

"Together  
we have  
clout!"

## ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026 - 7:00 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

## MEET MONICA RODRIGUEZ A COMMUNITY-FOCUSED COUNCILMEMBER



- Modernized small business tax exemptions for first time in 20 years
- Created Operation Bright SPOT to address blight and clean up commercial corridors
- Demanded accountability and transparency on how City spends our tax dollars
- Attacked impossible charter reform timeline that prohibited achieving meaningful results

In 2017, Monica Rodriguez made history as the third Latina to serve on the LA City Council. She won her 2022 reelection primary by 68% and is running unopposed for 2026 reelection. She is known for her results-driven, community-focused, fiscally responsible leadership – in the district where she was born and raised. She has housed more than 550 homeless individuals in her district, championed innovative programs like Encampment-to-Home and RV-to-Home, and is working to establish the city's first Department on Homelessness. Email your questions for Councilmember Rodriguez to [SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com](mailto:SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com) no later than noon Tuesday April 14.

Don't miss our *Live Meeting with Monica Rodriguez* and our *Special Mayoral Debate*. Streaming for both events starts at 7:00 pm. Go to our website at [www.SOHA914.com](http://www.SOHA914.com) and click the "Stream SOHA Meeting" button; or use Zoom ID 876 7050 9461 with Passcode SOHA914. The meeting and debate videos will be ready a day after the event by clicking the "SOHA Meeting Videos" button on our website.

## SPECIAL BONUS SOHA MAYORAL DEBATE

### MAYOR BASS VERSUS COUNCILMEMBER RAMAN

**TUESDAY, MAY 5TH AT 7:00 PM - No Dinner Served at this Special Event**

Sherman Oaks East Valley Adult Center  
5056 Van Nuys Blvd

Moderator, Phil Shuman, Fox 11 News

Huge Attendance Expected!

SOHA members get priority seating  
from 6:15 to 6:45 if they RSVP  
by May 4 to [SOHA914@gmail.com](mailto:SOHA914@gmail.com)

All Others Seated As Available

Email your debate questions to  
[SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com](mailto:SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com)  
by Monday, May 7



## **A CONVERSATION THAT MATTERS OUR MAY 5TH DEBATE WITH MAYOR KAREN BASS AND COUNCILMEMBER NITHYA RAMAN**

*by Matt Epstein, SOHA President*

On Tuesday, May 5th, the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association will host a special and highly focused debate featuring Mayor Karen Bass and our Fourth District Councilmember Nithya Raman. In a time when political forums can often feel crowded, chaotic, and more performative than productive, we have made a deliberate decision to do something different. Rather than hosting a stage filled with a long list of candidates, we have chosen to invite these two leaders specifically because they represent Sherman Oaks on two critical – and complementary – levels of government. This format allows for a deeper, more meaningful discussion about the issues that directly impact our neighborhood and our city.

This will not be a “circus-style” debate. Instead, it will be an opportunity to dig into the substance – public safety, homelessness, infrastructure, city services, and the overall direction of Los Angeles – without distraction. And make no mistake – this is one of the most important elections our city has faced in years. LA stands at a pivotal moment. We are confronting real challenges today – ranging from public safety concerns and housing pressures to the condition of our streets and basic services. At the same time, we are preparing for major global events that will shape the future of our city for years to come.

While Primary Election Day is in June, ballots will be mailed out in early May, and voting will begin shortly thereafter. That means the decisions that will shape our city’s future are effectively being made sooner than many realize. This debate is designed to give Sherman Oaks residents a clear, informed understanding of where these leaders stand – before those ballots arrive. We encourage all of our members to attend, listen closely, and take part in this important civic moment. An informed community is a strong community – and Sherman Oaks deserves nothing less.

### **THERE ARE 14 LA MAYORAL CANDIDATES ON THE OFFICIAL BALLOT**

**Bryant Acosta**  
**Asaad Alnajjar**  
**Nelson Cheng**  
**Karen Bass**  
**Rae Chen Huang**

**Tish Hyman**  
**Andrew Kim**  
**Suzy Kim**  
**John Logsdon**  
**Juanita Lopez**

**Adam Miller**  
**Spencer Pratt**  
**Nithya Raman**  
**Andrej Selivra**

### **CLOWNS TO THE LEFT OF ME - JOKERS TO THE RIGHT**

*by Larry Slade, SOHA Planning and Land Use Committee Co-Chair*

In 1972, the band Stealers Wheel released the song referenced in the title of this article. Over the years, I have listened to this song many times. During those times, it has symbolized many things to me – and I am sure to other listeners as well. Today, it has come to symbolize my journey along the American political spectrum.

I feel as though my political and moral ideology has not changed substantially over the past 30 years. The right has moved further right. The left has moved further left. To some degree, and on certain issues, I have moved both to the right and to the left – left on social issues – right on law-and-order issues (read as homelessness). But fundamentally, I am guided by my same principles.

We now live in a world where we cannot underestimate the influence of our “feeds” – social media, internet, cable news, ... We are all subject to the influences of what we see, hear, and read. The corporate interests behind the news

and social media want only one thing from us – our eyeballs, 24/7. They know that the best way to get us to “tune in” and stay tuned is not by making us say “aww” at videos of cute puppies and kittens. That only works so well, for so long. Instead, they keep us engaged by angering us and scaring us. It’s a sad fact but hope and love are less motivating than anger and fear. Unfortunately, that is human nature. These corporate interests are simply taking advantage of our most basic instincts – they didn’t invent them.

That said, another side effect of this dynamic is that it amplifies the most extreme positions on both the left and the right, pulling many of us along in the process. The level of political and social polarization is greater than at any time in my life. The loudest voices come from the extremes. Good luck trying to moderate your political and social views in this environment. And therein lies the point of this article. I believe I am able to do exactly that – to moderate and temper my point of view. As a lawyer, I can argue both sides of almost any issue. More importantly, I can see both sides – generally speaking. But when one side is extreme and the other side is even more extreme, the ability to find moderation is challenged, if not lost entirely.

I am often left feeling that the 80% of Americans who do not reside at either extreme are neither seen nor heard. It is only the “lunatic fringe” that gets attention, draws onlookers, and dominates the conversation. There seems to be no reward – and no traction – in being reasonable anymore.

So here I lie, in the middle, with clowns to the left of me and jokers to the right. I suspect that about 80% of you feel the same way. We need to find a path back from the extremes and, as Jesse Jackson once poignantly put it, find “common ground”. There is far more that binds us than divides us – we just struggle to hear and see it over the noise, the shouting, and the hysteria of the extremes.

## HERE WE GO AGAIN ON SB79!

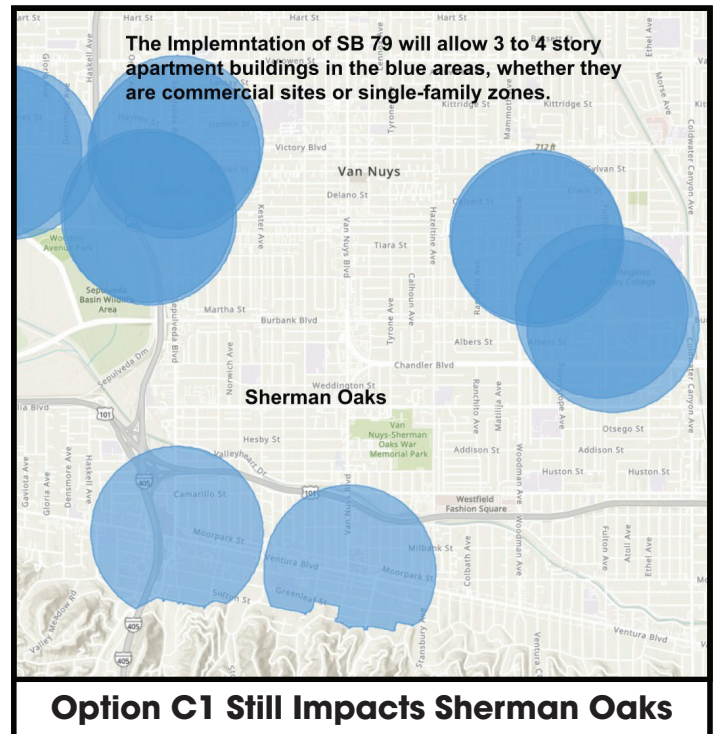
*by Maria Kalban, SOHA Housing Committee Chair*

If you have been following SB79 along with us, we are finally at the stage where local implementation must take place. Sherman Oaks has six impacted areas! What this will mean to our community and neighborhoods is still a big question – but here’s what we do know.

The Planning Department presented the City Council with three “options” for implementing SB79. All three meet the density requirements of the State and allows the City to defer high fire, low resource, HPOZs, and low sea level rise areas until 2030. SB79 allows seven-to-nine story apartments near rail stops and five-to-seven story apartments near qualifying bus stops. The Planning Department’s options are modifications to SB79’s requirements for areas not deferred like Sherman Oaks.

Option C1 would reduce the SB79-granted height requirement by 50% and allow just three-to-four-story apartments in all the qualifying transit stops. C2 would allow three-to-four-story apartments in most areas and also allow seven stories near rail stops. C3 would allow seven-story apartments in all qualifying areas. After studying the impacts of all the options, we supported Option C1 and sent hundreds of letters in support to our councilmembers from all United Neighbors groups. The City Council passed Option C1. Our Councilmember Nithya Raman voted for an option that allowed more density. She felt C1 would not meet the density requirement of the state, even though the Planning Department assured her it would.

What lies ahead? The Planning Department must now present guidelines on what can and will be allowed in our neighborhoods. This includes open space requirements, landscaping and side/backyard setbacks. We are hoping to work with the Planning Department as these guidelines are finalized. We hope all of you stay engaged as we push for guidelines. This could add a lot of density to our city. Even if your neighborhood isn’t impacted, this is only the beginning, as Sacramento buys into the idea promoted by YIMBY, Abundant Housing, and Streets for All – that more development everywhere and anywhere is what is needed, especially in single-family zones.



# NEW HOMELESS APPROACH MAY AID SHERMAN OAKS

*by Howard Jaffe, SOHA Homeless Committee Chair*

I had advised all that I would be taking a very tactical approach to the problem of the homeless in our community – but who wants to read about the daily calls, emails and texts to city council office representatives, police and neighbors going on about encampments, remains of encampments, RVs, filings on MyLA 311 ... So instead, I'm briefly writing about a new proposal which was recently passed by the LA County Board of Supervisors which could be of great assistance in dealing with the estimated 16,000 mentally unstable individuals living on the streets in the county. This number represents approximately 26% of individuals currently living on the streets.

On March 17, 2026, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion that would more closely tie the Department of Mental Health (DMH) with LA County Homeless Services and Housing (HSH) and the city's Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). DMH is expanding its presence in the field to provide direct mental health care, while HSH will manage housing placements and subsidies and LAHSA will continue to coordinate outreach and intake into system. All three entities remain independent – but for first time, there will be integration – DMH will now be embedded into homelessness response system led by HSH.

What this means to us is that DMH and HSH will now work closely with the mentally unstable homeless, giving them both mental health support and possibly even housing. LAHSA will still manage intake, but county programs can directly connect individuals with housing and services. In the case of Sherman Oaks, the housing will no longer have to be within the Sherman Oaks area but anywhere countywide – which is great because there is limited housing in Sherman Oaks. Our community can expect to see more DMH staff on Ventura Blvd and other areas with homeless populations. A goal of this integration is a move from a “sweep and move along” approach to homeless on our streets to an “engage, stabilize, and house” approach. This new approach might take longer to clear an area than a sweep but should lead to a more permanent solution. Under this approach the homeless will be tracked as they migrate through areas while waiting for housing. Of course, it will take time for this alignment between agencies to reap the benefits being touted by the proposal's sponsors, but I for one hope it will succeed – because the current methods by which we are dealing with the mentally unfit homeless on our streets is not working as a long-term solution.

## SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday, April 25, 2026**  
**8:30 am to 12:00 pm**

## soha SHINE LA 2026 SERVICE DAY IS BACK!

*by Kelly Lynch, SOHA Beautification Committee Chair*

Join SOHA, Mayor Bass, Volunteers Cleaning Communities, the Sherman Oaks/Encino Chamber, and other community and business partners for a fun day making Sherman Oaks Clean, Green, and Beautiful!

Meet at Gelson's Parking Lot, 4520 Van Nuys Blvd, Sherman Oaks, CA

- Volunteers team up for beautification projects, including neighborhood clean-up and tree planting.
- Features a Resource Fair and light refreshments to celebrate our hard work.
- All necessary tools, bags, and safety colors provided on-site.

Whether you or your business is looking for school service hours, interested in adopting a block, or inquiring about sponsorships – we want to hear from you!

For more information, please contact Kelly Lynch at [klynch@kplselect.com](mailto:klynch@kplselect.com).

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

HANK'S BAGELS

by Jane Kaplan, SOHA Restaurant Chair – I'd like to start off by thanking Dave's Hot Chicken for being our March Restaurant of the Month (see below). They did an extraordinary job of serving our members.



On April 15, we're in for another treat. Like Dave's which started when four friends had an idea for fried chicken ... Hank's, a deli of sorts, is also a new and very successful business – and their business is bagels! Hank's Bagels is a bagel bakery and sandwich shop founded in 2019 by the husband-and-wife duo Trevor and Kelley Faris. They specialize in sourdough bagels. Hank's



is family owned and named after Hank Faris, their middle child. The two other brothers are still a bit miffed, but hey, those are the breaks. Hank's makes just about everything fresh in house every day and they've got the most delicious bagels. I'm a fan and, in fact, they have become the only bagels that I buy because they are that good. Hank's will be bringing over some of their wonderful salads to accompany their bagels, along with their great cream cheeses. There'll be more than a smear, and I'm sure you're either already a fan or about to

become one. Hank's started out at 13535 Ventura Blvd a few years ago and now they've just opened up a bigger and better location around the corner. They've now got other locations now as well in Burbank, Calabasas and Brentwood. They've even got a truck that travels around selling bagels. So, as you can see, they're definitely dealing with dough one way or another.

- BELATED MARCH RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - DAVE'S HOT CHICKEN

by Jane Kaplan, SOHA Restaurant Chair

Dave's Hot Chicken was our March Restaurant of the month. Dave's all began in an East Hollywood parking lot in 2017 when four friends scraped together \$900 to purchase a fryer, hoping to serve up the best tasting hot chicken tenders around. They served those tenders to anyone willing to venture to their parking lot pop up. Like so many American dreams, this one had a very humble beginning. After a reporter from Eater/LA took his first bite of a Dave's Hot Chicken Tender – the owners world changed. The next day, the reporter posted that East Hollywood's new late night Hot Chicken Stand might "blow your mind". That was all the four childhood friends needed, and their restaurant concept blew up with lines around the block. So, if you're ever wondering if dreams can come true, remember these four friends and how one chicken concept created a chicken empire!



Dave's Hot Chicken has been fueled by a cult following. In 2021 the artist Drake was so impressed with their proprietary hot chicken recipe that he became a significant investor. They specialize in jumbo Hot Chicken Tenders and Sliders, along with sides of house made Kale Slaw, creamy Mac and Cheese and crispy seasoned French fries. They offer various spice levels ranging from No spice to Reaper which requires a signed waiver! Our March meeting attendees were able to taste the amazing food from Dave's Hot Chicken and see why and how this rags-to-restaurant riches story became a reality – a dream come true! The company recently celebrated its sixth anniversary with more than 700 locations in and around the world. Dave's Hot Chicken was recently named America's Fastest Growing Restaurant Chain. This recognition was earned because their systemwide sales increased 156% over the past year. Dave's Hot Chicken is located at 14622 Ventura Blvd on the corner of Ventura and Cedros.

Do you receive our email updates?

If not, we do not have your email address. Email it to us at soha914@gmail.com.

# SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The **ONLY** member-supported, volunteer-run,  
non-profit community organization  
dedicated to preserving and protecting  
the quality of life here in Sherman Oaks.

★ **BECOME A MEMBER** —  **STAY INFORMED** —  **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

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# soha

**SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**

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## IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

**- DON'T MISS OUR COMMUNITY MEETINGS -**

**Meet Monica Rodriguez (April 15) and don't miss our  
Mayoral Debate (May 5) with Karen Bass and Nithya Raman**

**Also: A conversation that matters; clowns and jokers;  
SB79 still a big threat; new homeless approach may  
help Sherman Oaks; and Service Day is back!**