

## Hollywood Property Owners Alliance

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# President's Message

Our BID is widely considered one of the best in the state, but our efforts and accomplishments often hinge on the cooperation with our city partners. So much of what we do occurs in Hollywood's very dynamic and challenging public realm, consequently our ability to marshal the resources of our city via the council office, the city attorney's staff, the LAPD or various city departments that play a regulatory role is critical.

Last year was rough on a number of fronts. Over the course of 2013, this community weathered a storm of night-time violence adjacent to some nightclubs, several of which have been closed. We experienced a tragic murder of a young woman on Hollywood Boulevard in June of 2013 by a known transient who is now awaiting trial. The summer simmered with tensions stemming from interactions with tour bus hawkers who seemed increasingly bold and street characters and CD vendors who often intimidated visitors with their shakedown techniques.

As soon as our new slate of city officials were sworn in on July 1, 2013 things began to change. Looking back, one can only be amazed: what a difference a year makes.

Significant credit must be given to two elected officials who took the deteriorating situation on the Boulevard seriously from the moment they took office: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell and City Attorney Mike Feuer. They both made themselves available for meetings with community leaders from the BIDs and the Chamber. We had developed a list of seven actions that the city could take to address public safety concerns in Hollywood. Looking back, it is clear that the city took these suggestions seriously because most have been addressed.

For example, we asked for a dedicated LAPD footbeat in the highly trafficked tourist zone. We have benefitted from an increase in resources that were dedicated to Hollywood -- an additional 25 officers assigned to the original 40-officer team that patrols the area in and around the Hollywood Entertainment District. We now have five full-time

sergeants reporting to a Lieutenant who oversees this team; up from two a year ago.

Additionally, LAPD is simply more visible. This is due to the dedication of more foot beat patrols on a daily basis. On particularly busy days, there can be up to three foot beats assigned during the day. Our community welcomed the arrival of Captain Pete Zarcone in September of last year, and he and his patrol captain, Cory Palka, have been nothing short of fantastic.

Zarcone and Palka heard loud and clear the community's frustration with the bad behaviors of the cast of characters and vendors that populate the sidewalks in front of the Dolby Theatre. The summer of 2014 is shaping up to be much calmer likely

due to the commitment of an undercover task force doing surprise enforcement twice a month. Though this represents a huge devotion of resources by the department to this effort, it helps to reinforce that laws must be adhered to and it weeds out the trouble-makers. We are very appreciative of this strategy.

Finally, we asked that the city attorney issue stay away orders to help protect the community against perpetual violators who troll in the busy visitor zones and wreak havoc. City Attorney Feuer is committed to this strategy. Where there were just a few stay away orders in place a year ago, now there are 30 that impact the core part of downtown Hollywood. He is also committed to beefing up the city's Neighborhood Prosecutor program, and our new NP, Jackie Lawson, has hit the ground running.

What is particularly gratifying is the commitment by the council office, the city attorney and the LAPD to be in constant dialogue with the BID to problem solve in a collaborative fashion. This has made a huge difference, and we are much stronger working together than retreating to siloes.

What a difference a year makes! We hope you are having a good summer, and we look forward to seeing you all at our All Property Owners Meeting scheduled for Wednesday August 6 at 4 p.m. at Emerson College.

John Tronson, President  
HPOA Board of Directors



Photo by Gary Leonard