



The Keys Breeze

The Newsletter of the Ventura Keys Association

SUMMER 2006

VENTURA KEYS ANNUAL BARBECUE—SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

Save the date: Sunday, September 17th, 12 to 3, at Ventura Keys' Big Beach (corner of Seaview and Beachmont). Last year's barbecue had record attendance, and was a great event. Lots of good food, drinks and camaraderie. A perfect time to make new friends and visit with neighbors. The same is promised for this year's event.

Josh Addison (805)643-7489 is chairman and will be needing lots of help. Please call him and volunteer your services. Assistance can be used before the barbecue as well as the day of the barbecue. A lot of work goes into coordinating this event, and your help would be most appreciated. Call Josh at (805)643-7489.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Clif Simonson, President 2006-2008, Ventura Keys Association

Welcome to the Summer 2006 edition of the Keys Breeze, the Newsletter of the Ventura Keys Association. It's been said before, but it bears repeating: these are exciting times for the Ventura Keys and for the Association! Membership is at record highs, property values are strong, and we have an organized and focused Board that will continue to work hard for the Keys. Please take time to visit the new website www.venturakeys.org and you will see what I mean!

Many thanks to Buki Burke, the Keys Breeze Editor, for her hard work in publishing this Newsletter, now in its 24th year as the "Breeze." I have been president of the Association for just over six months and wish to express what an honor it has been to work with such a dedicated and hardworking Board, my thanks to all of them for their efforts. But we have much to do!

In the short time I have been here we have built the website, adopted a mission statement, and focused the Association on "building value through community", which is our tagline, and began several other initiatives that I will outline below. But the most common question I get is "what exactly is the Ventura Keys Association and what does it do?"

The Association was formed in November 1969 with several purposes in mind. Per Article II of its bylaws: *"The Corporation is formed with the following objectives: To encourage the most appropriate use of land for civil and community purposes, with particular emphasis on the development, promotion and protection of the interests and welfare of the residential property owners and residents of the Ventura Keys and adjacent or nearby areas in the City of Ventura, County of Ventura, including those in other independent municipalities located in Ventura County."* We have further refined the mission of the Association with the adoption of our new Mission Statement: *"The mission of the Ventura Keys Association is to serve, promote, and protect the community interests of the Ventura Keys through volunteer efforts of its Board and others; to identify and*

evaluate needs, disseminate information, and take appropriate action to support the Ventura Keys neighborhood with the common goal of improving the value of the properties and the quality of life in our community.”

Practically speaking the Association is charged with maintaining the public areas, namely the Big and Little Beaches, interfacing with and advocating Key's matters with the various governmental agencies that affect our collective properties, and generally working to improve home values through appropriate internal and external efforts. The Keys association is also charged with CC&R enforcement. Over the years this has been controversial and the Association has been very relaxed in its efforts on this front.

But what have we done lately?

- We built the first-ever Ventura Keys website. The site is completely supported by advertising revenue and we are adding additional functionality that will allow for online forums, dues paying, and much more. Most importantly it will improve communication and dialog within the Keys community and be an archive of historical information on the Keys.
- Initiation of KeysVision 2006. This is the development of a strategic plan for the Association. This process began with our Mission Statement development and will continue with a survey of Keys residents. This will be available online as well as distributed with this issue of the Keys Breeze.
- We are working with the City to add speed restrictors to Beachmont as well as correcting numerous other traffic problems within the Keys.
- We are working with the County to add a trash screen to the Arundel Barranca.
- We are working with the City to develop a long term plan to finance the dredging of the channel fingers.
- We are working with the City to develop rules governing tree trimming and solutions to the long term problem of untrimmed private trees.
- We are developing plans to revise and refresh the Keys entrances.

We cannot do our job without knowing what is important to the residents. Please take the time to tell us where you would like to see the Association focus, as we work for you, the Keys resident and homeowner. Thank you for helping us “Build Value Through Community”... ---Clif Simonson

HOA BOARD REPORTS;

Stan Friedman, VKA Properties Chairman:

The garden at the Big Beach has been significantly expanded. A new fence now surrounds the flower bed. Additionally, a hedge of flowering bushes has been put around the corner of Seaview and Beachmont, and geraniums have been planted at the foot of the palm trees. The next project is to upgrade the Keys entrance at Peninsula.

Dan Burke, Environmental Chairman:

Ventura County is in the process of replacing the Arundell Barranca because the old water way had aged considerably. The new structure will be wider and it will include landscaping along the embankments. The work is being conducted between Harbor Blvd. and Channel Ave. During construction a considerable amount of sediment has collected at the mouth of the Barranca, and it is beginning to accumulate at the mouth of the Keys. Dan Burke was told by the Harbor Patrol as well as the Environmental Coordinator for

Ventura County that they will be dredging the mouth between August and September. Completion date for this project is December 2006.”

Frank McCallick:

Did you notice that the beaches at Big and Little Beach look a lot spiffier lately? They are cleaner and the sand is smoother and "fluffier." That is due to the efforts of a Keys homeowner Mike Malloy, who donated the use of a tractor and a farm hand to rototill both beaches recently. Mike has been very kind to help us out with our beaches for many years.

HARBOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT/KEYS' TRAFFIC IMPACT UPDATE

By Marc Angell, Government Affairs Chairman

Over the past two Keys' Board meetings, we were fortunate to be visited by a couple of very busy people, both of whom hold the future of the Ventura Keys in their hands. First to join us was Doug Ring, of the Ring Group, a real estate development company based in Marina del Rey. Most of you are probably aware that Doug's company was selected by the city several years ago as the developer of the Ventura Harbor development project at parcels 15 and 16 on Anchor's Way.

The second guest at the subsequent and most recent board meeting was Ventura's new city manager, Rick Cole. Before touching upon some of the issues, which have held the project in limbo for several years, I will say that both of these guys are passionate about what they do, very experienced at what they do and very diplomatic at how they do it.

Several years ago, Doug Ring, after a fact finding mission with the directly affected parties of such a development, i.e. the mobile home park residents, the harbor merchants, Anchor's Way boat yard, the residents along Beachmont Street and many Keys residents in general, worked tirelessly to have all the parties meet somewhere in the middle. Not only was he successful, he also drafted several designs for the project and held a town-hall style meeting so the community could vote on the design to be implemented. This was done four years ago if I'm not mistaken.

Since that time, the faces at City Hall changed hands a couple of times and the previous hand-shake approvals given by certain key City officials to Ring, have since been dishonored. Then along comes a new city manager with his own vision of our city and well, let's just say the stuff hit the fan. The main problem is that the City maintains a series of steps one must take (the proverbial "red-tape") to have any project move from the page to the shovel. Unfortunately for Ring, these steps had not been taken, nor was he asked to take them and therefore his diplomacy, time and money, was all but wasted. I participated in many of these meetings and I'll tell you first hand, there's a few people at City Hall that do not belong, their word means absolutely nothing and their self-serving interests have collided with what's best for the residents of Ventura...but that's another story.

So, like any businessman that is out of pocket nearly a million dollars, Ring filed suit against the City of Ventura. The details have been well documented by the Ventura County Star. We then introduce a new city manager, known for his tough stand on projects that may or may not fit the vision he has for a city. In this situation, the design previously agreed upon by the community, did not meet Rick Cole's vision for Ventura. Obviously, for those of us closely involved in this process, Rick Cole was the outlaw that needed to be driven out of town.

Before deciding to grab our six-guns and saddle up, I thought we should bring these guys before the Board separately and get to the bottom of this mess. Doug presented a diplomatic point of view, not bad for a man that's out of pocket so much money, but at the same time had obviously made uncomfortable compromises that if one more item or issue was placed into his glass, the spillover would send this project straight to trial and Ring packing. He had done his best, he had given it 100%, he had put his money where his mouth is. His is very good at what he does, but he could do no more.

Rick Cole delivered an opposing point-of-view that said, basically, there are protocols to follow and a vision to adhere to. That vision is his. And based on his successful track record of developing such a vision at other cities in Southern California, Rick was equally adamant about the threshold of compromise. As I sat back and listened, the thought occurred to me that it's too bad these guys couldn't have met on this project from day 1. I think all of us at the Board were very impressed with Rick and his points of contention, whether you agreed with him or not, they were well thought out. He's a very bright guy with a very specific vision.

Rick assured us that significant progress has been made between the Ring group and the City. In fact, there's a final draft of the new design, which has been adopted. Unfortunately, Rick and Doug don't speak much any longer, however, Doug's partner Mike Sondermann and Rick have been making significant headway. The city and Ring must now sit before the Coastal Commission for approval, a process that doesn't necessarily take too long if all the proper guidelines have been followed. A round of community input must also take place...who knows, maybe we could see something develop before the years' end.

Notwithstanding one of the largest harbor development projects in the State's recent history, the project neighboring the Keys poses a significant increase in traffic flow through our already busy streets. One of the many compromises Ring made was to install various traffic calming devices on Beachmont Street at his cost. This would include a one-way closure from Beachmont into the harbor and planter style medians on Beachmont. Speed-tables, cross-walks and other traffic mitigation tools have also been discussed for Beachmont and Seaview streets. As Ring says, he's willing to do almost anything it takes to keep his neighbors happy. Since the City has stalled on this project for so long, myself and others have applied pressure on the City to begin these measures independent of the harbor project. A meeting with the City's traffic engineer is on the August calendar to discuss in detail.

As for the lawsuit, on July 28th a Ventura County judge rejected Ring's attempt to block the City's newly adopted general plan. Ring's contention is that the new plan places unfair conditions on what may or may not be built on the harbor property. The judge's ruling is tentative until a decision is made on how an environmental review should proceed. It seems to me these issues should have been decided long ago and certainly before we invite a developer to begin work on a project, with their own money, years before our City has its act together.

We should consider ourselves fortunate to have someone like Doug Ring working on this project. How many other developers would have tolerated such nonsense and be willing to go out of pocket on the City's clock. Let's hope we can say the same of our new city manager, that one day we can look back with pride because of his vision.

Keeping you informed, one problem at a time...

---Marc Angell