



Upper Nichols Canyon Neighborhood Association
Susan W. Mullins, President
2838 Nichols Canyon Place Los Angeles, CA 90046
www.nicholscanyon.org s.mullins@nicholscanyon.org

Date: 9/7/11 Committee
Submitted in PW
Council File No: 11-1222
Item No.: 4
Deputy: pubuc

September 6, 2011

REFERENCE: CF#11-1222, Motion before the Committee of Public Works

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of our Upper Nichols Canyon Neighborhood Association to support the pending motion for a security gate on Solar Drive in the Hollywood Hills. Our 4 year old Association is made up of over 500 residents—homeowners and renters—in the upper part of Nichols Canyon. The eastern boundary is Runyon Canyon. Solar Drive is on the edge of the Runyon wilderness area, facing downtown.

Before we ever formed our neighborhood association, the residents of Solar Drive were trying unsuccessfully to deal with heavy night-time usage of their cul-de-sac street for loud, alcohol and drug-fueled partying and disturbing furtive activities. Many of these nocturnal visitors were and are aggressive and belligerent making Solar residents justifiably wary of confronting them. One resident tried hiring a private security guard which, while somewhat helpful, was too expensive to maintain.

Over the last four years, the problem has grow in size and nature and is more intractable. Twitter and blogs are helping more people discover Solar Drive. We joined the effort to try to find some resolution. This is not just a problem for one small street in the Hollywood Hills. The Police and Fire Departments consider Solar Drive a serious public safety hazard. Drinking, drugs, and smoking is a lethal combination in the Hills. The activities that are happening on Solar Drive put the entire Canyon at risk from fire.

Let me be clear. These are not tourists wanting a view of LA lights. Most of the people go to the Solar Drive cul-de-sac because it is completely off the route of the police and offers seclusion for drug and sex deals, partying with drinking, loud music, smoking and more until dawn. It is also the parking spot for people to make forays into Runyon Canyon Park at night. Before an armed caretaker was on-site at the unoccupied mansion in the cul-de-sac that house was a place for gangs to party. The graffiti inside the house was id'd by the police as 18th Street gang members and other known crews.

Each morning Solar neighbors clean up the debris of liquor bottles and food trash, used condoms, drug stuff, and cigarette butts tossed into the dry brush. All of this is evidence of what they report seeing from their windows when they are kept awake through the night.

We have been working closely with the Police on this for some time. Officer Sanchez and Captain Girmala have tried solutions within the scope of the police and that of a solid Neighborhood Watch program. They have responded many, many times to the location and have tried to see if making random visits would discourage these nightly gatherings. They knew that was a long shot and it clearly hasn't been effective nor is it feasible given LAPD manpower shortages.

We are very appreciative of the efforts of Councilman LaBonge to help us find the right measured response to this. This security gate we hope will be the answer. Clearly the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy feels their Hollywood Bowl overlook, which has a similar view and appeal, needs to be protected at night with a gate.

Thank you for your serious and thoughtful consideration of this motion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan W. Mullins".

Susan W. Mullins
President

AMY DANTZLER
2451 SOLAR DRIVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90046

September 6, 2011

Re: CF#11-1222, Motion before Committee of Public Works regarding
Solar Drive Temporary Closure

Dear Committee Members:

I am a resident of Solar Drive, which is a very short, narrow street with just 12 homes and a view of the city. The street ends at the trails of Runyon Canyon and is in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

I am the Block Captain for the street and have been asked to write on behalf of the residents, many of whom are currently out of town and could not attend the hearing or write a letter in light of the short notice. I have lived on Solar Drive for seven years and have worked closely with Councilman LaBonge and his staff during that time resolving issues affecting our street and the neighborhood.

Since we moved to Solar Drive, our street has occasionally attracted people who want to enjoy the view. However, in the last several years, as the popularity of Runyon Canyon has increased and with the publicity surrounding a very large uncompleted house at the end of the street and abutting Runyon Canyon Park (2450 Solar Drive), we have had an influx of visitors who appear dangerous and who put the Solar Drive residents as well as the entire canyon at risk.

On a regular basis my neighbors who have bedrooms facing the street are awoken by visitors to the street. These visitors are not tourists seeking a nice view but are criminals coming up to make drug and sex deals and to party with alcohol, drugs, loud music and cigarettes. It is also now the parking spot for people who wish to make forays into the Runyon Canyon at night to camp, build fires and party on the secluded trails. The uncompleted house has been covered in graffiti on several occasions that police identified as gang related. These visitors are aggressive and belligerent so we are afraid to confront them about the dangers of fire.

As an early riser, I witness the aftermath of these visits daily as I find debris littering the street. Each day we pick up bags of trash consisting of alcohol bottles, food wrappers, used condoms, discarded lighters, medical marijuana bottles, drug paraphernalia and cigarette butts tossed into the dry hillside brush. I've included photos taken over the last several days that are just a small sampling of what we are finding. Because we pick up daily, these photos are not an accumulation of days but are examples of an average

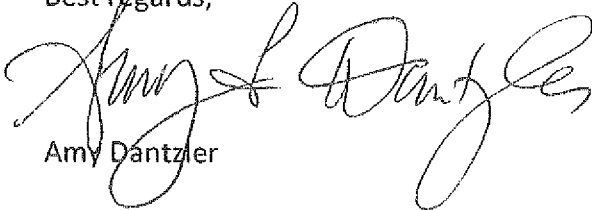
morning's debris. One of our neighbors pays annually to have the entire hillside cleared of the garbage choking the plants and animals living there.

The Police and Fire Departments now consider Solar Drive a serious public safety hazard. In addition to the increase in crime, the combination of alcohol, drugs and smoking puts the entire community at great risk of fire. The police have responded many times to calls to the location but our calls evidence only some of the activity on the street as many of the residents are too afraid to call the police for fear of being identified. I personally have inebriated people come onto my property outside my bedroom in the middle of the night and have had to call the police in fear of my life.

For some time we have been working closely with the police and Councilman LaBonge to find a solution to what has become a very serious public safety issue as the police's random visits and our neighborhood watch program have not been successful. Officer Ralph Sanchez and Captain Bea Girmala have advised us that that the only real solution is to try an electronic gate at the entrance to Solar Drive so that non-resident cars would be unable to access the street. Councilman LaBonge supports this plan of action as well. All of us who reside in this fragile community are very hopeful that a gate will be the answer and will serve to ensure the safety of our entire community.

Thank you for the time and attention you have given this matter.

Best regards,



Amy Dantzier

Wednesday September 7th, 2011

RE: CF#11-1222 Astral Drive/Solar Drive Temporary Closure

Dear Members of City Council,

Thank you for taking the time to address our neighborhood's concerns. My husband and I have called Nichols Canyon home since 1992. It is a special part of Los Angeles and we enjoy sharing the magnificent views and wildlife with those willing to make the trek up the ridge. However, in recent years and even more so in recent months, it has become clear that not all of these visitors are hikers and tourists coming for a view of LA's lights.

Solar Drive has become more than a vista, it is now a party destination. Nighttime visitors park on Solar Drive to either trespass into the park or to drink and smoke right on the street. These visitors bring noise pollution and lit cigarettes to some of our city's driest brush. They leave behind souvenirs - broken bottles, wrappers, drug paraphernalia and other reminders. Over the past five years my husband and I have personally paid to have this hillside swept of debris on four occasions. It is a shame to see litter on one of the last open green expanses in Los Angeles. It is also a threat to our other neighbors, the natural wildlife of this canyon. We are lucky to share this urban enclave with the coyotes, bobcats, hawks and other birds that called this canyon home before us. Despite working with Councilman LaBonge's staff to have "No Littering" signs placed on the street, we have seen no decrease in trash leftover from the parties. Our "No Smoking" signs also have failed to deter this potentially lethal activity.

As a member and Block Captain of the Upper Nichols Canyon Neighborhood Association, I have worked with my neighbors and local law enforcement to determine an effective solution to our unique problem. Despite reporting the incidents and routine visits from our local officers, people continue to party on Solar Drive. The uninhabited "mansion" at the end of our cul-de-sac has a history as a haven for gang meetings, sex deals and violent parties. Although this house now has an armed guard and is no longer host to such destruction, an impression remains that the people visiting Solar Drive are potentially dangerous and therefore not approachable. Officer Sanchez and Captain Girmala believe that the best solution is an electronic gate at the entrance to Solar Drive, preventing non-residents to access the cul-de-sac. Other public vistas in Los Angeles have similar safety measures in place, such as The Griffith Conservatory or the Universal Lookout. These are trafficked party spots where drinking, smoking and trespassing on our dry canyons present a dangerous fire risk to the city.

Thank you for your consideration and taking the time to make Los Angeles safer for all of its residents.

Best regards,



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Resident of Solar Drive

Member & Block Captain, Upper Nichols Canyon Neighborhood Association

Council File: # 11-1222 Astral Drive/Solar Drive/Temporary Closure

To whom it may concern

When we took over our house in the beginning of the year we were very concerned about being able to insure our house against the treats of nature, whether it be earthquakes, fires or floods. We of course knew of these dangers ahead of time and had no complaints about this.

What we didn't know was that us being careful when it comes f. ex. open fire is almost a joke, when we at night see people parked on Solar Drive smoking cigarettes, carelessly disposing buds over the hill side in mid August!!

Then there are the occasional bottles thrown of various observations, syringes, used condoms, used diapers (yes, we find it weird, too), plastic canisters, lighters and waste in general. Everything can be found on the Solar Drive hill side – And yes the neighbors on the street almost take turn crawling down that hillside picking up especially bottles, that works as magnifying glasses under the baking sun.

That's the garbage side of the problem – Then there is the noise. The people visiting our street, especially during night time are not here to take in the view (alone), they have a regular street party going, music cranking, cars revving and people shouting. And this all takes place at random times every week – Sometimes Monday night at 4am, Sunday at 11pm or Thursday at 1am – Take your pick.

To top that we have a few gangs showing up once in a while. And at least 5 times a week somebody try to scale the wall to the big mansion across the street. Thanks to the guard and dog present they usually abandon their break in and retract.

Don't get us wrong living on Solar Drive is fantastic, but trying to get a full night sleep here is next to impossible. We used to live right by Tower Bridge in the heart of London, UK in area filled with restaurants, bars and night clubs – and we had more quiet nights there than here.

95-99% of people showing up on Solar Drive during night time are NOT here to take in the view. They are here to smoke weed, take drugs, drink, have sex, party and/or trying to scale the wall to the mansion or crawl over the fence to Runyon Canyon.

For once it is a clear case of the many ruining for the few. The dangerous behavior of the people visiting Solar Drive at night is making living (and sleeping) a challenge which is far greater than the fire/earthquake/flood danger presented by nature.

A gate would make Solar Drive safe instantaneously, both for people living here and the surrounding area.

Best regards

Mette Lisby & Jesper Baehrenz
2457 Solar Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046

COUNCIL FILE #11-1222

From: Harry Lawenda <harrylawenda@gmail.com>
Subject: Solar Drive - Hearing on Gate
Date: September 2, 2011 2:18:59 PM PDT
To: amy dantzler <amy.dantzler@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern

My name is Harry Lawenda and I have been living on 2405 Solar Drive since the early 1970s.

Solar Drive is one of those streets with great views. On a clear day you can see from Catalina Island all the way to the San Gabriel Mountains. We gladly share this with visitors, hikers and walkers! They are very respectful and clean up after them.

Solar Drive is about a 10 minute drive from Hollywood Blvd and Fairfax. This remoteness unfortunately is increasingly attracting a crowd, that makes me very nervous. Loud music and having sex would be one thing. But drinking smoking and consuming drugs could result in a catastrophe. The south side of solar is mainly brush. It takes only one cigarette to start a fire! These nightly gatherings are not a once in a while thing anymore. They are happening almost every night. It can get crowded on a weekend night. I live in the first house on Solar Drive and like to take a walk to the end of the street every day. There are condoms, condom wrapper, broken beer bottles, cans, vodka bottles, thrown away packaging of fast food, drug paraphernalia, and what concerns me the most, are cigarette butts thrown into the brush. It's a miracle that there hasn't been a fire yet.

In the 40 years of living on this street, it never has been this bad. I urge you to install a gate and give us back the peace of mind and safety that everyone should have in their home.

Sincerely

Harry Lawenda

To whom it may concern.

My name is Wilian B Menezes and I am a resident of 2447 Solar Dr Los Angeles, CA 90046

This letter is in support and to confirm the necessity of gating Solar Drive Los Angeles California 90046. It is imperative that the board understands that for the past 4 years all sorts of activities are taken place on this once quite street, which goes from vandalism to drugs and public sex. The amount of trash and fire hazardous are overwhelming and safety is a big issue today. With small children at home it is concerning the amount of people who do not live on the street or neighborhood knocking on our doors and hanging out uninvited on our backyard. I fully support the addition of the gate in the beginning of the street in which will improve safety and WILL PREVENT fire accidents due to people smoking cigarettes and pot near the bushes even with the non smoking sign right in front of them. We welcome guests and everybody from our neighborhood the have access to the street however this action is necessary to prevent the gang activity, drugs, theft and public sex from taking place in our street. I am available for any question if necessary at (310) 7794200. Thank you!

09/06/2010



Wilian B Menezes

COUNCIL FILE #11-1222

From: gayla rega <francisalbert_72@hotmail.com>
Subject: Solar/Gate letter
Date: September 3, 2011 2:14:31 PM PDT
To: amy dantzler <amy.dantzler@gmail.com>, amy.dantzler@nicholscanyon.org

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing regarding the activity on Solar as a concerned homeowner in Nichols Canyon.

I live a couple blocks over, but I often walk my dog in the area at the top of Solar and then I take it down to Nichols Canyon and around. On my walks, I have seen the following: All kinds of trash, fast food wrappers, beer bottles, liquor bottles, multiple prescription marijuana bottles and little baggies, cigarette butts. I have seen new graffiti on guard rails, trash cans and signs. I have been walking down Solar and almost been run over by cars driving erratically up the hill on at least two occasions. This is a close knit community and most of the residents recognize each other, smile and wave, and normally drive fairly safely (although maybe fast) as they expect people may be walking, etc...

I was a teenager once and I certainly don't want to rain on anyones parade, but I am concerned about the cigarette and pot smoking leading to a fire. One small fire around here in the hills could mean disaster! The graffiti is unsightly. This is a beautiful neighborhood with lots of natural charm not found often in LA. and it should be protected. I am concerned about home break-ins and destruction of property. And I'm also concerned about being run over by a car while I'm out with the dog, especially in the evenings.

I do know that there is a proposal for a gate at the bottom of Solar at Nichols Canyon. I am very in support of this. I know that the residents on Solar are not only affected by the issues I stated above, but also the noise from loud stereos from parked cars, etc... I also know the police do not have the expendable man power to send a car up here every time someone is causing a disturbance, so I think a gate would solve the problems I've listed.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and listen to my concerns.

Sincerely,
Gayla Terzian
2655 LA Cuesta Drive

