



# April 2023 newsletter

## Hybrid

### City Council

Tuesday, April 18, after 5 p.m.  
(tentative)

Village Entrance Median  
Landscaping  
City Council Chambers

## In Person

### April General Meeting

Tuesday, April 25, 7 p.m.  
Susi Q Community Center

## Via Zoom

### May Board Meeting

Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m.

## In Person

### Charm House Tour

Sunday, May 21  
Call 1-949-472-7503  
to volunteer

### Dan Selmi to Tell the Mineral King Story April 25

At our next general meeting, Dan Selmi, the author of the 2022 book *Dawn at Mineral King Valley*, will describe the battle between the Sierra Club and the Disney Corporation that launched a new era in environmental activism in America. The story of this David-vs.-Goliath showdown has special salience for Village Laguna because Arnold Hano's 1969 *New York Times* article was cited by Justice William O. Douglas in his famous dissent to the Supreme Court's decision. Selmi was until recently the Fritz P. Burns Professor of Law at Loyola Law School, the co-author of the casebook *Land Use Regulation* and the two-volume treatise *State Environmental Law*, and co-editor of the six-volume *California Environmental Law and Land Use Practice*. We'll gather to meet him at the Susi Q Center on Tuesday, April 25, at 7 p.m.

### Rules for Blufftop Development Return for a Second Look

The code changes governing development of the coastal bluffs passed to a second reading last

month were then put on hold pending a special meeting to allow the staff to try to dispel what they considered the public's "confusion" about them. In the interim, Village Laguna held a special meeting to talk about the details of the proposal (see [villagelaguna.org](http://villagelaguna.org) for the recording of that meeting). A workshop of some kind on April 4 was anticipated, but what we got was a second "first reading" of the slightly modified ordinance that resulted in additional public comment and a couple of important changes. Village Laguna argued against the blufftop overlay district, opposed the proposed baselines for the calculation of 50% of the existing structure in the definition of a major remodel (preferring the use of the original size of the structure), and urged the retention of the requirements of initial studies for all development in environmentally sensitive areas and design review for all blufftop development. In the end, Bob Whalen said, to general agreement, that any changes to a structure should not result in its getting any closer to the bluff edge than its existing footprint, and it was determined that such language could be added to the ordinance. Finally, Councilmembers were unanimous that an initial study of the ordinance's possible effects on the environment should be conducted before it moves to a second reading.



PO Box 1309  
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

### **2023 Board of Directors**

Anne Caenn, President  
Merrill Anderson, Vice President  
Meg Monahan, Recording Secretary  
Barbara Metzger, Corresponding Secretary  
Mary Ives, Treasurer  
Johanna Felder, Immediate Past President  
Armando Baez  
Janet Bescoby  
Jacob Cherub  
Ann Christoph  
Barbara Dresel  
Darrylin Girvin  
Gary LeFebvre  
Regina Hartley  
Toni Iseman  
Mary Ives  
Mike Phillips  
Kurt Wiese

Phone: (949) 472-7503  
Website: [www.villagelaguna.org](http://www.villagelaguna.org)

### **Reports of Hospital Closure Raise Concern**

VL board members have recently been told by their doctors that the hospital is closing. The laboratory is operating only irregularly. The emergency room may be the next to go, and eventually even the doctors' offices on the hospital campus are to close and most of our doctors will no longer be local.

Our hospital began as a community venture. When a policeman was shot in attempting an arrest and died before he could reach the nearest hospital, Lagunans raised money to help his family and then went on to collect funds for the construction of South Orange County's first hospital in 1959. Since then, the community has raised millions to support and improve it. Past City Councils have vigorously defended keeping the hospital local.

When Village Laguna raised the issue on March 21, Mayor Bob Whalen reported that when he spoke with the hospital administrator recently "he didn't use the word 'closure,' but he did make it clear that the hospital doesn't intend to conduct the earthquake retrofitting.

### **Tree Replacement Issues Return to City Council**

With the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element finally in place, a city arborist hired, and a list of community "tree people" identified for noticing of additions and replacements, one would think that everything would be OK in the tree department, but apparently it's not. Time was when the General Plan governed in City Hall, but these days staff seems to be arbitrarily choosing trees that depart from the recommendations or are outright unsuitable. An appeal of two such choices is scheduled for May 2.