



## Mar Vista Community Council



Thursday, October 15, 2015 at 6:00 PM

**Revised Location**

**Vintage Grandview, 4061 Grandview Blvd, LA 90066**

**Activity Room – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

Co-Chairs – Sherri Akers, Tatjana Luethi, Birgitta Kastenbaum

Co-Founders – Sherri Akers, Tatjana Luethi

### Minutes

**Attendees – Virve Leps, Cindy Rabson, Susan Klein, Susan Black-Feinstein, Mike/Michelle Dennis, Robin Dennis, Allison Beale, Lori Gilder, Charles Guinn, Hosneya Khattab, Leanne Lindsey, Rachel Caraviello, Paola Cervantes, Sherri Akers, Birgitta Kastenbaum, Tatjana Luethi, Abigail Benitez**

- **Called to order : 6:07pm**
- **Public comments**

Allison Beale: November 28<sup>th</sup>, Make It Mar Vista – part of Big Saturday, get the small local businesses to get back into the mix <http://marvistachamber.com/make-it-mar-vista/>  
Mar Vista Fall Festival on Saturday will have a mini Aging in Place festival within the festival - <http://marvistafallfestival.blogspot.com/search/label/Aging>  
Sherri Mohammed Hassan and Seniors Helping Seniors has secured the license for Cycling Without Age <http://cyclingwithoutage.org/>
- **September minutes** – unanimously approved
- **New business** –
- 1. **Special guest presentation** – Birgitta Kastenbaum of [Bridging Transitions](#) - Exploring options for final arrangements and after death care. Join us so you can feel good about making your plans.
  - How can I make it easier for those I leave behind?
  - What can I do now so I don't have to worry later?
  - What is new in the funeral industry?
  - How are we as a country changing how we care for our loved ones?
  - Who should decide and who should pay?
  - Receive information, ask questions, know your rights, discuss pro's and con's.
  - You either have a plan or you have a panic!

It's important to collect important personal data that are necessary for death certificate. Make sure to have these conversation. Birgitta provided a handout of what to get answered.

“Why” you would want to make those arrangements. Grief is hard enough. Adding anything to it, it becomes a big mountain to climb during that phase. Spending a little time now to plan now is a gift for your family and a peace of mind for you. It’s good to figure out what’s important to you and make those plans.

A quick word about the history of the funeral industry in the USA:

Used to be home funerals. It shifted because of the civil war, a lot of young man lost their lives in battle and were on uncommon ground. You were buried at home or church, but to be buried away from your kin was not normal. Challenge of all the dead bodies from war inspired embalming. The funeral train procession after Lincoln was assassinated made embalming for longer viewing seem like a way to honor our dead. A new paradigm emerged and a new profession developed in the funeral industry - now we had “experts”. Suddenly home funerals were deemed less respectful.

So today, Birgitta often asks her clients about their wishes of how and what would you like? What is important to you, based on your values, and beliefs, and religion? We are redefining who we are which means we are also redefining how we might do “end of life decisions” differently, take back autonomy and make your own choice.

**Discussion re options:**

Conventional Cremation

Cremation without fire - <http://www.startribune.com/cremations-go-green-by-forgoing-the-flames/162436556/>

Conventional Burial with embalming and casket

Burial without embalming – offered in most cemeteries

Green Burial - <http://greenburialcouncil.org/>

Burial to become a tree - <http://www.earthporm.com/bye-bye-coffins-these-organic-burial-pods-turn-your-loved-ones-into-trees/>

- Considerations – cost, religious concerns, opportunity for family visits, environmental
- If the body is embalmed, you have to put a cement or steel liner in the container, then the casket around it to prevent the formaldehyde to leach into our drinking water.
- It’s the real estate today that’s causing the high costs. The average cost for a burial is quoted as \$7,000 but tends to run much higher here
- Organ Donations: If you donate your organs / body you don’t have to pay for your cremation or burial. But you have to make backup plans in case they deny your body for whatever reasons.
- Obituary – Scammers are using them to target seniors
- Birgitta recommends <http://www.deathcaredirective.com/> (\$10 booklet) as a good tool for people to put together their wishes, how and what they would like to happen with their body and what they would like to happen during the funeral, or event (however, whatever you choose for your family). Also <http://getyourshittogether.org/> for worksheets and reminders to get paperwork together.
- Discussion about home funerals and celebratory approach - celebrating the person by decorating the plywood box during the “celebration” (the body is not in this box). This can be done prior to the person passing, or after. Birgitta: a wonderful way for people to go through the process and express their grief, or emotions. It’s a shared activity. Sit down together and share stories.
- Discussion about “electronic funerals” (videos, photos) for those who choose not to have a physical location for the body or where loved ones are widespread.
- Discussion about importance of a living trust, and states what you want to do with your property to avoid family member stress after your death.

2. **Motion approved supporting** Councilmember Mike Bonin’s motion to create a new ordinance addressing short term rentals ([Council File 14-1635-S2](#)) We believe that short term rentals will be a key component in our fight to help seniors stay in their home as they age and urge that we protect the right of individual community members to host short term rentals in their primary residence. Motion approved with friendly amendment (see ***bold italics***) – 15 yes, 1 abstained.



The Mar Vista Community Council supports the motion by Councilmember Mike Bonin to create a new ordinance addressing short term rentals - Council File 14-1635-S2 ([http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2014/14-1635-S2\\_mot\\_06-02-2015.pdf](http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2014/14-1635-S2_mot_06-02-2015.pdf) )

Whereas seniors are currently 10% of the Air BnB hosts, with 56% of those being retired and 25% being empty nesters, with 49% doing this for financial reasons. (<http://blog.airbnb.com/celebrating-airbnbs-60-host-community/>).

Whereas the following statistics project that our senior community will face significant financial challenges for aging in place:

- About 22% of Americans 65 years and older are in danger of becoming elder orphans - single or widowed; they have no children, at least in the area, and no support system. Based on 2012 U.S. Census data, about one third of Americans age 45 to 63 are single, and in a position to become orphans as they age.
- People age 65 and older now make up 13 percent of the total population and will jump to 16% by 2020 and 19% by 2030
- 33% of Boomers have put aside less than \$50,000 for retirement
- Baby Boomers have saved an average of \$262,541, about a third of the \$805,398 they predict they’ll need at retirement.
- Among the first wave of baby boomers to hit retirement age, more than half (54 percent) quit working before they planned. A majority of those polled say it was job loss or health-related issues.
- The average annual cost of a nursing home is \$91,000 per year
- Home caregiver 24/7 costs are \$125 a day and up and will further increase with the Dept. of Labor decision that home caregivers must be paid at least minimum wage and overtime.
- Assisted Living facilities average \$3,351 per month for a one bedroom but are as high as \$12,000 with costs increasing as the level of care increases.
- Short term rentals are often the only viable means for seniors to bring in extra income to cover their increased cost of living expenses due to the need for additional services as seniors age in place and maintain independence.
- 80% of women live longer than their spouses, often by many years, on average 14. Widowhood creates economic hardship as Social Security benefits and pensions plans benefits have a reduced pay out after a spouse dies.

The Mar Vista Community Council believes that short term rentals will be a key component in our fight to help seniors stay in their home as they age. ~~Therefore, the MVCC urges the LA City Council to authorize a host to rent all or part of their primary residence to short-term visitors, permitting someone to rent a spare room, a back house, or even their own home while they are out of town, as proposed by Councilmember Mike Bonin.~~ **Therefore, as proposed by Councilmember Mike Bonin, the MVCC urges the LA City Council to authorize a host to rent all or part of their primary residence to short-term visitors, permitting someone to rent a spare room, or a back house. This would include renting their whole house while they are out of town.**

- **Old Business updates**

- a. **Update on \$1,500 Neighborhood Purposes Grant for Westchester Playa Village** - approved by the Board and WPV has received the check.
- b. **The Right to Die Act is being reintroduced to State Assembly** – ABX 215 was approved and signed by Governor Brown and will become law.
- c. **Senior Friendly Stores campaign** – No update
- d. **Senior couples in a home who can “delegate” - creating “senior Au-pair”** – No update
- e. **Future guest presentations**
  - **November 19<sup>th</sup>** - Frances Sotcher of Unity Hearth on intentional living communities (unconfirmed)
  - **December 17<sup>th</sup> (tbc)** - Sheila Moore, Sr. Director of Comprehensive Older Adult Services Jewish Family Services – "How to make the most of your trip back home" - what to look for to determine if your parents/grandparents need additional help, how to start difficult discussions, how to use this trip home to gather info you might need in an emergency/health crisis;
  - **January** – Allison Bealle - on how to hire a caregiver, adult day care program and support organization
  - **February** - Lilly Ortiz of LA Metro will present on their [On the Move Riders Club](#) (available for Dec if that doesn't confirm).
  - **March** – Monica Moore of [UCLA Easton Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research](#)

- **Meeting adjourned 7:35**

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*\*in compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the board in advance of a meeting, may be viewed at <http://www.marvista.org> or at the scheduled meeting. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please contact [secretary@marvista.org](mailto:secretary@marvista.org).*

*\*\*As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or any auxiliary aids and/or services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request at least 3 business days prior to the meeting you wish to attend by contacting [chair@marvista.org](mailto:chair@marvista.org)*