the fire engine is checked to make sure that it is where it is supposed to be and is in good working order.

The firefighter responsible for driving the fire engine and operating the pump at fires (called a firefighter specialist



or engineer,) will do a complete check on the engine, in accordance with Department of Transportation guidelines, to ensure that all of the mechanical components and safety systems are functioning properly. Firefighters and members of the public rely on all this equipment in the event of an emergency. The middle of a high pressure emergency incident is not the time to discover that something is broken or missing.

Once everything checks out, firefighters meet for a daily briefing at the kitchen table. At this briefing, the day's tasks will be outlined by the crew's captain. Department-wide bulletins will be read, training discussed, and the daily chores that go along with maintaining a fire station will be scheduled. Often, plans for the day's meals will be made at this time.

The crew will then take some time to exercise in the station's workout room. Firefighting is a physically demanding job and it is important that they maintain physical fitness. Not only so that they can do their job effectively, but also to reduce the chance of injuries. After everyone is cleaned up, the crew will head off to the store to purchase groceries for the next two days.

Some ask why they take the fire engine to the grocery store. That is so they are always ready and near the engine in case they get placed on a call. It is not uncommon for firefighters to have to pass a full grocery cart off to a store employee in order to rush out the door to an emergency. And contrary to some popular misconceptions, taxpayer money does not go towards firefighter's grocery bills. Each crew pools their own money to pay for everything from the coffee to the cable bill. Only essentials like cleaning supplies and toiletries are provided by the department.

Firefighters live at the firehouse, spending a third of their working lives there. It becomes a second home, and their fellow firefighters become like a second family. Cooking and eating together plays an important role in bonding with one another. Working together on a fire crew requires a lot of trust, and it is during these times that firefighters get to know one another enough to trust each other with their lives.

The afternoon is often when chores around the station get done. Whether it's yard maintenance, cleaning the ladders, washing the fire engine, or mopping the floors, each day has its assigned duties. But firefighters also take this opportunity to accomplish a lot of work outside of the station.

Each crew has certain local businesses assigned to them which they will visit to perform annual fire inspections. Larger buildings like schools, hospitals, and apartment complexes are often handled by the Department's fire prevention inspectors, but smaller businesses are often handled by firefighters. This is done to ensure that business owners are following the fire code, and not creating any situations that could endanger life or property. Each crew also has a certain number of fire hydrants in their area to maintain. Each fire hydrant in the City of Fresno gets serviced once a year. They are repainted, numbered, and flowed to ensure that they function properly. The caps are all removed and lubricated to ensure easy removal. Any hydrant that is out of service is marked and entered into a computer system so that firefighters don't try to get water out of a non-functional hydrant during a fire. The hydrant's information and location are then sent to the water department for repair.

As daylight draws to a close, firefighters return to the station to finish any additional chores and start preparing their evening meal. Of course, things don't always go as planned. It is not uncommon for any one of the day's activities to be interrupted by emergency calls. In 2022, Fresno firefighters responded to 61,413 calls for service, with Engine 20 accounting for 1,800 of them. Medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, rescues, hazardous material spills, and fires of all type often occur at night. But, with luck, firefighters can get a few hours of sleep in the department dorms before the morning alert tones go off at 7am the next day, and the rewarding day of your local fire crew begins anew.

OLD FIG GARDEN 2022 HOME SALES TO DATE

by Angie Hyatt

Old Fig Garden continues to be a sought-after neighborhood. Our sales continued to be brisk through most of 2022, in spite of the rising interest rates and the low inventory. The market generally slows during the holidays, which it did, however, there is already a buzz of homes being readied to market, which will bring the spring real estate market to life very soon. As everyone has noticed, there are many homes with major renovations. This is proof that our neighborhood remains one that people feel will continue to thrive, and are willing to invest in its future.

As for 2023, interest rates will more than likely remain fairly steady, although higher than we have become accustomed to in the past many years, and the inventory of homes will remain lower. However, people will still sell and buy homes, and our neighborhood will continue to be as desirable as it has always been.

In reporting the sales, the neighborhood is divided into three areas. On the west side the borders are Palm to Fruit and Shaw to Ashlan. The middle section is Shaw to Lansing (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.

2022 STATISTICS			
LOCATION	# OF SALES	MEDIAN SALES PRICE	AVERAGE SQ. FT. COST
Palm to Maroa and Shaw to Lansing /Circle Dr.	34	\$748,750	\$296.41
Shaw to Ashlan and Palm to Fruit	22	\$406,000	\$234.25
Shaw to Ashlan and Maroa to Blackstone	16	\$512,000	\$235.50
<p>Now for the 2022 statistics so far: The highest price home sold was \$1,265,000. The lowest home/condo price was \$220,000 The highest s.f. cost in Old Fig Garden was at \$400. The lowest s.f. cost was \$148.85 <i>Homes sold for an average of 99.69% of their asking prices.</i></p>			

SAVE THE DATES:

**Fig Garden Home Owners
Annual meeting
March 29**

**Fig Garden Dinner
October 8**

*Both events will take place at
Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club
4722 N. Maroa Ave*

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