

# Venice Neighborhood Council Graffiti Committee Year End Report

One year ago a group of Windward Avenue neighbors came together seeking to form the Venice Neighborhood Council Graffiti Committee. Our mission as defined at the time was as follows:

We seek to maintain Venice as a haven for creativity and artistic expression, while defending the rights, property, safety, and quality of life of all residents, business owners, and visitors, in regards to \*graffiti.

**We plan to support this mission in the following ways:**

- **Engage in educational outreach with residents, business owners, taggers, gang members, community youth groups, and law enforcement officials regarding graffiti.**
- **Establish recommendations for the control and management of the Venice graffiti walls.**
- **Enact graffiti prevention programs throughout Venice neighborhoods and business districts.**
- **Work with existing resources and establish new avenues for immediate graffiti removal and clean up.**
- **Educate residents and business owners and work with law enforcement officials regarding enforcement of existing graffiti and vandalism laws.**
- **Engage Neighborhood Watch groups in monitoring, prevention and enforcement efforts.**
- **Initiate dialogue and develop recommendations for protecting existing public art in Venice.**

- **Work closely with existing City of LA graffiti control programs, committees, and resources.**

**\*Graffiti means any unauthorized inscription, word, figure, painting or other defacement that is written, marked, etched, scratched, sprayed, drawn, painted, or engraved on or otherwise affixed to any surface of public or private property by any graffiti implement, to the extent that the graffiti was not authorized in advance by the owner or occupant of the property, or, despite advance authorization, is otherwise deemed a public nuisance.**

## **Our Success**

There are three vital components to the success we have had this year as a committee. They are:

1. Oversight and implementation of a new permit painting process for the newly renamed Venice Art Walls (Graffiti pit) at the beach.
2. Extensive work with the City Office of Beautification and City contracted Graffiti removal companies regarding immediate removal of graffiti.
3. Education, outreach, and providing of resources to residents, property owners, and business owners to help with graffiti removal.

Specifically here are some of the things we have been able to accomplish in each of these three specific areas:

### **Venice Art Walls**

We represented the community in the planning, design, approvals and implementation of the permit painting process overseen by ICU Art at the newly renamed Venice Art Walls.

We served (and continue to serve) on a City wide Art Walls oversight committee made up of the following: Venice Neighborhood Council Graffiti Committee, Windward area residents and property owners, City of LA Council Office 11 Staff, Recreation and Parks representatives, City of LA Office of Beautification representatives, LAPD officers serving both the beach area and Venice neighborhoods, City of LA Prosecutors Office, Venice Neighborhood Council Oceanfront Walk Committee, Oceanfront Walk business owners, Venice Arts Council members, and ICU Art representatives.

The Oversight Committee met bi-monthly for three months and now meets monthly.

Since the implementation of the Venice Art Walls permit process (and the graffiti removal efforts noted below) we have seen the following:

- 90% decrease in the amount and frequency of tagging in the Windward Neighborhood (the area due East of the Art Walls).
- 90% decrease in the amount and frequency of tagging on Venice murals
- 70% decrease in the amount and frequency of beachfront tagging.
- Improvement in the level of art vs simple tagging on the Art Walls themselves.

We have also worked closely with the LAPD regarding enforcement of the new permit process and painting times at the walls.

We have worked to get the City to install solar lighting in the area of the Venice Art Walls to help prevent frequent tagging that takes place at night. That process has been approved by the City and is in progress.

Lastly, in our most recent Oversight Committee Meeting we voiced our support for a continuation of the permit painting process for another six months. The cost of the continuation to the city is \$15,000 to \$20,000.

## **Immediate and Ongoing Graffiti Removal**

Working closely with both the City contracted Graffiti removal companies, and the City of LA Office of Beautification, we have been able to accomplish the following this year:

- Photographically documented the relationship between the Venice Art Walls and the tagging seen throughout the neighborhood.
- Photographically documenting the failures in the graffiti removal reporting process.
- We have exposed shortcomings and failures (such as no available water source for graffiti crews in the area) in the current graffiti removal efforts, and helped find solutions to those problems.

- Completed a graffiti/Tag survey for the area bordered by Rose, Abbot Kinney, Venice North, And the beachfront. In the survey we noted the locations of every tag and the means (painting, sandblasting, etc.) requested for its removal.
- Secured an additional full-time graffiti removal crew, at a cost of over \$100,000, to work exclusively in the Venice area.
- Received paint, rollers and other supplies from the city and have made them available to residents and business owners for removal efforts throughout the year.
- Continued to work with the Office of Beautification as “eyes and ears” regarding graffiti removal and the reports they receive.

## Community Education and Outreach

In the third component of community education and outreach, we have accomplished the following this year:

- Established a Neighborhood Hotline to assist residents and business owners with graffiti removal requests, questions, and concerns.
- Passed out postcards to remind area residents and business owners about the importance and resources available for immediate graffiti removal. The post cards include the location of a specific tag on the residents or business property, a request for removal, the phone numbers to call, and additional resources,

Organized an ongoing, volunteer group of Windward area residents, to help out a “stretched thin” City Recreation and Parks Department. This volunteer group meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 6:30am. As a group we have been trained by the Rec and Parks Department and provided with supplies. When we meet twice a month we paint over graffiti and tags on the sidewalks, benches, garbage cans, poles, and other surfaces along the beachfront and park area.