



The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

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Nature walks continue in Johnson's Pasture

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy is continuing a series of walks in Johnson's Pasture in northern Claremont. CWC Board Members Suzanne Thompson (left, in photo) and Karen Chapman led a bird-watching session on Sunday, February 23. Over 25 people enjoyed meandering through Johnson's Pasture on a crisp, foggy morning to see birds and learn about CWC's efforts to save the hillsides.

The next walk will take place on Sunday, March 23 at 8am. Park and carpool at PFF Bank (NW corner of Indian Hill and Foothill) at 7:45, or meet at Via Santa Catarina in Claraboya.



Photo: Kirk Reynolds

Candidates for City Council answer CWC questions on hillside preservation

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy asked the seven City Council candidates to respond to three questions about development in the hillsides. Printed below are the questions we posed and the responses we received from all seven candidates.

As a nonprofit organization, CWC cannot endorse any candidates, but--before the election on March 4--we can help the public receive information about the position of candidates on the hillsides.

Questions

1. What is your philosophy regarding residential development along the hillsides and open space of Claremont?
2. How familiar are you with the Claremont Hillsides Plan?
3. What are your recommendations in regards to how to pay for the purchase of

open space in Claremont? Would you favor a bond issue to raise funds for purchasing land? Would you recommend other funding mechanisms?

Sandra Baldonado

1. My philosophy is to retain as much open space, wherever it exists in Claremont, taking into consideration the rights and interests of the present owners. Any hillside development must be consistent with the city's hillside development plan that requires clustered sites in areas where services are already available. I support this concept. We are not going to be able to prevent all development so we must be vigilant and careful when faced with requests for projects.

2. I am very familiar with the plan and strongly support its goals. I was involved with the

League of Women Voters' hillside study that was the impetus for the city's eventual adoption of the plan and the purchase of our existing wilderness park.

3. How to pay for more open space is the big question. I don't need to tell anyone that land is incredibly expensive in Claremont. We have had discussions about using a bond measure and that possibility must still be considered. Because of the Conservancy's leadership, the city, together with Conservancy leaders, have had positive and encouraging discussions with the Trust for Public Land and I am optimistic that we can all work together for a viable solution.

Thanks for bringing this important issue to the forefront and getting the information to your constituents.

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The Post is the newsletter of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy.

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resource. The city ought to begin a fundraising drive to gather funds voluntarily as well, and gather help from local businesses. As your councilmember, I would work to instigate a moratorium on ALL new housing development until the land can be purchased by the city. Going even further, I would work to acquire the remaining land of the Padua Hills nursery to assure it will always be available, and I believe the last remaining lemon grove in all of Claremont on Alamosa and Grand ought to be acquired and refurbished as a living link to our past. I believe ALL remaining undeveloped land ought to remain that way. However, in order to accomplish this we need to fight for it. We cannot win without the proper person on the city council, and I cannot win without you. That is why I am asking for your vote come March 3.

effectively taken property and the owner has to be compensated.

3. I am in favor of finding a means of obtaining some seed money to be able to provide matching money for grants. For example, Proposition 40 money will be available soon, but we are unlikely to receive much money unless we have some match. There can be many ways to obtain such money, but the best way is through a bond issue passed by the voters. If experience is a guide, voters are quite likely to vote for such a bond issue since people value open space. However, the size of the bond needs to be better quantified before we proceed. One key is to first establish the price, possibly through an option agreement with the owners of the flat areas, (for example Johnson's pasture,) as well as the remaining development credits from the remaining hillsides. That will prevent an owner from raising the price when he sees that we have funding. I think that a bond issue could be pursued in the next two years. It will be important for the City of Claremont to work with the Trust For Public Lands, Claremont Wildlands Conservancy and other preservation groups to develop a strategy to bring a bond issue to the voters.

Candidates...

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Jeffrey P. Carman

Open space preservation is the cornerstone of my candidacy, one that I feel passionately about. I believe our open space has deteriorated far too much as it is and the current city council is negligent in their responsibilities towards preserving our environment, and the other challengers do not nearly have the same drive or passion as I do. I believe all remaining open space ought to be preserved without question, a stance that has drawn criticism from incumbents and challengers alike.

My philosophy is that residential development along the hillsides and open space would wreak havoc on our future. Our open areas are what make our city so unique and special, and serve as our one true link to our past the way Claremont once was. I am familiar with the Claremont Hillside Plan, and I cannot stress enough my belief that our hillsides MUST remain open and free from the destruction of developers.

I believe that a bond ought to be presented to voters that would enable us to raise the necessary funds to preserve this precious

Algird G. Leiga

1. Residential development in poorly accessible areas of hillsides needs to be discouraged. This includes Johnson's pasture. I will work diligently to bring all the hillsides, not already owned by Claremont, into the wilderness park or into some conservancy if others are willing to help. For example the San Gabriel Mountains and Rivers conservancy could be such a vehicle to gain control of hillsides for preservation. However, I prefer that Claremont be the agency that controls the hillsides rather than someone else. We already control about 1200 acres and will pursue approximately 1300 acres.

2. I am very familiar with the Claremont hillsides plan! It has been an excellent vehicle to keep the hillsides preserved. The key is the creation of credits for parcels which are too steep to build on. These credits have to have a value. The value is created when there is a place to use them in flatter areas. This means that we can't just buy an area like Johnson's pasture to prevent development, but we need to buy the credits as well. If the credits cannot be used anywhere, we have

Jackie McHenry

1. It is imperative that we save what little we have left of the Claremont open space and hillsides. When we allow development in these areas, we destroy the very reason many of us had for choosing Claremont as our

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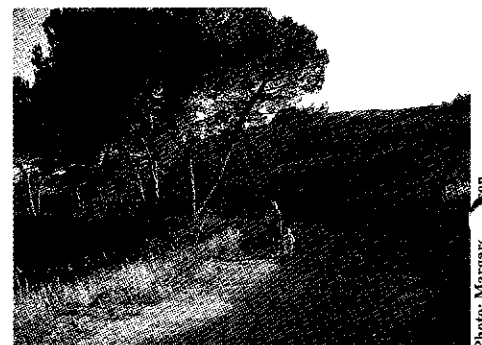


Photo: Margarita

Candidates present views on hillside preservation to CWC

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home. I am opposed to further development of houses in these sensitive areas.

2. It is my preference not to develop any of the ecologically sensitive areas of Claremont, and whether trading development credits from the Hillside to flatland was a good trade is questionable. It would have been better to either have paid for those Hillside lands via a bond measure or ask the many land conservancies in the area to buy the land and keep it in a perpetual conservancy.

We ended up borrowing 1.3 million dollars from the sewer fund to buy the land that is now the Wilderness Park, and in return we got the Claremont Hills 125 home project that further destroys what little is left of Claremont's dwindling open space. Not the best solution in my opinion and in the future I believe we need to revisit how we implement the whole Hillside plan, a document that hasn't been updated in awhile and doesn't take into consideration the consequences of allowing the tdc's to be used in an already too built out city. Surely they could have been used in another less ecologically sensitive part of the city, and this alternative needs to be studied.

3. Before we ask Claremont taxpayers to approve any bond measure, we need to tell them how much it would cost to save the areas we want to purchase and ask how much they are willing to pay to do this. Based on their response, we can finance it totally through a bond measure, a combination of a bond measure and private funding, or totally through private funding, grants and monies from land trusts and conservancies. Hopefully if we determine that the people want these areas saved, we can use all our minds and skills to find a way to achieve this worthy goal.

Karen M. Rosenthal

I am in favor of acquisition of as much property as possible to add to the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park. I am very familiar with the Hillside Plan.

I would prefer the land be given as a charitable donation, but would be open to some creative "cobbling together" using different resources and organizations to achieve the same goal.

The City has been working with regional conservancy groups, philanthropic land acquisition groups such as the Trust For Public Lands and local hillside property owners to achieve this goal. State Park Bond money is being applied for and I believe a study of a possible bond issue should be eventually addressed.

We need to remember the 1200 acre Wilderness Park that exists today was, in part, made possible by the approval of the development of the 125 homes that are being built today on the east side of Padua Hills.

I was not in favor of the large parcels of land for single family homes in the rural area and felt that developing this acreage would encourage excessively large homes with lots of concrete, lighting, use of extraordinary amounts of water and non-native plants. I favor what is now being called "compact housing" especially in transit-oriented developments but which is even useful in more rural areas.

Zephyr Tate-Mann

1.) I am particularly interested in preserving Johnson Pasture and The Bernard Field Station as open space, and the latter also as a biological teaching/research. It is important that we maintain The Bernard Field Station as an outdoor teaching facility. Most college students and youngsters have not had the opportunity to experience nature in its purest form as I did growing up; therefore, I consider this as a grand opportunity for our youth to know, appreciate and

respect nature.

There is no replacement for the tranquility that one can experience sitting or walking in a natural environment like Johnson Pasture. Johnson Pasture offers a natural habitat for animals, birds, and vegetation. Protection of our open space is protection of animals, birds, vegetation, clean water, and air. Currently, there is a concern for the Chicken Creek Development project regarding the destruction of wildlife, vegetation, and trees

Currently, we have a concern for water and water rates and continuous development means that we will be consuming more water for lawns, gardening, and household use. With the addition of road coverage, this will eliminate the earth from absorbing the rainwater. Development will cause the animals to look elsewhere for a natural environment, which leads to confrontation between human beings and animals for space. Needless to say how human beings have handled this on some occasions.

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La Fetra Foundation gives CWC generous \$10,000 grant

The conservancy recently received a grant of \$10,000 from the La Fetra Foundation (its third such gift) to support its work in preserving the Claremont hillsides. The foundation funds a variety of open space projects, including native plant preservation and the California Parks Association.

Helping to save Johnson's Pasture is a natural for the La Fetra family because of the family's close ties to the Claremont and Glendora areas. Suzanne La Fetra and her brother, Mike, grew up in Claremont and remember playing in Johnson's Pasture as children..

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The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the foothills wild and free for all.

Candidates offer CWC their views on hillside preservation

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We lose our natural environment.

2.) I have read The Hillside Ordinance and have attended meetings regarding the hillsides. I understand that we are involved in limiting the uses of the hillside areas by transfer of development credits.

3.) I would favor conducting a survey of the residents of Claremont to determine whether they would support a bond to purchase open space in Claremont. Then, I would support placing the bond issue on a ballot. The issue regarding a bond should be placed on a survey and ballot as a single issue and not consolidated with a proposal for a bond for the Padua Sports Park. I believe there are many people in Claremont who would support a bond for the preservation of Johnson Pasture. The other funding mechanisms that have been presented at the City Council meetings have not

been as favorable as the proposal of a bond, in my opinion. I am suggesting, if possible, that Johnson Pasture, be placed on the National Registry as Open Space.

Peter S. Yao

I mountain bike in Claremont's hills, so I value all our natural vacant space. Claremont has 3000 acres of open space left, with city control over 2600 acres. 400 acres might yet be developed. The Chicken Creek has started development on about 125 of the 400 remaining acres.

I say, Claremont is better off with 400 acres of open space instead of with 400 additional homes. So I want to keep the space open.

How much does this open space cost? To buy up development rights may cost \$10 to \$20M. So, to keep

Claremont's open space will average \$1500 per household in bonded indebtedness.

Now, HOW can we save Claremont's scarce open space? I like the CWC's approach. That is, we let the Conservancy assess fair market value of development rights. They then negotiate a fair price with the owners.

Then Claremont should ask voters to approve the project and issue bonds to save our scarce remaining open space.

I agree. I am for open space, using the Conservancy so the City doesn't get involved too soon at too high a cost. Open space at a reasonable price. That's my way.