

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMMUNITY MEETING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

— WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025 - 7:00 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM —

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

DENNIS ZINE TELLS ALL

FORMER LA COUNCILMEMBER AND LAPD SERGEANT



- Recent History of LA City Hall Corruption
- Real Goal of Newly Formed Charter Commission
- Shrinking LAPD and Declining Public Safety
- LA City Hall's Defund LAPD Movement
- Broke but Spending Billions on Convention Center
- Mayor Bass Future? - Will Rick Caruso Run?
- Billions on Homeless and Little to Show for It
- Why Do We Pay City More for Less Services?
- Neighborhood Councils' Real Impacts on City Hall

Dennis Zine grew up in Hollywood, attended Notre Dame High School, and graduated from Cal State LA in 1970. He was an LAPD officer and sergeant for more than 28 years and then District 3 Councilmember from 2001 to 2013. He has been elected to the Police Protective League Board of Directors three times and has been an active member of Mothers Against Drunk Driving for ten years.

Don't miss our live meeting and the opportunity to ask questions directly to Dennis. You can email questions to SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com no later than noon Tuesday October 14th. Streaming starts at 7:00 pm. Zoom ID 876 7050 9461; Zoom Passcode SOHA914. Zoom link on our website at www.SOHA914.com, click on the "SOHA Community Meetings" button, then click on "Stream This Month's Meeting". Meeting video is available at www.SOHA914.com a day after the meeting by clicking the "SOHA Meeting Videos" button.



RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - LUNA GRILL

FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 5 - SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM



SAVE THE DATE - SOHA 27TH ANNUAL TOY DRIVE

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH - 11 AM TO 2 PM



SOHA is again helping the LA County Department of Children and Family Services collect toys for young children who truly deserve them. Join your friends, family, and neighbors at Gelson's Market on Van Nuys Blvd for free coffee and snacks when you drop off new, unwrapped toys that will put a smile on a young child's face.

COUNCILMEMBER NITHYA RAMAN HOUSING ADVOCATE OR HYPOCRITE?

by Tom Glick, SOHA Planning and Land Use Committee Chair

Councilmember Nithya Raman has built a public image as a bold progressive – a tireless advocate for housing reform who claims to fight for the marginalized and push back against exclusionary zoning. She speaks passionately about the housing crisis, blames “NIMBY” neighborhoods like Sherman Oaks for blocking progress, and praises legislation like Senate Bill 79 (SB79) as essential to breaking the stranglehold of LA’s single-family zoning. And while we have become very accustomed to politician’s hypocrisies, when they spit in your face as Ms Raman’s does with her X videos, NBC interviews, and newsletters toting that LA isn’t producing enough housing, then she needs to be called out hard because it is very clear that her private actions paint a starkly different picture – one that raises serious questions about hypocrisy, self-interest, and the true beneficiaries of her policies.

SB79, authored by CA Senator Scott Wiener, was passed by the California Legislature last month. It essentially overrides local control and wipes out single-family zoning across much of California, forcing cities to permit denser housing near transit and in so-called “high opportunity” areas. Ms Raman has been the local face of SB79 and has been one of its most outspoken supporters, often using her platform to chastise neighborhoods like Sherman Oaks for their efforts to preserve single-family housing.

Yet while she calls for dramatic up-zoning in other people’s communities, public records show that Ms Raman is quietly undertaking a luxury redevelopment of her own home in the heart of Silver Lake – an historically single-family area largely untouched by SB79. Public building permits reveal that Ms Raman will demolish her 80-year-old craftsman home and replace it with a much larger residence featuring a multi-car garage, spa/pool, retaining walls, and extensive grading.

But what is more concerning is “What’s missing from Ms. Raman’s building plans?” No additional housing units. No Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). No Junior ADU. No duplex. No lot split for more units. Just a large single-family mini-mansion – precisely the kind of project Ms Raman publicly derides as a symbol of exclusion and privilege. It’s a glaring contradiction. While she lectures other neighborhoods about their duty to densify, she’s expanding her own single-family footprint in her well-protected, affluent, single-family enclave. She will be benefitting from the very protections afforded single-family owners that she wants stripped from others.

Her staff has responded to our inquiries about her construction and have stated that she is building a new home for her family with two twins getting older and both having their own room – and also anticipating her parents coming to live with her. These are admirable reasons for construction for most people, but most people are not elected officials standing on a very visible soapbox and deriding the evils of LA’s pitiful housing numbers. So, while Ms Raman has taken upon herself to be the public voice of LA’s housing and homelessness, that platform comes with responsibility, not hypocrisy.

Moreover, this hypocrisy is more than symbolic – it’s political. Just weeks ago, the LA City Council voted 8-to-5 to oppose SB79 unless significant amendments were made. Ms Raman was one of the five votes against the majority. She then took to the media blitz to support the core ideals of SB79, including a social media video and an August 31st interview with NBC’s Conan Nolan – undermining the council’s official position.

So, who exactly is Councilmember Raman representing? Her constituents or the pro-developer YIMBY groups like Abundant Housing, Streets For All, and the Democratic Socialists that applauded her defiance of the Council vote? This goes to the deeper question on who actually sits at Ms Raman’s table and who she listens to most. SOHA is continuing our efforts to determine this dissonance between Raman’s public rhetoric and private behavior. We filed a Public Records Act (PRA) request with her office in May aimed at identifying who truly has access to her and what influence they wield over her decisions. Her office’s response was wholly inadequate. But of course, we really didn’t need a PRA request to determine this – just look at her actions since City Council voted to oppose SB79.

Ms. Raman has often framed her housing advocacy as a moral imperative – rooted in personal struggle, empathy, and justice. But as her own mini-mansion project makes clear, it’s easy to push density for others while preserving comfort and value for yourself. We believe public officials should be held accountable when their actions contradict their words

– especially when those contradictions affect policy decisions that will reshape neighborhoods, property rights, and lives. For this article, we respected privacy boundaries, omitting specific addresses and relying solely on publicly available information.

But the core question remains. Is Councilmember Raman the principled housing warrior she claims to be – or just another politician saying one thing in public while doing another in private?

SB79 IS NOW IN THE GOVERNOR'S HANDS WE CAN ONLY HOPE FOR HIS VETO

by Maria Kalban, SOHA Housing Committee Chair

As we write this article, we are waiting to hear if Governor Newsom signs SB79 into law. We have sent thousands of letters from United Neighbors, a statewide community coalition, asking the Governor to veto this bill – hoping he understands the chaos SB79 will cause cities and how unnecessary it is to achieve our state's housing goals.

The real target of SB79 was always single-family neighborhoods. Initially the bill identifies areas within a one-half-mile radius of qualifying bus or light/heavy rail stops for apartment density. But each year more bills will attempt to add more neighborhoods into this new higher-density zoning. When you look at the impact maps for SB79, you see how it targets middle- and working-class neighborhoods. It also creates uncertainty for homeowners. Why would you take a chance with the biggest investment of your life and invest in a single-family neighborhood that can be re-zoned for higher density without your input or any advance warning?

The city has more than enough zoning capacity to build sufficient housing and can easily meet state goals – without going into neighborhoods. SB79 obviously has nothing to do with adding more housing – but everything to do with pleasing the real estate investors that sponsored the bill, can now buy single-family lots on the cheap, and add more value to their holdings by building apartments.

We have always worked closely with our Neighborhood Council to come up with good planning ideas for Sherman Oaks. Together we also worked with the Planning Department to make sure we added the housing LA needs and even plan for new starter single-family homes – while protecting open space and neighborhoods. SB79 ends the ability to properly plan a community. It is now in the hands of the state and developers, who will have the ability to determine where and what is built. Without a strong councilmember advocating for us, we will be powerless to control the density and our own destiny. Sherman Oaks is a great community. We could have made it even better. We still hold out hope that the Governor will side with California families and veto SB79.

IF PERMANENT IS NOT POSSIBLE, I'LL TAKE TEMPORARY

by Larry Slade, SOHA Homelessness Committee Chair

Is there a permanent solution to homelessness? I wish there was, but I really don't think so. Certainly, homelessness is temporary for many who are forced into living on the streets by circumstances often outside of their own control. For these people my heart aches and I support providing them with the resources to "get them inside". No question in my mind it's the right thing to do.

Like a broken record I return to a different question – what about the people who simply refuse to go inside? They either insist on remaining on the street or they do not possess the mental faculties to get "inside safe" – no matter what we offer to them?

LA City Councilmember Nithya Raman said that her office is "dedicated to permanently resolving encampments as quickly as possible and getting people inside as the only way to avoid pushing the impacts of homelessness onto another set of neighbors. We fully support LAPD enforcing the law around any criminal activity that might be associated with this encampment."

To be sure, there is wisdom and logic in this statement. Absent a permanent solution for encampments, the only way to resolve the problem is to move it somewhere else, into someone else's neighborhood, under a different overpass, to another location. And I think that we can agree that this is nowhere near a permanent solution.

Which begs the question of what to do when the homeless person refuses to accept a “permanent” solution. This is not a novel question coming from me on the pages of this newsletter. I still have not heard a satisfactory answer, and my opinion remains at odds with our councilmember. Finding a “permanent solution” cannot be the “only” way to resolve the matter. This “pie in the sky” thinking is at odds not just with my point of view but with reality.

To be sure, sobriety is a permanent solution to alcohol addiction. Strive for that. Work for that. Hold out hope for that. But, short of attaining that goal, “one day at a time” will do. Same with the homeless who refuse to be housed. I pine for permanent solutions. But a blanket refusal to provide “temporary” solutions leaves the problem on our doorstep and that is not acceptable.

SHERMAN OAKS BEATIFICATION UPDATES

by Kelly Lynch, SOHA Beautification Committee Chair

Our fundraising for the Welcome to Sherman Oaks mural with the Paint Sherman Oaks Foundation continues! Stop by our SOHA booth at the Sherman Oaks Street Fair on October 19th to see some conceptual designs.

The Valley Current online newspaper (www.valley-current.com) did a great feature piece on our Sherman Oaks Volunteers Cleaning Communities (VCC) team chaired by Howard Jaffee. The team meets on the first and third Saturdays of the month. All are welcome, get a little exercise, and meet your neighbors. For more info, log into our website at www.shermanoakshomeownersassociation.com/beautification.

Remember if you see graffiti, sidewalk hazards, or illegal dumping, take a minute to log into <https://lacity.gov/myla311> and report it! The app is very user friendly, and once you submit your request you should see results for most situations in three to four days.

VISIT SOHA BOOTH AT SHERMAN OAKS STREET FAIR

by Victoria Bourdas Martinez, Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce CEO

Get ready for one of the most anticipated events of the year – the 33rd Annual Sherman Oaks Street Fair! This fun-filled community celebration will take place on iconic Ventura Blvd from Kester to Van Nuys on Sunday, October 19 from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. As the largest single-day event in the San Fernando Valley, we expect 100,000 attendees. The Street Fair is a full day of entertainment, shopping, food, and family fun – a true celebration of our vibrant community. We’re grateful for the ongoing support from Sherman Oaks businesses, residents, and community partners.

The Fair features two stages – the Main Stage with professional bands and the Community Stage spotlighting local-school youth performers. Kids love the carnival with its 45-foot Ferris Wheel, rides, and games – while adults enjoy relaxing in the beer and cocktail garden. Come hungry – food trucks and vendors will offer savory bites and sweet treats. Shoppers can explore artisan booths for handcrafted goods, unique gifts, and local treasures.

Meet your new best friend at the pet adoption area, connect with the community, discover volunteer opportunities with local nonprofits, learn about schools and businesses, and meet local leaders and candidates. There’s something for everyone to enjoy, explore, and discover! For more information, visit [https://ShermanOaksStreetFair.org](http://ShermanOaksStreetFair.org) and follow us on Instagram and Facebook. Spread the word to your neighbors, family, and friends – we can’t wait to see you at the Fair!

THANK JANE SACON FOR NEW SOHA WEBSITE

SOHA has a new website (www.SOHA914.com) and we want to thank Jane Sacon who volunteered her time and knowledge to put it together. Our website is continuously updated and provides useful information on our SOHA Newsletter, Community Meetings, and a wide range of topics impacting Sherman Oaks.

BECOME A SOHA MEMBER!

It's only \$45 a year including our monthly newsletter, community meetings, public service emails, and more. Go to www.SOHA914.com, click "Join or Renew", and pay by credit card subscription that renews annually. Or mail your check, name, address, and email to: SOHA Membership, PO Box 5223, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5223.

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

LUNA GRILL

by Jane Kaplan, SOHA Restaurant Chair – It all began with one family's dream – create a place where people could enjoy food that was not only flavorful, but also fresh, nutritious, and convenient. In 2004, that dream became a reality when the Pourteymour family opened the first Luna Grill. Today, Luna Grill has grown to more than 50 locations across California and Texas, all dedicated to serving the vibrant flavors of real Mediterranean cooking. Their kitchens prepare meals from scratch, grilling over open flames and using only the freshest ingredients.

From the very beginning, the family's mission has been simple – inspire better food choices and make healthy eating accessible for everyone. Their goal is to take the stress out of mealtime – replacing your kitchen with honest, wholesome meals – so you can spend less time cooking and cleaning, and more time connecting with the people you love. Luna Grill Sherman Oaks, 4550 Van Nuys Blvd.



COMINGS AND GOINGS SHERMAN OAKS AND CALIFORNIA AT A CROSSROADS

by Matt Epstein, SOHA President

Each month, I usually share stories about Sherman Oaks businesses – who's new, who's closing, and how our main street is changing. But this month, I feel compelled to step back and look at a bigger issue: what is happening not just here in Sherman Oaks, but across LA and California as a whole. It's no secret anymore – businesses, and in some cases, entire industries, are leaving. Walk along Ventura Blvd and you see the turnover. Look at our state's economic headlines, and you see the same story on a much larger scale.

Leadership Without Vision – What's driving this? In my view, it comes down to leadership – or rather, the lack of it. Too many of our elected officials are more concerned with campaigning for their next term than providing real solutions. They rely on easy slogans instead of facing tough realities. Our own City Councilmember, Nithya Raman, recently said that California needs more affordable housing, pointing out that Texas builds more and is more affordable. That's a nice soundbite. But here's the reality:

- Minimum Wage – Texas sits at \$7.25/hour while California's is at \$17/hour.
- Workers' Compensation – California is among the highest cost in the country.
- Insurance – Both hard to get and prohibitively expensive.
- Regulation – Layer upon layer – so much so that industries simply pack up and leave.

Now, Governor Newsom is talking about regulating AI, one of the few major industries still rooted here. But if history is any guide, the AI sector will follow the auto industry, the tech sector, and the entertainment industry – leaving California behind. And let's be honest – once they leave, they aren't coming back.

A Bleak Ranking – Here's a fact that should stop all of us in our tracks. California currently leads the nation in unemployment. Number one. That is not the kind of leadership we should be proud of.

A Call to Action – I grew up in Sherman Oaks. I've seen this community at its best, and I've watched it struggle. To see where we are now, and where we appear to be headed, is heartbreaking. But it doesn't have to stay this way. If we want change, we need to demand it. Write, email, or call your local and state lawmakers. Tell them we need leaders who see beyond the next election cycle – leaders who are willing to stop the over-regulation, make California competitive again, and bring jobs and industries back.

The questions we must all ask are simple...

How many more businesses have to leave before our leaders wake up? Where are our true leaders?

SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The **ONLY** member-supported,
volunteer-run, non-profit
community organization
dedicated to preserving and protecting
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IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

- DON'T MISS OUR COMMUNITY MEETING -

Dennis Zine tells all! You won't want to miss what this former Councilmember and LAPD Sergeant has to say!

Also: Nithya...Housing Advocate or Hypocrite; SB79 in Governor's hands; If permanent's impossible, I'll take temporary; Don't miss the Sherman Oaks Street Fair; and Sherman Oaks and California at a crossroads