

# FOOTHILLS SENTRY

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## FCA annual meeting addresses neighborhood concerns



*Monica (center) and Alexander Ostowari (right) share a moment with Supervisor Don Wagner.  
Photos by Tony Richards*



*Residents are largely opposed (79 percent in one poll, 83 percent in another) to a county ordinance amendment that would relax RV parking rules.*



*Racquet Club neighbors vow to fight any rezoning efforts to allow housing on the recreation-zoned property.*

### **By Tina Richards**

The Foothill Communities Association (FCA) annual meeting attracted North Tustin homeowners who came to interact with Supervisor Don Wagner, Sheriff Don Barnes and representatives from county agencies, and glean first-hand information about the issues that concern them.

Those issues include criminal activity, RV parking, group homes, the fate of the Tustin Hills Racquet Club, public parks and the eternal quest for a dedicated North Tustin zip code.

The March 2 meeting preceded the current restrictions on public gatherings and drew some 300 people.

Sheriff Barnes, in his opening remarks, complimented the community for the turnout. "Sometimes I'm invited to community meetings," he said, "and there's four people there. This is impressive."

### **A low crime community**

Barnes reported that property crime in North Tustin has decreased, and vehicle thefts reduced by 58 percent. "Crime is almost nonexistent in this community," he said, "but if you see something specific, call us." He assured residents that there are always two sheriff's patrol cars in the area, and four during peak hours. "The top 10 low crime areas in Orange County are all patrolled by the sheriff's department."

Noting that most residential burglaries happen in the day time, he urged residents to keep garage doors closed, put locks on side gates and trim trees and shrubs.

Supervisor Don Wagner began his keynote address with the proclamation that the Tustin Hills Racquet Club, "contributes to the character of the community." "I'm not going to allow something to come in and change the character of what is yours," he said. Wagner was referring to the popular recreation facility that has been sold to a developer who, it is rumored, wants to build condos on the site.

### **Waiting and wondering**

"There's nothing happening," he said. "No hearings set for a zone change. It has to go to the planning commission first; nothing is being done officially to change the zoning on that property. I will oppose a zone change," he emphasized. "The racquet club is your community asset."

Another community asset being reconsidered by the county is neighborhood streets not lined with RVs.

County code enforcement is amending its 2002 RV parking restrictions to permit storage on residential driveways. The current code allows RV parking in residential neighborhoods, only if the vehicle cannot be seen from the street. Code enforcement has, however, allowed RVs to be stored on driveways without screening. The amendment codifies the county's leniency.

Residents fear the revised code will allow an unlimited number of RVs of any height or length to be stored on a given property, in any orientation (sideways), blocking access to garages and inhibiting views of oncoming traffic.

The new code also appears to allow homeowners to rent their driveways and lots for RV storage to others.

### **RV parking pushback**

Wagner assured the audience that he is not interested in changing the current RV policy. He opposes advertising driveways for RV storage, or renting vehicles out as Airbandbs. "I'm not supporting code changes in that light," he said, "but if it's your property, you can store your RV – as long as it's shielded."

The supervisor tempered other North Tustin hot buttons, noting that he had passed an ordinance tightening up rules for sober living homes, re-opened Irvine Lake to shoreline fishing and eliminated the use of toxic chemicals in public parks. "Our parks department knows not to spray with glyphosates," he advised.

Wagner did admit that he could do little to get North Tustin its own dedicated zip code. "That's a federal issue," he said. "You need to talk to your congressional representative about that."

FCA President Rick Nelson added that the community had tried in vain for years to get a zip code separate from the one currently shared with Santa Ana. "Maybe," he mused, "since Santa Ana's higher tax rate is being unfairly levied against North Tustin residents based on zip code, we have more reason to push for it again."