



Outreach Committee Report

Prepared for: The Mar Vista Community Council, Board of Directors

Prepared by: Kathryn Wheeler, Chair

September 24, 2020

Note: On March 13, 2020, the MVCC received official notice to stop operations. Through the leadership of the MVCC Chair, Elliot Hanna, the MVCC was the first Neighborhood Council to hold remote meetings, it was the [April 14, 2020, Board of Directors' meeting](#).

MISSION STATEMENT

To create and disseminate content through traditional, social, and electronic media that educates and informs Mar Vista stakeholders of the Mar Vista Community Council; including, but not limited to, increasing awareness of and participation in its functions, duties, and decisions.

OVERVIEW

Kathryn Wheeler was reappointed as Outreach Chair on July 14, 2020 and wishes to thank the MVCC Chair, Elliot Hanna, for reappointment and the Board for its approval. Ms. Wheeler is grateful, appreciates the confidence, and looks forward to another productive year.

The Committee has come a long way since Ms. Wheeler was first appointed on July 9, 2019. The 2019-2020 Fiscal Year ended with all known MVCC assets in compliance with Best Practices for media accounts while her first term began with none in compliance. Also, a newsletter was printed and distributed to the community (the first in 18 months, after months of Board delays). It was successful and warmly received by Stakeholders. Updating the website began with Board and Stakeholder support for design and implementation. For a full listing of actions, please review the [June 18, 2020 Outreach Report](#).

The MVCC begins the new Fiscal Year still under the *Safer at Home Order for Control of COVID-19* (now named, *Safer L.A.*) with no timeline as to its end. In June of 2021, the MVCC will hold its election and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) has approved a mail-in only election. It should also be noted that DONE has down-sized to a skeleton staff with more cuts on the horizon. Many who assisted Outreach are gone and the response rate to inquires has been understandably diminished.

The challenges ahead involve situations (e.g., COVID, ~25% budget cuts, mail-in only election) which have never existed. Out-of-the-box thinking will be needed as well as relying on tried and true outreach (e.g., print media) to ensure that the community remains engaged with the

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MVCC. Of course, this will entail experimenting, which always comes with some failure. However, with the support of Stakeholders and the Board, we will learn from our mistakes. All of us can consider this a time of great enterprise—each of us can look forward to the upcoming year.

AVAILABLE ASSETS

Informing Mar Vista stakeholders of the MVCC message is the fundamental purpose of the MVCC. And the Outreach Committee, as with any good marketing company, needs its available assets coordinated and functioning as one with the minor tailoring (e.g., size, timing, material) necessary to achieve the highest benefit from each asset.

Due to the confines of being a City organization, many of the assets must continue to function on a sub par marketing level. Yet, Outreach continues to make strides in compensating for such City restrictions.

There have been asset changes since the last report. SurveyMonkey has been added and YouTube has been removed. YouTube will no longer be listed due to the inability to find or discover the login credentials. Prior Outreach Chairs as well as Board members and other committee chairs have been contacted to no avail. The account was opened on June 2, 2010 with an email address using the old domain name (i.e., MarVistaCC.org) instead of the current domain name (i.e., MarVista.org). A total of 25 videos were uploaded with the last being on April 21, 2011. There has been no activity since and the account has 8 subscribers.

For this coming year, it is hoped that all Committees will take advantage of MVCC assets by submitting copy regarding the activities of their committee for posting; Stakeholders really do want to know what the MVCC is doing, and outreach is a mandate for all Neighborhood Councils—it is why the Neighborhood Council System was created.

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Facebook

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Farmers' Market Blue Tent

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Gmail

This asset continues to grow in usage and interest by committees. In addition to the PLUM committee using Google Drive, the Homeless Issues Subcommittee is using Google Sheets to provide a public record of the Mar Vista encampments (see tiny.cc/mvccencampmentcount). They are also in the process of adding additional Sheets while other committees are looking for ways to utilize this asset to provide information to Stakeholders.

Instagram

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

MailChimp

As noted in previous reports, a higher-than-normal MailChimp subscription and involvement rate has been created by MVCC postings limited to weekly and promotions detailing only *MVCC and MVCC-sponsored events*.

Subscribes received a major jump during the period of distributing door hangers for the *Outreach Community Plan Survey* (MarVista.org/survey).

The beginning of September saw the release of MailChimp's new Dashboard with updated and new features. Some will be available to the MVCC and some will not as features are based on the purchased subscription and many are written with e-commerce in mind. One feature, Creative Assistant, is not available to the MVCC due to MarVista.org being written in PHP instead of HTML. Hopefully, in time, MailChimp will release a version that can be used with the MVCC website.

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- WEEKLY ROUNDUP

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Next Door

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

SurveyMonkey

In the June Report, it was noted that:

Shawna, from the NC Funding Office, informed the MVCC that purchasing a service (such as SurveyMonkey) for a year is NOT the same as the MVCC entering into an annual contract. Therefore, Shawna suggested that the MVCC purchase a year of SurveyMonkey in July when the new fiscal year begins. It is hoped that the Board will approve such a purchase as it is a valuable tool in obtaining input from Stakeholders.

Indeed, the Board on July 14, 2020 approved an upgrade from a monthly subscription (ending in July) to an annual subscription until July 17, 2021. It was an invaluable tool for the *Outreach Community Plan Survey* (MarVista.org/survey) that was published on September 8, 2020.

The Outreach Committee will continue to work with the MVCC in utilizing this excellent asset.

Twitter

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Website

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Zoom

MVCC has been a leader in the use of Zoom for online meetings. Yet, since the *June 18, 2020 Report*, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) made changes to all Neighborhood Council Zoom accounts without any notification.

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These changes caused a disruption to a few MVCC meetings until the issue was discovered. After which, adjustments were made in procedures to mitigate any further disruption.

In addition, all changes are “Locked by Admin” (i.e., DONE) and cannot be changed by the individual Neighborhood Councils. The Outreach Chair continues to reach out to DONE for an explanation regarding this autocratic action since the Zoom Account Settings were (and continue to be) labeled as “Recommendations”. Once calls are returned, it is hoped there will be a removal of said “locks”.

PROJECTS

A brief outline of what the Outreach Committee has been doing and/or is in the process of completing. This list is not exhaustive and is from the time period between reports.

Advertising

– BOILERPLATE ADS

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

– BUS BENCHES

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

– DOOR HANGERS

Door hangers continue to be utilized as described in the *June 18, 2020 Report*. In addition, door hangers were used to complete the *Outreach Community Plan Survey* (tiny.cc/mvccsurvey). During this report period, Zone 7 was adopted into the MVCC Bylaws and a new Zone 7 Director position was created as well as another At-Large Director position.

After the first week or so of announcing the new positions, the MVCC Chair had received only one application and it was for the At-Large vacancy. Therefore, the original distribution order of survey door hangers was altered to provide the bulk of Zone 7’s door hangers first. This caused

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an enormous influx of applicants for the Zone 7 and At-Large vacancies as reported by the MVCC Chair, Elliot Hanna.

Additionally, the distribution of the survey's 5,100 door hangers to all Zones created an uptick in subscribers as well as Stakeholders attending meetings and becoming involved.

- MVCC SEAL/LOGO

Status unchanged since June 18, 2020 Report.

- NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS - NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING

The Westside Village Homeowners Association (<https://www.westsidevillage.org/>) in Zone 1 accepted a request from the MVCC to advertise in their newsletter. The Board approved the expenditure and the ad was sent. As of this report, the newsletter has not been disrupted nor released (<https://www.westsidevillage.org/newsletters>).

Outreach Community Plan Survey

In the March report, it was noted that:

The Board approved a joint project with the Community Plan Sub-committee at the February meeting (Item 14.2).

Both the Community Plan and Outreach Committees were actively moving forward and about to implement the survey when the Safer L.A. was announced in March.

In April, it was apparent that Safer L.A. was going to be much longer than the original 2 to 4 weeks proposed; Chairs of both committees discussed dropping the survey. They agreed that the information from the survey was too important to the Mar Vista Community to drop and a way to safely conduct the survey needed to be invented and implemented.

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The *Outreach Community Plan Survey* was completed and published on September 8, 2020. You may read the full report that includes Background and Methodology by using the URL tiny.cc/mvccsurvey or visiting MarVista.org/survey.

Event Mobility Cart

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

MVCC Newsletter

In the June Report, it was noted that:

Hopefully, a follow-up to the successful Winter Edition will be forthcoming. Newsletters will become more important as Stakeholders cannot meet with the MVCC in person.

On July 23, 2020, over a dozen Stakeholders attended a Supplemental Outreach meeting to discuss a Fall newsletter. Without objection, both the Funding and Administrative motions were passed. The following was noted in that meeting's minutes (<https://www.marvista.org/docs/34486177-11124.pdf>):

The consensus was to create a newsletter that focused on what MVCC committees have done, are doing, and how they can assist/facilitate Stakeholders (especially during COVID) as well as resources. Also, include a follow-up article to the previous main article regarding the importance of NCs; but, replacing NCs with Stakeholders. The newsletter would coalesce around the new website that will have easier navigation and user-friendly tools.

The funding motion was sent to the Executive & Finance Committee where some members were concerned that spending money on a printed newsletter would provide an unfavorable "appearance". However, members were reminded: a) the MVCC has a "mandate" to provide outreach; b) Stakeholders at the Outreach Committee voted to spend the money; c) the prior newsletter was very successful; d) and with COVID, the newsletter would provide information regarding resources. Therefore, it should be approved.

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The opposing members stated their opposition was not “personal” and “hoped” the motion would return at a later date. The Outreach Chair assured them that it wasn’t a personal problem, but a problem of MVCC not providing outreach to Stakeholders. Also, if brought back later, it would not be a Fall newsletter (as Stakeholders requested), but a Christmas one.

A Christmas newsletter seemed to satisfy the opposing members, it was apparent they had forgotten that Stakeholders wanted a Fall newsletter and not a Christmas one. And, that a Christmas newsletter would be fraught with issues; including, but not limited to: manpower, scheduling, content, and readership availability. Members were also reminded that by not passing it now, any substantive newsletter would be “killed” until Fall of 2021 as the Spring newsletter would have to be dedicated to the upcoming election and, as such, would be restricted to a small and predetermined content.

The opposing members were not swayed and voted against the will of the Stakeholders and expertise. The vote was 2 Yeas (Hruska, Tilson), 3 Nays (Shure, Stemar, Hanna), and no abstentions. Since it failed to pass, it could not be advanced to the full Board of Directors.

While a Directors’ motion was considered, a Summer newsletter failed at the March 10, 2020 Board meeting by a wide margin [2 Yeas (Watkins, Wheeler); 8 Nays (Hill, Hruska, Kadota, Krupkin, Rubin, Shure, Stemar, Tilson); 1 Abstention (Hanna); 2 Absents (Ambriz, Inouye)], and with 3 out of the 5 members opposed, it certainly would not pass the full Board. It is important to note that opposing Board members at the March meeting encouraged the Outreach Chair to bring back the motion at a later date for a “Fall newsletter”.

The myopic and political view (held by the majority of Board members) regarding spending resources for Stakeholder outreach is unconscionable!

The Los Angeles City Charter (Section 900) begins with the Purpose of Neighborhood Councils:

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To promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs...

How can this purpose be fulfilled without communication to Stakeholders (i.e., outreach)?

During the February 11, 2020 Board of Directors meetings, it was clearly shown that a newsletter will reach Stakeholders by a factor of more than 15-fold compared to any other means available to the MVCC.

Yet, with this information and after the success of a Winter newsletter, the Board delayed a Summer newsletter until Fall, and the Fall newsletter until Fall next year—for what purpose?

Outreach eMail

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Outreach Table at the Board of Directors' Meetings

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Remote Meetings

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

Storage Unit

Status unchanged since *June 18, 2020 Report*.

MOVING FORWARD

In the June Report, it was noted that:

...providing funds to any of those organizations is neither within the purview of the MVCC nor in the LA City Charter for Neighborhood Councils—we must stay in business.

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Additionally, with an election in this fiscal year and the ~25% fund reduction, we were already starting with a shortfall.

In this turbulent time, hard decisions have to be made, priorities have to be set, and actions will speak louder than words.

Not having a Fall newsletter is a tragic blow to Mar Vista Stakeholders. The history of substantive MVCC newsletters is abysmal: Fall 2018, Winter 2020, and now Fall 2021. This schedule provides outreach to the majority of Stakeholders every year and a half—or 18 months. And with this schedule, Committee Chairs complain and wonder why there is not more Stakeholder involvement?

An 18-month outreach schedule should serve as a Scarlet Letter on the MVCC for Stakeholders to remember.

It should also serve as a reality check to Board members since the MVCC's main function is outreach to Stakeholders; everything else is window dressing and self-aggrandizing.

This body does great work and most Stakeholders don't know because outreach (as far as spending resources) is on the bottom of the barrel.

There is also more than monetary resources at the bottom. Ninety percent of this Board and ninety-five percent of the Committee Chairs have never provided any information for outreach to Stakeholders regarding their committee's work. And, certainly not on any consistent or timely level. Just as we have a responsibility to provide an agenda for our monthly meetings, we should provide information as to the activities of our committees (and what is needed from Stakeholders) on a regular and timely basis. This is why we were elected and exist—it is our fiduciary responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The Outreach Committee had a successful 2019-2020 year even with unwarranted and obvious opposition. It was indeed unfortunate that this year begins with more of the same—resistance to reaching out to Stakeholders. In this election year, it is the hope that the MVCC will rise above politics and “appearances” and get down to the business of the MVCC—reach out and inform Stakeholders.

Finally, the Outreach Committee can do nothing without the full support of every Board member (or, at least 8 members). And, if the majority of Board members believe (and vote) that providing outreach to Stakeholders is not the basic function of the MVCC, then Stakeholders will remain in the dark, the Outreach Committee will have very little to do, and the MVCC will be ineffective by abdicating its responsibility.

Please, feel free to contact the current Outreach Chair (Kathryn.Wheeler@MarVista.org) with ideas, suggestions, and to volunteer. All are welcome and every idea is great for, at least, 15 minutes! If longer than that—we have a call to action! Come join us every third Thursday at 6:30pm. For more information and meeting links, visit MarVista.org/remote.

Thank you! Stay safe and well in this unique time.