

FALL NEWSLETTER 2020

www.oldfig.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DEAN ALEXANDER

Hello Fig Garden Residents.

Although this year has been a trying ordeal for most of us, we Fig Garden residents stand united in our way of life. During this pandemic I have seen more neighbors strolling our streets and they are as friendly as ever. The pandemic has impacted my family life as well as yours. This year I experienced the birth of two of my grandkids but being able to visit with them has been limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our businesses have been impacted, social activities have been at a standstill, worship and social gatherings limited (affecting celebrations, dining, theaters, and vacations). Our children cannot physically attend school and are restricted to online learning. We are unable to visit loved ones in hospitals and nursing facilities. Meetings with friends and family are replaced by online video and telephone sessions. Just imagine the pandemic of 1918 when none of this technology was available.

But every crisis, including this Covid-19 pandemic, has a silver lining—one just has to search and find it. For Fig Garden, more residents are getting out and strolling our park-like neighborhood. All the neighbors that I greet are pleasant and have a positive attitude. We have found new ways to communicate that will increase the bonds with friends and family after the pandemic is over. As a neighborhood we will all get through this and be stronger. My hopes and prayers go out to all Fig Garden residents and their families.

One critical item that continues to impact our neighborhood is transitional or sober living housing. This type of group home is unique and according to Fresno County representatives there are few regulations required to run this type of facility. Other group homes we've been so far familiar with have a maximum occupancy of six, unless they obtain a conditional use permit. According to Fresno County personnel, this limitation does not apply to this new type of transitional or sober living housing.

I know of two transitional housing facilities within Fig Garden that exceed 12 occupants per house. The high capacity occupants have created issues impacting our neighborhood. Within the past two years a total of 47 calls for police service have occurred at these two residences. Based on the existing two transitional homes' track records, it does not appear such high occupancy is safe for our neighborhood.

The Fig Garden Home Owners Association, along with neighbors, asked Fresno County representatives about safety concerns at these high occupancy transitional housing/sober living units. Other municipalities within California have set requirements for these group housing facilities to be similar to regulations for other group homes. Fresno County representatives are currently evaluating if these requirements can be used in Fresno County. I encourage you to reach out to County Supervisor Steve Brandau to let him know your opinions regarding appropriate conditions for transitional/sober living housing in relation to all other group homes.

When I travel down our wonderful tree-lined streets I see some trees in need of maintenance that may become a hazard or have a shortened life. Conversations with Fresno County staff indicate that while these trees are within the public right-of-way, maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowner. Fresno County does not maintain the trees, but will remove dead trees within the easement if they impact the roadway—however, the County will not replace the trees. I recommend all residents check their trees and, if required, do some maintenance so you can enjoy their beauty. After all, these mature trees make our neighborhood unique in Fresno. Let's maintain them so we can enjoy them for a long time to come.

We have revamped our website www.OldFig.org. Please visit the site and let me know what you think. If you have any comments for improvements, please provide them in our comment box. A new website has been a long time in coming and I think we made some great improvements.



FIG · GARDEN
HOME · OWNERS

ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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

MEET YOUR FIG GARDEN SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES

BY MERILEE AMOS



Sheriff's Deputies Tyler Phillips and Brennan Gowens share duties patrolling the Fig Garden Police Protection District.

What could be better, more rewarding, and more fun than an early morning walk down Christmas Tree Lane in late summer/early fall? No, the trees are not yet decorated for the Holidays, but neighbors are out in full force, greeting each other and getting exercise, with their children and their pets (usually of the canine sort).

What makes it better is to meet and learn about the two current Sheriff's deputies, Brennan Gowens and Tyler Phillips, assigned to the Fig Garden Police Protection District. And, then the icing on the cake is when neighbors Frannie Levine, who is renowned for her persimmon cookies (with fruit from her own trees), and Chris Hays, on her way to visit family, stop for a visit with these two personable, dedicated, and professional young deputies. Fabrizio Lofaro and his dog Roxy drop by, making it perfect for the dog-loving Deputy Phillips, himself a dog-owner (with a Siberian Husky named Archer).

Talking to Deputies Gowens and Phillips gives you a sense of their dedication to their jobs patrolling Fig Garden, and their personal convictions. The two men share similarities professionally and personally.

Brennan Gowens was born in Fresno and grew up in Clovis. "My mentors have always been and always will be my parents. I am thankful for the work ethic they instilled in me and for raising



Deputy Tyler Phillips greets Fabrizio Lofaro and his dog Roxy.

me to be the man I am today. The team aspect and brotherhood of law enforcement attracted me to the job. I was interested in the Police Protection District because I wanted to be able to do everything I can to protect people and protect their property which they worked so hard for."

Deputy Gowens attended CSU, Fresno, majoring in Kinesiology. He left a year before graduation to pursue a professional career in baseball. Now back in Fresno, working full-time, he is considering finishing his degree for a possible sideline in personal training since “staying in shape is a big hobby in my life.”

Exercise and backpacking are important for Tyler Phillips, who hails from “a small, closely-knit mountain community near Oakhurst.” This upbringing fueled his desire to help those in need. He attended Fresno City College, Humboldt State University, and the University of New Mexico. At both universities he worked as an Emergency Medical Technician. Deputy Phillips’s EMT experiences served as a training ground for the calm and quick thinking needed for high-pressure jobs.

Deputy Phillips, like Deputy Gowens, felt an immediate draw to the Fig Garden Police Protection District and is thankful he can devote himself “to providing the best law enforcement service to such a richly historic, closely-knit community.” And, like Deputy Gowens, he is grateful for “the close ties of family, friends, loved-ones and God.”

Both Deputies Gowens and Phillips take great pride in their assignment to the Fig Garden Police Protection District and want neighbors to feel they can depend on them, especially in those night-time hours. There was one last comment from Deputy Phillips: “Thank goodness for coffee!”

Thank you, gentlemen.



Fig Garden residents Chris Hays (left) and Frannie Levine stop for a chat with Sheriff’s Deputies Tyler Phillips and Brennan Gowens (right).

VIDEO DOORBELL NETWORK

The Fresno County Sheriff’s Office is working with residents to help prevent and solve crimes through the use of video from home doorbell cameras that monitor activity outside a home. This video may be useful in providing information to help solve area robberies, as well as provide resources to help in establishing an effective crime prevention network in Fig Garden.

Residents who wish to supply video information to help with the Sheriff’s investigations, or who have additional questions regarding issues involved in such usage may contact Deputy Tyler Phillips or Deputy Brennan Gowens:

Tyler.Phillips@fresnosheriff.org

Brennan.Gowens@fresnosheriff.org

FRESNO COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATES

For the latest update regarding COVID-19 safety recommendations, please go to the Fresno County Public Health website (you can also search for “Fresno County COVID”):

www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health/covid-19

For general Public Health issues, you can call: (559) 600-3200

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE 2020

Christmas Tree Lane will be celebrating its 98th season this year. Sorry to say but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic we will not have any walk nights this year. It would be nearly impossible to do social distancing on the walk nights. On the bright side, we are going to have the Christmas Tree Lane Event but there will only be drive nights. Our opening night will be Tuesday, December 1. The Lane will be open through Christmas Day, December 25. Let’s mark our calendars and enjoy another magical year.

RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE INFORMATION

Most Fig Garden residents receive waste hauling and recycling services through Republic Services (Allied Waste/BFI), which has exclusive service for our area. Questions about the program can be directed to the Resources Division of the Public Works & Planning Department at (559) 600-4259.

Household Hazardous Waste: For Household Hazardous Waste disposal information check this Fresno County website: tinyurl.com/y5tga3va

For those who are homebound or disabled, the County offers a Door to Door pickup program for Household Hazardous Waste. Please call the Resources Division at (559) 600-4259.

OLD FIG GARDEN 2020 HOME SALES TO DATE

This has been a very unusual year to say the least. However, amid COVID and a very low mortgage interest rate market (the lowest we have seen in years), sales have been very robust in our area and all of Fresno. I will recap what has occurred specifically in our area.

As I have done previously 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. The middle section 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.

So far in 2020 there were 63 home sales in the entire Old Fig Garden Area. Inventory has been low and interest rates have also remained extremely low. Below is a breakdown of sales in the areas identified above.

Now for the 2020 statistics so far:

	# of Sales	Median Sales Price	Avg. Sq. Ft Cost
Palm to Maroa and Shaw to Lansing /Circle Dr	32	\$482,500	\$213.86
Shaw to Ashlan and Palm to Fruit	13	\$310,000	\$198.06
Shaw to Ashlan and Maroa to Blackstone	18	\$381,450	\$184.32

The highest price home sold was \$899,000.

The lowest home/condo price was \$249,000.

The highest s.f. cost in Old Fig Garden was at \$324.32.

The lowest s.f. cost was \$101.61.

Homes sold for an average of 99.96% of their asking prices.

There are currently seven other homes in our neighborhood that are pending and getting ready to close, as well as 12 other homes actively for sale.

Stay safe and be well!

Your neighbor and board member,

—Angie Hyatt

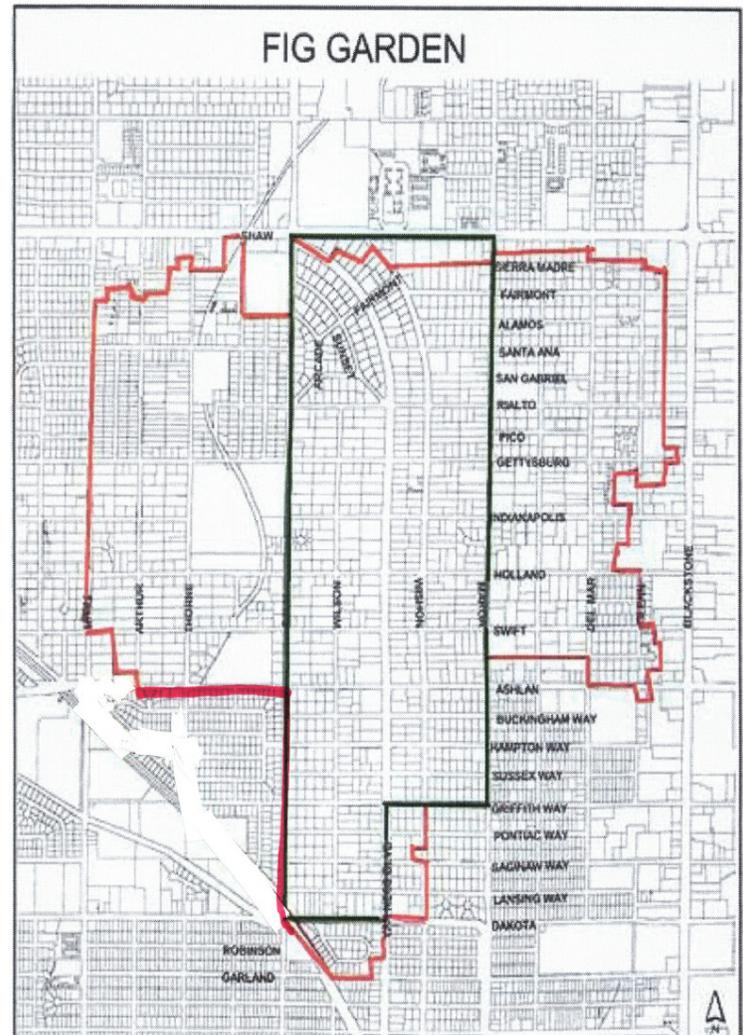


FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION WANTS YOUR HELP

We are looking for more volunteers for the following committees. This is your opportunity to help us serve the neighborhood in bigger and better ways, 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 (angie@hyattre.com) if you would like to join one of the groups to maintain the vibrancy of our neighborhood. Don't stand back and watch. Join in and help! A big "Thank You" to those of you who have already emailed to volunteer!

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY TONY PINGS

In 1992, I was asked to join the Fig Garden Home Owner's board and have become its longest serving member. I was asked to provide a focus on land use issues. It was a different world then. The punitive widening of Ashlan Avenue was just being resolved. It was a difficult and destructive time. Fortunately, our relationship with the County has continued to change over the years from the dark days into the present. In the distant past, we were viewed more as a disobedient problem area. Issues were difficult to resolve and protecting the unique nature of old Fig Garden was a constant struggle.

Over time the County's view of our area has changed for the better. Today we are recognized as a unique area to be celebrated and protected. We achieved many land use safeguards working interactively with the County. Many of yesterday's points of contention now have safeguards built into our current zoning ordinance and in the Fig Garden overlay. The work done under Supervisors Susan Anderson and Andreas Borgeas were very effective, with each Supervisor bringing positive change and protection to the area. There were always issues to address, but our underlying foundation was sound, and the process for resolution was interactive.

We now have a new Supervisor, Steve Brandau. As was true with our previous supervisors, we need to forge a relationship and help our Supervisor understand and experience the unique needs of the Fig Garden area, a process that was starting when the COVID-19 effectively stopped all positive and interactive

government. Protecting our area is difficult. Our greatest need is for government not to change things, which is the hardest thing for government to do.

Today we face new pressures from state mandated changes. We must work interactively with the County to find the correct implementation methods for these changes in our unique area. In this, we face serious threats to our area and beyond.

We need you. In a manner that has not been as important in the last decade, we need each of you to engage with all our County and City representatives and staff. We are entering a time when we need to pull together as a community and reach out. Not only for you to make your thoughts known on specific issues, but on a larger scale to get to know the staff and supervisors in this effort. Having a cup of coffee, sending an email, it is all important in ensuring the people who shape and protect our future actually gain an understanding that they need to be our guardians. Nothing is more powerful than a personal relationship, because when old Fig Garden is actually understood, the interactions needed to create positive change come naturally. With today's COVID-19 restrictions, your options are limited, yet our need is now.

What I want you to take away from this is simple. To keep what makes our area unique and desirable, we need you. Now is the time to engage. You do not need talking points in this effort. You are the talking point.

THE NEXTDOOR.COM WEBSITE AND NEIGHBORS APP

The Nextdoor.com website is a "hyperlocal social networking service for neighborhoods" popular across the country and which has a local Fig Garden section. The Neighbors app is available for smartphones on the Apple and Android platforms and is also a social networking service for neighborhoods that is associated with the Ring doorbell app—though you do not need a Ring device or any other doorbell camera device to use Neighbors. The Fig Garden Home Owners Association has no connection with either Nextdoor.com or the Neighbors app.

Residents can sign up for a free membership and can read and post messages. The Nextdoor website can contain ads as well as commercial posts from members, while the Neighbors app is more controlled with fewer irrelevant posts.

Members can post messages that instantly appear on the Nextdoor site, and which can be emailed to members—an advantage especially when posting lost and found pets where fresh information a few minutes old seen by a large number of people can be helpful. https://nextdoor.com/lost_and_found

The Neighbors app also has instant posts available where one can see lost and found pets, for example. The Nextdoor

website has also provided a forum for information about issues affecting the local region as well as providing resources to help those seeking advice for services, or to help those who were affected by incidents such as the Creek Fire.

E-ALERT SYSTEM UPDATE

The Fig Garden E-Alerts will be sent out through the Mailchimp server, so those of you who wish to continue receiving these alerts should check that these alerts from Mailchimp and oldfigalert@gmail.com do not go to your spam folder.

Some e-mail addresses did not transcribe over to the new mailing list so if you wish to be added to this updated list, please send a message with "Subscribe" in the Subject line to: oldfigalert@gmail.com

E-Alerts will contain vital and timely information of general interest to Fig Garden residents, such as the Monthly Crime Reports submitted by Fig Garden Protection District Deputies, and Fig Garden Home Owners Association information.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OLD FIG!

Please join the Fig Garden Home Owners Association. We work to protect and strengthen our unique neighborhood. The dues are \$70/year, which goes to pay fees associated with filing documents and for projects that protect the quality of life and integrity of the neighborhood, printing and mailing newsletters to keep you informed, and running and hosting 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.

NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Neighborhood Beautification Overlay District (NBOD) is intended to assist in protecting and preserving the integrity of Fresno County's urban neighborhoods, such as Fig Garden which have a history of and reputation for well kept and verdant properties. For more information about the NBOD, please search online for "neighborhood beautification overlay district" or go to this link:

tinyurl.com/y2gtk6q5

One of the main issues Fig Garden residents should be prepared for this fall is weed abatement. This creates a serious fire hazard, and all of us know the devastation fires have caused all around us this year.

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

FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2020

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Merilee Amos	merilee.fghoa@gmail.com
Magda Gilewicz	mgilewicz@gmail.com
Angie Hyatt	angie@hyattre.com
Mike Chen	mikechenfgha@gmail.com

Note: The Fig Garden Home Owners Association Board Election for the three-year terms were postponed this spring due to local and state health restrictions concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. The election will resume at the next Fig Garden Home Owners Annual Meeting tentatively scheduled for Spring 2021. Updates will be posted in the Spring 2021 newsletter, as well as on the www.oldfig.org site and through E-Alerts.

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Sheriff's Dispatch	600-3111 (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 (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

For help or comments regarding Fresno County issues, contact our Fresno County District 2 Supervisor Steve Brandau:
E-mail: district2@fresnocountyca.gov • Phone: (559) 600-2000 • Fax: (559) 600-1609