

Active Democrat



www.CulverCityDemocraticClub.com

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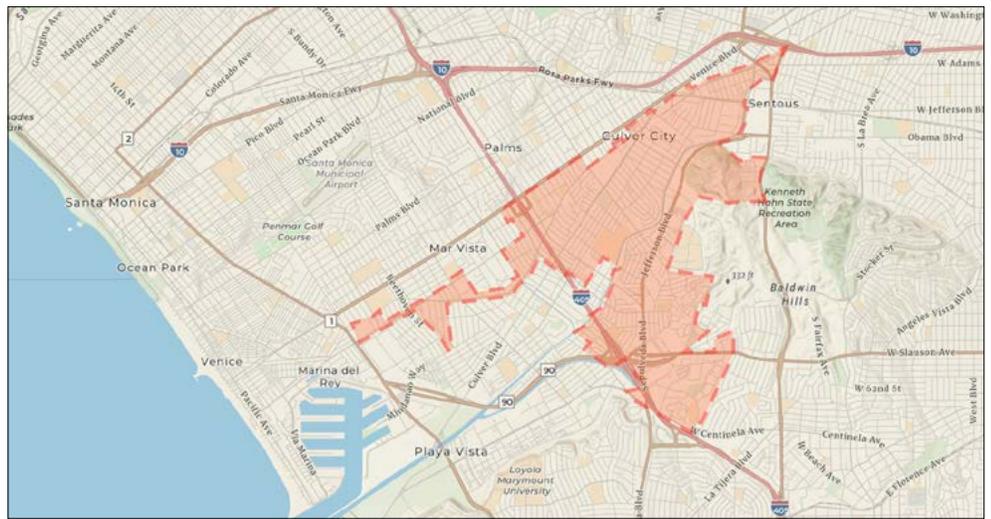
Post Office Box 4254 • Culver City, California 90231-4254

General Meeting On Zoom — 7 p.m., Wednesday, November 10, 2021 Program: Culver City's General Plan with Associate Planner Lauren Marsiglia

President's Message by Jeff Schwartz

Mayberry vs. Chelsea, Part Two

In [last month's message](#), I attempted to demonstrate that the fictional rural community of Mayberry is an inappropriate and harmful model for Culver City. I encourage you to read that installment before continuing. I also direct you to the adjoining map. Every foot of the border is Los Angeles, except for a segment on the east, which is unincorporated LA County, and that's mostly the Inglewood Oil Field.



If we can recognize the reality of our surroundings, the Chelsea neighborhood of New York is a more useful reference. Caryn Coleman, co-owner of the [Sixspace Gallery](#), may have been the first to call Culver City “the new Chelsea,” on her now defunct blog, [art.blogging.la](#). The [Los Angeles Times](#) credited her in a September 2006 article, noting that the phrase also appeared in that month's *Elle*. The *New York Times*, [historically reluctant to give LA credit](#), preferred “a nascent Chelsea” in [“A New Art Scene in Los Angeles”](#) from April 2005, then cited that article in a condescending January 2007 sequel: [“In Culver City, Calif., Art and Food Turn a Nowhere Into a Somewhere.”](#)

The narrative invoked by calling

Culver City “the New Chelsea” is about art and gentrification. Chelsea developed in the early 19th century, focused on luxury housing. However, its location on the Hudson attracted industry, leading to the construction of tenements and other workforce housing. This supply of affordable housing drew artists and other Bohemians as New York grew as a global art and media center during the 20th century. The [Chelsea Hotel](#), built by utopian socialists as NYC's first co-op, was the icon of Bohemian Chelsea, accepting artwork as rent instead of cash and playing a key role in the lives of [Dylan Thomas](#), [Patti Smith](#), [Robert Mapplethorpe](#), [Bob Dylan](#), [Leonard Cohen](#), [Sid Vicious](#), [Andy Warhol](#), [Harry](#)

[Smith](#), and many others. In 2011 the building closed, to be renovated into a luxury hotel, with [the few dozen long-term residents who could not be evicted suing the new owner](#), who was attempting to drive them out. [Renovations and lawsuits continue.](#)

Chelsea is now one of the most dramatic examples of the “missing middle,” with [a bimodal distribution of household income peaking below \\$20,000 and above \\$200,000](#), the low end clustered in the few remaining public housing projects. Converting the defunct High Line railway to a park drove development of luxury housing on the adjacent properties and the further gentrification

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of the area. While the City offered developers a density bonus if they included at least 20% affordable units, few took advantage of it. The neighborhood activists behind the High Line park have [now remorsefully started a nonprofit](#) to help cities combine reactivating public spaces with social justice, to avoid repeating the harm of their project.

Chelsea seems to present the classic scenario of artists coming to a neighborhood for cheap rent, making it fashionable, then being priced out. This is familiar from Venice, Silverlake, DTLA's Arts District, Austin, and most of the Bay Area. It also seems to be the story of Culver City's tenure as "the new Chelsea." A majority of the galleries and restaurants mentioned in those 2005 and 2007 *New York Times* articles have closed. Some of that is the [fashion cycle](#): food and art are risky and fickle businesses, but this cycle chews up neighborhoods. While part of the fun of art, food, music, and style is finding new scenes and watching them grow, what happens to the people and businesses priced out of Venice and Silverlake? Is the only option for those of us who can stay to passively watch our city become uncool again?

However, the deindustrialization and gentrification of Chelsea was the outcome of nearly a century of urban planning, not merely art world trends. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the Newark-Elizabeth port was upgraded to handle container ships, a major contribution to this standardization of shipping. [Newark-Elizabeth replaced the old Port of New York in 1962](#)

which eliminated the advantage of having manufacturing in lower Manhattan and freed up that land for more lucrative uses. Since the 1920s, a revolving door cast of civic and business leaders had worked to undiversify Manhattan by [removing working-class jobs and housing](#), including by moving the port. Jane Jacobs may be best remembered for [defeating Robert Moses' plans to build a freeway across Manhattan](#), but she failed to stop the broader strategy to convert as much of its property as possible to high-end office space.

When I selected Chelsea as the counterpoint to Mayberry, I intended to talk specifically about cultural sustainability: exploring whether or not the ["creative economy"](#) can bring something besides ["creative destruction."](#) I still believe this is a vital question for Culver City, and hope the [General Plan Update](#) will address it in depth. However, the more I dug into the history of Chelsea, the clearer I saw that it was a story of massive technological and economic shifts which could not be ameliorated merely by more robust and proactive arts funding. While the preservation of [The Kitchen](#) is important, it shrinks next to the displacement of a neighborhood's entire working class. While Culver City did not have our own [Robert Moses](#), [David Rockefeller](#), or [Michael Bloomberg](#), the collective commitment to Mayberry was its own undiversification program. We prioritized keeping the city at bay.

Early in Part One of this essay I mentioned that references to Mayberry, Norman Rockwell, and "traditional small-town atmosphere" were in the Call for Pro-

posals used to recruit the General Plan Update consultants. I strongly hope that these terms and concepts will not appear in the Plan itself, and that the new General Plan will chart a course to remediate the ways this fantasy has limited our cultural and physical development, isolated us from our neighbors, and squandered our resources.

The dream of isolation and stasis represented by Mayberry and the transformation of Chelsea from an economically diverse neighborhood full of immigrants and artists to one with [a median household income more than twice that of NYC as a whole](#) are both cautionary examples for Culver City's future. This Club's November program will be on the General Plan process, featuring the City staff coordinating it: Associate Planner Lauren Marsiglia. This will be focused on the process: what work has been done, what remains, and how we can contribute, but there will also be some opportunity to provide input.



For information on becoming a member of the Culver City Democratic Club call Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328.

[Click here to join the Club or renew your membership online](#)

Di's Corner:

by *Diane Rosenberg*

Update on Club member Charlotte Gunter: Her left foot is healing and her doctor has now removed the boot from that foot. Her attitude is remarkable, and she still misses everybody.

This coming week I have two events that happened back in Oct. 1975. The first is that on Oct. 14 we moved into our house here in Culver City which we are still living in. The following day, Oct. 15, Herb took me down to Immigration with a friend (as I had to have two witnesses I had known for at least 5 years, Herb being one) to be tested to become a U.S. Citizen. Herb and I had been married 9 years.

Want to wish Pete Rockwell and Cynthia Hart a very Happy Anniversary. May you have many, many more wonderful anniversaries to come.

[At its October 13 meeting the Culver City Democratic Club passed the following resolution submitted by Rick Tuttle.]

Whereas the Governor vetoed Assemblyman Mark Stone's bill to allow farmworkers to vote in union elections with ballot cards that could be mailed or dropped off at the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board office (citing some flaws in the bill); and

Whereas there appears to have been some communication difficulties between the governor's office and the bill's author, as well as with the United Farm Workers' leadership; therefore be it

Resolved, that the governor call a special session of the legislature to enact legislation to allow farm workers to vote by mail in union elections.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Club website: www.culvercitydemocraticclub.com

Follow us on Twitter: @CulvCityDemClub

Instagram: CulverCityDemClub

and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CulverCityDems>

October 29 thru 31

FIESTA LA BALLONA

email CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com to volunteer for the Club's booth

November 3 - 5PM

Last Day to register for

CADEM ([Virtual](#)) [November Executive Board Meeting](#)

November 6

[Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Awards](#)

Los Angeles County Democratic Party

November 8 - 7PM

Culver City Council Meeting

Meetings & Agendas - City of Culver City

November 9 - 5PM

[Engineering in Action: Water Equity](#)

November 9

[Culver City School Board Meeting](#)



November 10 - 7PM

General Meeting of the

Culver City Democratic Club

[CCDC General Meeting via Zoom](#) [CLICK TO REGISTER](#)



November 15-21

CADEM ([Virtual](#)) [November Executive Board Meeting](#)

November 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 30 - 7PM

[Joint meeting of the City Council and the Planning Commission](#)

on the General Plan Update

December 8 - 7PM

CCDC General Meeting via Zoom

“Transgender Day of Remembrance” November 20, 2021

Our Culver City Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee invites you to join them in an observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDR). TDR was started in 1999 by a small group of Transgender persons to memorialize the murder of Transgender woman Rita Hester in Allston, Massachusetts.



This annual event held on the eve of November 20th is now observed in over 185 cities around the world in over 20 countries. At TDR events, the names and stories of those murdered during the past year are read.

In the United States, the murder rate against Transgender people is the highest in the country; estimated to be 16 times the national average.

TDR events are also an opportunity to bring to public attention the struggle of Transgender people to live their lives free of discrimination and violence.

When: Saturday November 20th at 7:00 PM, virtual on City of Culver City's Webex system

How to Register for this Event: When the plan for this event is approved at the 10/26/21 EHRAC meeting, City staff will provide information on how to register for the event.

Comments expressed in the newsletter are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the Culver City Democratic Club

One of our Club members is running for LA Mayor

It's official! Our Congressional Representative, Karen Bass, [<https://karen-bass.com/>] has formally announced that she is running for Los Angeles Mayor. Of



Congressional Representative Karen Bass (right) and Club member Leah Pressman.

course, we will all miss having her represent us in Congress, but, sadly, her district could be redistricted out of existence anyway.

Besides Representative Bass, Wikipedia counts 12 other declared candidates so far, including these prominent Democrats:

- Kevin de Leon, LA City Council Member, and our Club's endorsed candidate for US Senate in 2018 [<https://www.kevindeleon.com/>]
- Joe Buscaino, LA City Council Member [<https://www.joebuscaino.com/>]
- Mike Feuer, LA City Attorney [<https://mikeforla.com/>]
- Alex Gruenenfelder, Echo Park Neighborhood Council Member [<https://mayoralex.com/>]

[At its October 13 meeting the Culver City Democratic Club voted to sign on to the following resolution, directed to the California Democratic Party, which seeks recognition of Ecocide as a crime.]

Recognition of Ecocide as a Crime

Whereas, the Orange County, California, coast is experiencing an ecological disaster with immeasurable impact, with over 126,000 gallons of crude oil spilled into coastal waters at the beginning of October, 2021, harming fish, bird and other wildlife ecosystems with permanent, detrimental effects.

Whereas, a coalition of [15,364 scientists](#) warned in 2017 that “humanity is not taking the urgent steps needed to safeguard our imperiled biosphere,” and that “we have unleashed a mass extinction event, the sixth in roughly 540 million years, wherein many current life forms could be annihilated or at least committed to extinction by the end of this century”

Whereas, indigenous island communities of Vanuatu and the Maldives, along with many others, are facing elimination of their ancestral communities and their environment and are [calling for such ecocide to be recognized as a crime](#).

Be it therefore resolved, that the California Democratic Party recognizes ecocide as a crime defined as the extensive damage to, destruction of or loss of ecosystems of a given region, whether by human agency or by any other causes.

Be it further resolved, that the California Democratic Party recognizes ecocide as a crime that is appropriately punishable, whether ecological damage is caused by individuals, corporations and/or the State.

Authors:

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Lauren Johnson-Norris, Esq., Executive Board and ADEM AD74,
Democratic Party of Orange County Central Committee

Photos from the October 2 Women's March



Volunteers Needed

The Culver City Democratic Club will have a booth at the

Fiesta La Ballona

Friday 4:30PM to 10PM

Saturday 12 NOON to 10PM

Sunday 10AM to 6PM

Location

Veterans Memorial Park

4117 Overland Ave.

Culver City

[View Map](#)

to volunteer email:

CulverCityDemClub@gmail.com

Redistricting is happening now, and you can have input

The State is redrawing legislative districts based on the results of the 2020 census. The proposed new districts will drastically change how West and South Los Angeles are represented.

Assembly District 54 (currently represented by Isaac Bryan) and State Senate District 30 (currently represented by Sydney Kamlager) include Culver City, Leimert Park, Ladera Heights, Mar Vista and Westwood. These communities share important values and interests. We are all threatened by the significant concentration of active and abandoned oil wells such as the Inglewood Oil Field, we benefit from the same transit (Metro E line) and educational institutions (UCLA/West LA Community College), and border Ballona Creek, (a natural and cultural resource).

Both of the proposals under consideration seriously disrupt these districts and will dilute our power in the legislature. Rough drafts of the proposals can be found here: <https://www.wedrawthelinesca.org/10-27-29-21-handouts>.

[wedrawthelinesca.org/10-27-29-21-handouts](https://www.wedrawthelinesca.org/10-27-29-21-handouts). These are rough drafts. The actual drafts will be released in mid-November, and the districts will be set at the end of the year.

You can comment by emailing the commission at VotersFirstAct@crc.ca.gov, calling (916) 323-0323, or sending a letter to:

We Draw the Lines CA
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260
Sacramento CA 95814

For more about the California redistricting process: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-09-27/skelton-redistricting-congress-seat>

<https://calmatters.org/politics/2021/10/california-redistricting-community-groups-diversity/>

[LA Times op-ed: keep two Black congressional districts in L.A.](#)

An Open Letter to the Redistricting Commission



by Patrick Macfarlane: 3rd generation South Central LA resident

These proposed redistricting maps eliminate a legislative district that includes much of Central LA, including the historically black communities of

Ladera Heights, View Park, Baldwin Hills, Leimert Park, Hyde Park, Gramercy Park, Manchester Square, Mid-City, and West Adams in the heart of South Central Los Angeles.

To draw legislative districts that split a collection of the most historic Black communities in the Western United States would certainly disenfranchise Black voters.

Since the great migration, South Central Los Angeles has been a beacon for millions of Black Americans in search of the American dream. It has become more than just a destination on the Southern Pacific Railroad for my great grandparents and many ancestors, but a cultural hub for Black people across the globe.

These neighborhoods are linked by their shared culture and the bonds formed by our collective experiences.

As a community we have overcome so many obstacles: residential housing segregation, chronic disinvestment, underfunded public schools, the crack epidemic, the war on drugs, overpolicing, and so much more.

It is critical that we have shared representation around our major transit corridors and new transit lines—the Expo Line and Crenshaw line—as well as around the Baldwin Hills Conservancy and the Inglewood Oil Field.

Black Los Angeles faces the existential threats of homelessness, gentrification and displacement. That is why it is more important than ever for our collective interests to be collectively represented at every level of government.

This is a very specific group of communities that common interests and deserve to have shared representation focused on marshaling government resources to support the community.

The elephant in the room

“When the Roman Republic became a dictatorship, the Emperor did not dissolve the Roman Senate right away!”

—*Michael Parenti*

“We are in a once-in-a-century moment.”

—*Senator Amy Klobuchar*

So let’s talk about that elephant in the room. Brick by brick, the Republicans have been building the infrastructure of permanent one-party rule. (Their party.) This is nothing new. Karl Rove (AKA Bush’s Brain) spoke of it openly. The

OPINION

Koch Brothers have long funded the effort as was well-documented in Nancy MacLean’s excellent book *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America*. This work goes all the way back to the “Massive Resistance” movement against school desegregation after *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Now we see a combination of gerrymandering, voter suppression legislation, control of most state legislatures, control of the U.S. Senate through the filibuster, and a youthful Supreme Court majority that is displaying a willingness to bless all of their efforts. And to put the icing on the cake, we see a rising level of politically motivated violence so that nonpartisan election workers are in fear of their lives. How long to the point of no return?

We are deep in a constitutional crisis.

Legislative responses to the problem have been proposed. HR1, the [For the People Act](#), was the Swiss army knife of democracy protection, the very gold standard. Filibustered.

There’s also the [John Lewis Voting Rights Act](#) and the [Freedom to Vote Act](#)—even the terrible twins Manchin and Sinema voted for the Freedom to Vote Act—but all three were felled by the filibuster.

So, three strikes and we’re out? No! “We’re not going to give up.” Says Vice President Kamala Harris. Word is that the bill will be brought up again.

What can the grassroots do? Joe Biden tells activists that we should just “out-or-

ganize them.” Out-organize them? Seriously?! Red States are making laws to allow their legislatures to overturn the results of elections that don’t go their way! How in the name of Patrick Henry do you out-organize THAT?

[Ari Berman points out](#) that Biden has not expended political capital in that area. Ben Jealous, president of People for the American Way, has called on Biden to “step up or voting rights will die on his watch.” As Active Democrats we must press our electeds to restore the Senate to majority rule.

Call our Senators at 202-224-3841 and (202) 224-3553! Email the White House at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>! Impress upon them the urgency of this moment! Ask them: “What have you done to save democracy today?”

Keep everlastingly after them.

And if that doesn’t work ... Ummmm... well... I’m open to suggestions.

“Failure is not an option.” Says Majority Leader Charles Schumer.

— *Cynthia Hart*

