



THE Riviera Association

October 2024

www.rivieraassociation.org

P.O. Box 4235 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-4235

Letter From the Board

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and positive spirits. It's hard to believe summer is already behind us, but I'm looking forward to a fun and productive fall season, including several association events.

First, it is with mixed emotions that I announce the departure of two of our board members, Janis Clapoff and Richard Page, who are leaving the board to pursue other opportunities and interests. Each has made significant contributions to the association and our community during their time on the board, and we thank them for their years of service. Janis, who in her role as GM has driven tremendous growth and innovation at the El Encanto Hotel, is moving to Los Angeles to become CEO of the prestigious California

Club. We hope Janis will decide to return to Santa Barbara one day soon. Richard and his wife Joan recently made their way back to Santa Barbara and the Riviera, where they began their marriage fifty years ago, retiring from successful careers in entertainment and hospitality. Richard is leaving the board after having served his full term. We are sad to see Janis and Richard go but wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Upcoming Association Events

Fall General Meeting Sunday, October 13, 4–6:30 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you at our fall meeting for association members at Riviera Ridge School. For those of you who are not familiar, our semi-annual meetings begin with a happy

hour, including wine and gourmet appetizers (all included in the annual membership fee), and the opportunity to mingle with neighbors and meet new friends. The second half of each meeting is devoted to keynote presentations on topics of interest to Riviera residents. At the fall meeting, we welcome new City Administrator Kelly McAdoo, who moved to Santa Barbara earlier this year from the Bay Area, where she had served as city manager and CEO at the City of Hayward since 2016. Kelly will give us an overview of her role and provide an update on key city developments, challenges, and issues. She will answer your questions, time permitting, immediately following her presentation or at the end of the meeting.

The fall meeting will also feature a drawing for door prizes and—new at this meeting—the opportunity to participate in a silent auction for one of two, overnight “staycations” at a local high-end hotel.

If you haven't yet registered as an association member or renewed your membership for the coming year, you can do so at rivieraassociation.org/join-now or when you check in at the event. We hope to see you there!

Franceschi Park Clean-up Day Saturday, October 26, 9 a.m.–Noon

This volunteer clean-up day has been organized in *Continued on page 3*

Riviera Association Fall General Meeting

Sunday, October 13, 4–6:30 p.m.

Riviera Ridge Campus, 2130 Mission Ridge Road
Shuttle service to/from Mission Ridge & Tremonto parking lots

Keynote Speaker: Kelly McAdoo, Santa Barbara City Administrator

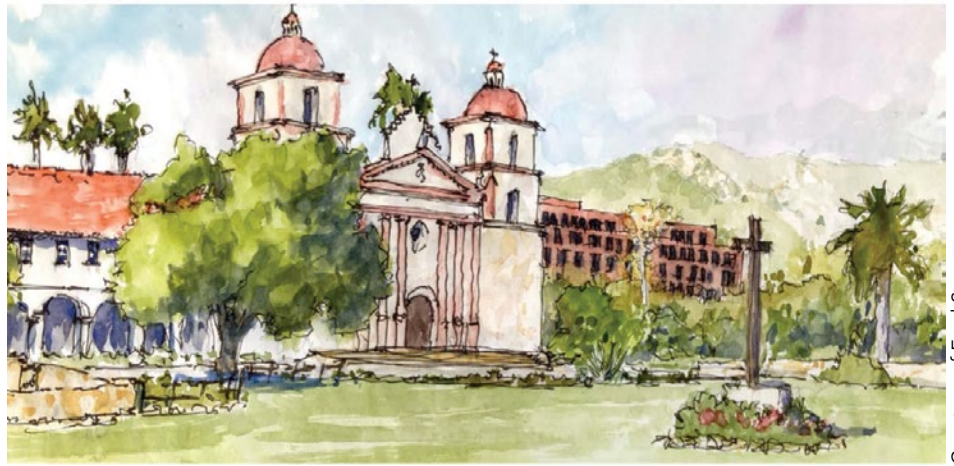
Enjoy local wines and gourmet appetizers catered by Via Maestra. There will be a chance to win a gift certificate for *High Tea for Two* at the El Encanto Hotel. Plus, the opportunity to participate in a silent auction for an overnight stay at the Ritz-Carlton Bacara Resort or the Ojai Valley Inn.

Builder's Remedy Projects—Your Input Needed!

How would you feel if a large, multi-story apartment complex landed in your neighborhood, despite it being out of compliance with City zoning ordinances and land use regulations? That could become the unfortunate reality in two beautiful and historic Riviera neighborhoods, unless we as a community take collective action to try to stop it.

As you may know, out-of-town developers have proposed to build two, multi-story apartment buildings at sites on the Riviera. The two properties in question are at 1609 Grand Avenue and 505 E. Los Olivos Street, the latter most recently being the site of the Mt. Calvary Monastery. The developers' applications are subject to Builder's Remedy provisions, meaning they can be fast-tracked through the approval process and maybe even bypass some local building standards. Josh Molina's August 2024 podcast, available on our website at rivieraassociation.org/blog-listing, and Ryan Cruz's January 2024 *Santa Barbara Independent* article at shorturl.at/mbGGH, gave some good insights on the Builder's Remedy and the two projects involved.

We've included drawings from the developers' preliminary applications for both projects, which were available to us prior to our print deadline. Those applications have since been updated, likely with new drawings, which we encourage you to



Courtesy of Fred Sweeney

Watercolor rendering of the proposed 505 E. Los Olivos Street project from in front of the Old Mission. Based on the developer's preliminary application information.

review. (You can hopefully find them by searching the City's websites.)

The association board firmly believes that these projects would adversely impact the character and charm of our Riviera neighborhoods. A large majority of the units proposed for both of these projects would be offered at market rate; a relatively small percentage would be designated as affordable to low income families. While we agree that the City desperately needs more workforce housing, we believe these sites are not conducive to such large-scale structures, nor would they serve their purported purpose. They would be grossly incompatible with homes and other buildings in those Riviera neighborhoods, they would significantly increase evacuation risks in the event of a wildfire or other emergency, and the increase in traffic would overwhelm

our narrow, winding Riviera streets.

If you agree with the board's assessment, we encourage you to **make your opinions known** as soon as possible to members of the Santa Barbara Planning Commission and City Council. Once the developers' applications are considered complete, the City will have the opportunity to review both projects based on their compliance with local development standards and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). So, **your opinion matters!** You may also encourage the City to litigate this on behalf of the community, should it become necessary. We have an opportunity to preserve the character and historic charm of our community, but only if we take the time to speak up on behalf of our neighbors and loudly voice our opinions to City leaders.

Following is info on how to reach your city representatives:

Mayor & City Council Members

Email: Send to Holly Perea at HPerea@SantaBarbaraCA.gov and request that your email be distributed to all council members.

Mail a Letter: Mayor & City Council, P.O. Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990.



East elevation of the proposed 505 E. Los Olivos Street development, viewed roughly from Rocky Nook Park. Based on drawing in developer's preliminary application.



Rendering of the west elevation of the proposed 1609 Grand Avenue project, from the developer's preliminary application.

Planning Commissioners

Email: Address the email, "Dear Chair Baucke and Planning

Commissioners" and send a single email to PCsecretary@santabarbaraca.gov.

Mail a Letter:

Community Development PC Secretary, P.O. Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the association

via the form at: rivieraassociation.org/contact-us. —Jeff Byrne

Your Riviera Association at Work

The association works to educate and share information with members on developments and issues affecting our community, and provides opportunities for you to meet and mingle with neighbors and friends at our semi-annual member meetings. We also organize Riviera service events where members can give back to the community.

One of the association board's most important but perhaps lesser known roles is to stay abreast of city developments and stand up for Riviera interests at the Santa Barbara City Council and with other government bodies. This enables the association to bring residents together and create a collective voice that more effectively addresses the concerns and aspirations of our community.

Here is a sampling of the association's recent success stories:

- Gained commitments from Santa Barbara City Council and City Fire for increased fire mitigation resources to protect the Riviera, which were formalized in the updated Community

Wildfire Protection Plan

- Disseminated information to members on opportunities to reduce wildfire risks, through steps such as home hardening and the formation of Firewise Communities
- Along with Councilmember Sneddon, persuaded city leadership to block deployment of SB 9 (unregulated lot splits and duplexes) on the Riviera, due to significant wildfire and evacuation risks
- Organized and moderated a City Council District 4 candidates forum for members
- Worked with Santa Barbara Parks & Rec to organize a Franceschi Park clean-up day and coordinate member updates on the Reimagining Franceschi House project.

Join Us

We encourage you to join us—we become stronger with your participation! Visit rivieraassociation.org/join-now to sign up or renew your membership today.

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Letter From the Board, cont.

cooperation with the Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation Department. To ensure you have the energy for this fun group activity, the morning will begin with bagels, doughnuts, coffee, and tea provided by the association. Participants need to bring gloves and wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes. Santa Barbara Parks & Rec will provide a variety of tools, but you're encouraged to bring a hand tool, such as clippers, if it's convenient. We will meet in the Franceschi Park parking lot, and volunteers will need to sign a waiver to participate. Please indicate your interest in attending by following the instructions in the event description at rivieraassociation.org/happenings. We will also have signups for the event at the fall meeting.

Geology Walk Saturday, November 16, 10 a.m.–Noon

Ever wonder how the Riviera formed, or where the faults are? Join Professor of Environmental Geology Kristen Sneddon for the Riviera Association's fourth geology walk, this time at Skofield Park. We will meet in the parking lot. Sign-ups for this always popular event, including a liability waiver form, will be at the fall general meeting. —Jeff Byrne

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 This newsletter is printed on recycled paper and is recyclable.

Thomas M. Storke, Santa Barbara Riviera Pioneer



Thomas M. Storke

Thomas M. Storke (T.M.) was one of the earliest, non-indigenous residents of the Santa Barbara hillside that became the Riviera, when he was born in 1876 in a home along an unpaved buggy road, which is today Grand Avenue. His father had purchased 123 acres of the barren hillside a few years earlier at \$1.25 an acre (equivalent to \$154/acre in today's dollars), in a transaction that became known as "Storke's Folly."

Local citizens at the time could not understand why anyone would want to live on a rugged, largely treeless hillside covered with boulders.

T.M. was a descendant on his mother's side of Jose Francisco Ortega, a former commandant of the Royal Presidio of Santa Barbara; and on his father's side from early settlers of colonial Virginia.

Storke's father

Charles, a Civil War veteran, came to Santa Barbara in 1872 to teach at the recently founded Santa Barbara College, and he later became a lawyer and influential citizen, serving two terms in the California State Legislature.

T.M.'s mother was fluent in Spanish, and he grew up bilingual. Young T.M. attended public schools in Santa Barbara, and with the help of his father, was admitted to the recently founded Stanford University in 1894. There, T.M. got to know Herbert Hoover and other classmates with whom he developed lifelong relationships, including a number who later went on to distinguished careers.

Following graduation, Storke returned to Santa Barbara, and took on various odd jobs, including tutoring, and managing a sheep ranch. He became a cub reporter of the *Santa Barbara Daily News* and eventually a part owner of the struggling *Santa Barbara Daily Independent*. He started his journalistic career at the tender age of twenty-four on the first day of the first week of the new century, 1900.



T.M. Storke was assisted in researching and correlating his eighty-two-year coverage of California history (called *California Editor*) by Walker A. Tompkins, a well-known Southern California author and student of early Santa Barbara County history.

In 1910, Storke sold his stake in the newspaper to a Michigan publisher to pursue a job in the fledgling oil business near Bakersfield, in what he would later refer to as the only serious mistake in his journalistic career. That oil venture eventually failed, and in 1913 Storke returned to Santa Barbara and purchased the *Daily News*, which ultimately became the *Santa Barbara News-Press*. Storke served as the owner and editor of the paper for more than fifty years, and won many journalistic awards along the way. He also took on the role of Santa Barbara postmaster to supplement his income, and during the outbreak of WWI, he became deputy director of the draft board.

Following the 1925 Santa Barbara earthquake, which destroyed many structures in the city, Storke was one of several influential city leaders calling for new earthquake-proof construction that followed a Spanish Colonial design. The City Council approved the El Pueblo Viejo architectural standard that became a defining feature of the city.

As we'll see when we continue

this account of Thomas M. Storke's storied life, this local icon stands out as a pioneer who was involved in nearly every aspect of life here, from education to the environment, the economy to politics, and many more. And notably, his influence extended far beyond the boundaries of our city. Stay tuned—you'll learn the rest of the story of Storke's life in the spring edition of this newsletter.

—Paul Gertler