



Established 1971 To preserve and enhance the unique village character of Laguna Beach

February 2025 newsletter

Membership Meeting

Future of Community and School Pool

Wednesday, February 26, 7 p.m.
On Zoom

Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 25, 5 p.m.

Village Laguna Board Meeting

Saturday, March 1, 9 a.m.

Home of Ann Christoph
31632 Wildwood Road

Membership Meeting— Community and School Pool

Will the long-term controversy regarding the swimming pool at the High School be resolved soon? The community has been conflicted about replacement of the existing pool and about the extensive construction for new facilities the District proposed as part of its master plan. Neighbors formed their own group “Sensible Laguna” to object. The School Board considered the plan in many meetings and eventually reduced the size of the proposed pool and eliminated some of the most costly items (like the parking garage) from the plan.

The City doesn’t have permit authority over the District, but they do have a financial interest in the pool which is used for public aquatics programs. The City helped to fund the construction of the existing pool and pays 70% of the operating costs, plus staffing. Last year when the new pool issue came to the Council, the City’s negotiating team seemed to have been rebuffed by the School District and the Council voted to go ahead with its own separate pool.

The controversy spilled over into the November School Board election. New Board members Howard Hills and Sheri Morgan were elected, creating a new Board majority with long time lone voice Dee Perry.

At the recent City strategic plan session the city manager said that it is too expensive for the City to do its own pool because the City would have to provide the required parking. (And the district doesn’t!) He said that staff was in talks with the District in September about renting time at the new pool for \$400,000 annually, less costly than what the City is paying now.

Will the new 45 x 45 meter pool approved by the previous Board go forward? Will there be new options? We will hear from new Board members Hill and Morgan as well as Steve MacIntosh of Sensible Laguna. Tune in on Zoom on Wednesday February 26 at 7 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86526685564?pwd=zI7vPPXMucgjVZ9JCsf94s6cvtOPxF.1>

Meeting ID: 865 2668 5564

Passcode: 800920

City Plans for Our Future

On January 31 the City Council held an all-day planning session reviewing the work of all city departments and upcoming projects.

Spending and income patterns indicate that outgo demands will exceed income in years to come. This is without paying for any significant projects. Assistant city manager Gavin Curran said that a 1% sales tax increase would bring in \$7 million annually, and a 1% bed tax increase \$1.5 million. The city council is planning on a ballot measure in 2026 to ask voters to approve an as yet undetermined tax increase.

Costly efforts that are anticipated are improved fire safety measures, utility undergrounding, take-over of Laguna Canyon Road with maintenance and improvement expenses, the Promenade, the downtown action plan, sewer system upgrades, new fire station #4, new fire station #1 and parking garage at the Village Entrance, affordable housing projects, implementation of the facilities master plan and the playground master plan. More pickleball courts, community pool, and library remodel are also items to be resolved.

Meantime the city manager will be looking for efficiencies to reduce city costs to demonstrate the city's diligence in "lean" operations.

Public works will be reviewing its list of capital projects to confirm the status of amounts budgeted—removing some projects from the list that are no longer needed, and returning some of the funds to be used for more urgent work.

Fire department's extra 3-man crew will allow fire engines to remain in town instead of following ambulances to the hospital.

The police department recommends abandoning the "BeWell" mental health service and also reducing or stopping the homeless shelter in the canyon. They also suggested ordinances to control e-bikes, regulate street vendors and to disallow tobacco sales.

Community development is in the process of a zoning code evaluation. They want to reduce the number of projects that go to Design Review, with more projects being approved by staff and with Administrative Design Review. The propose to change the commercial parking code to require 3 spaces per 1000 sq. ft. of floor space throughout the city

instead of as many as 10 per 1000 sq. ft. presently required for restaurants.

The city manager suggested that the Heritage Committee could be upgraded to a Heritage Commission and that the City's handling of historic resources needs to be strengthened. A consultant is being hired to make recommendations.

Karyn Phillippsen presented Visit Laguna's new emphasis on stewardship instead of tourism marketing. They are abandoning social media promotions and will be emphasizing care for our beaches and natural open spaces.

This will be a busy year ahead with city staff promising multiple items to be coming to City Council in February and March. Many of the proposals outlined above will have far reaching effects, both for cost and potential impact on our village character. Communicate with Council Members, watch the agendas and participate in these decisions.

Board Elections



Outgoing president Anne Caenn, new president Merrill Anderson and Johanna Felder, nominating committee chair, at the Village Laguna meeting of January 27.

Merrill Anderson was elected president, and Armando Baez was elected recording secretary of Village Laguna at our January meeting. Board member Johanna Felder presented outgoing president Anne Caenn with a painting of Diver's Cove by Doug Miller in appreciation for her four years of dedicated service to our organization.

Council Member Hallie Jones enthusiastically spoke of her lifelong love for Laguna and how she hopes to help keep its unique qualities in her work on the Council.

Battalion Chief Andrew Hill raised our interest in the Seagrave fire engine restoration and encouraged our donations at lbffa.org. Merrill Anderson presented Village Laguna's donation.

Forest Avenue Promenade



On February 4 the City Council held a meeting to review another plan for the Promenade on lower Forest Avenue. Following previous design submittals that were rejected, Council Members Mark Orgill and Sue Kempf organized a series of working groups to develop a more acceptable design. However, only complete closure of the street was considered in the designs. Village Laguna urged the Council to consider other options such as:

- parking on the south side and dining on the north side
- a flexible scheme that provides for a closed street during certain hours and for special occasions.
- restoring the street to its previous usage and providing beautification enhancements.


Complete designs for these options should be prepared similar to the presentation provided on the complete closure along with a credible price tag of each option. Those costs should be evaluated considering the City’s budget challenges and other higher priorities, especially fire safety.

Many members of the public testified in favor of the plan. Clearly the Council did not agree with looking at alternatives and is proceeding full steam ahead with the proposed full-closure plan. It will be on the Planning Commission’s agenda soon.



50th Laguna Charm House Tour this year

The tour is the Sunday after Mother’s Day, May 18. Now’s the time to start planning and bringing your ideas for our best tour ever! Please contact Anne Caenn, (714) 501-1816. Many volunteer positions available!



SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025
\$70 Presale
\$80 Day of Tour

LAGUNA CHARM HOUSE TOUR

Enjoy an afternoon in Laguna. Experience a taste of the heritage of Laguna Beach as you tour houses in neighborhoods dating from homestead days in the 1800s. Visit cottages and bungalows, working artists' homes and studios. Experience the rustic canyon environments and see how creative residents have crafted their home settings to reflect their own unique talents and interests.


STARTING POINT:
 In front of the Festival of the Arts grounds, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach.
 Buses will leave continuously from 12:00 noon. Last bus departs at 3:00 pm. All day parking is available for \$4 at the lot directly across Laguna Canyon Road from the Tour Bus pick up at the Festival of Arts Grounds.
 For more information about the tour call (949) 472-7503 or go to www.villagelaguna.org/charm-house-tour

Tickets may be purchased:

- by sending a request and check to
 Village Laguna Charm House Tour
 Post Office Box 1309
 Laguna Beach, CA 92652, or
- from any of the outlets listed here, or
- online at www.villagelaguna.org

Tickets available at:

- Cottage Furnishings 497-3121
- 802 S. Coast Hwy.
- Fawn Memories 494-2071
- 384 Forest Ave.
- Laguna Nursery 494-5200
- 481 N. Coast Hwy.



We regret that the tour cannot accommodate children under 12. Uneven surfaces and steps may preclude participation by persons with mobility challenges. March 3, 2024

2025 Officers

- Merrill Anderson, president
- Anne Caenn, past-president
- Joy Berry, vice-president
- Armando Baez, recording secretary
- Johanna Felder, corresponding secretary
- Merrill Anderson, interim treasurer

Board Members:

- Margaret Brown
- Jacob Cherub
- Ann Christoph
- Darrylin Girvin
- Regina Hartley
- Toni Iseman
- Amy Jackson
- Caren Liuzzi
- Mike Morris

Phone: (949) 472-7503

Website: www.villagelaguna.org



PO Box 1309
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Time to renew your membership

Support Village Laguna—2025

Village Laguna is committed to: preserving and enhancing the unique village character of Laguna Beach fostering community spirit, addressing social needs, and restoring and protecting our ocean and coastal habitats...

What does it take to be effective in achieving these goals? Your participation and dedication!

Please join, donate funds, and get involved. If you love this town as much as we do – we need you! It's time to join for 2025—for Laguna forever!



If the date on your mailing label is 2026 you are paid up. Thank you! If it's 2025 or earlier please renew at VillageLaguna.org or by mail

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ **Email** _____

(please send me my newsletter by regular mail ___ by e-mail ___)

I have enclosed my check for the following membership. I understand the amount is not tax-deductible.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer \$250/family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic \$40/individual, \$60 family | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservationist \$500/family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$150/family | <input type="checkbox"/> Villager Extraordinaire (\$1,000+) |

To satisfy campaign reporting regulations for contributions of \$100 or more, I am supplying the name of my employer (or specifying that I am retired): _____

Mail to: Village Laguna PO BOX 1309 Laguna Beach, CA 92652