

PVP Watch Newsletter – January 10, 2010

To Our Friends & Supporters

While most Peninsula families had an enjoyable Christmas, the Kammoun family did not as they had to deal with the tragic death of Jamel Kammoun on Sunday December 20th. Mr. Kammoun was a math professor at Marymount and El Camino Colleges and leaves behind a wife and 3 daughters. What is so dreadful is that Mr. Kammoun was out for his morning walk and was a victim of reckless driving by a 17year old who was reported to have been speeding at an estimated 80 MPH (perhaps more) down Hawthorne Blvd approaching Ryan Park. At Tuesday's (Jan. 5th) RPV Council meeting Deputy Knox reported that the situation was still under investigation and no charges had been filed. *It is difficult to understand why a reckless driver who killed an innocent person is not sitting in jail.* Hopefully other parents are discussing the perils of reckless speeding with their teenage sons and daughters.

PVP Schools

January 7th California Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation that makes possible use of Obama stimulus funds for California schools. Highlights of that legislation is posted at www.pvpwatch.com / click on the PVP Schools button on the lower left side / Cal Schools Jan. 2010. One particular piece of the stimulus package requires that teachers must agree to performance evaluations, as least partially, based on student achievement. PVP Watch has long believed that performance based pay should play a roll in teacher salaries. However, to judge solely on student's academic achievement (metrics) is unfair and inappropriate. We would hope that peninsula teachers would welcome the opportunity of being rewarded for performance and participate in making peninsula teachers performance measurements a model for others to duplicate.

RPV

Kudos to recently elected Councilman Anthony Misetich. As some may recall Misetich stated during the recent campaign that LA Council member Janice Hahn would "answer the phone" if he were to call her. Shortly after being "sworn in" Misetich proved his words by getting Janice Hahn's signature on an agreement (within 24 hours) applying for stimulus funds for the Tarapaca Canyon storm water runoff project. Apparently other RPV Councilmen had been unable to get Ms. Hahn to even "answer the phone."

The January 5th Council meeting revealed some interesting ideas with Councilman Misetich proposing that RPV consider "zero based" budgeting which requires that every budget item be justified / evaluated rather than copying from year to year. We found that Rolling Hills Estates converted to "zero based" budgeting several years ago and reports that "zero based" budgeting is an

excellent cost / budget control tool. We would hope that a council majority would concur with Councilman Missetich and implement this concept.

Councilman Long proposed that the view ordinance be evaluated. Tom, we certainly agree on this one. We totally support the concept of protecting existing views; however, what needs fixing is creating views where none have existed. The view ordinance as presently written is a flawed process. We also agree with Councilman Long on the oversized vehicle parking ordinance being a "solution looking for a problem."

These issues bring a thought as to why ordinances and other issues are not evaluated after enactment. For example, should not the traffic enforcement services of Deputy Knox be evaluated? How many years has RPV had a Deputy assigned to traffic enforcement? Is this working? RPV continues to have serious / deadly accidents. Might those funds be better spent for neighborhood patrols? It would seem that the Traffic Commission should be proactive in making this assessment.

With a new Council makeup and a new year it would seem some reassessments are appropriate: The Vision Plan with a new City Hall with Village Green should be tossed in the trash can and dispensed with. The concept of a Village Green where people might gather is ludicrous. This is 2010 not 1910. What should be the first priority for the Upper Point Vicente complex is an active recreation facility with soccer & other ball fields, perhaps tennis courts and maybe some basketball hoops. Some upgrading of City Hall may be appropriate. A reasonable plan is needed.

PVP Watch questions the proposed Annenberg dog and cat facility as misuse of public lands. Annenberg Executive Director Leonard Aube has been actively selling the Annenberg plan and many seemed awed by the proposed \$40,000,000 dog & cat haven. The site is Lower Point Vicente where the Interpretative Center is located. The "hook" to the deal apparently is *education and training* of how to care for animals. Unknown are the proposed financial arrangements for land use, maintenance etc. What do RPV residents think about the Annenberg plan? Send your comments to info@pvpwatch.com. It does seem that if Annenberg is truly interested in animal education that they could give the \$40,000,000 to Peninsula schools for educational programs including animals. This would undoubtedly result in better use of the funds for education rather than monuments.

RPV and it's so called Open Space.

Late December escrow closed on RPV's purchase of approximately 190 acres of the Upper Fillorium property from York Associates. Interesting is that the PV News reported that the Land Conservancy purchased the property which is just another fable in a long list of misrepresentations by the Peninsula Land Conservancy. The Land Conservancy contributed \$400,000 while the

the esteemed RPV Council contributed \$600,000 of the people's funds and the California taxpayers contributed \$6,500,000 of bond funds that taxpayers will have to repay. Was it Barnum that said a "sucker is born every minute?"

Let's get a few facts straight; the preserve area is not Open Space, its Restricted Space.

It may be *Open Space* to a chosen few but it remains *Restricted Space* to most. This land should be accessible by ALL residents not just the chosen few in the Peninsula Land Conservancy.

While we can debate the wisdom of the land purchase transactions, the bottom line is that the City of Ranch Palos Verdes, not the Peninsula Land Conservancy, now owns the approximate 1,400 acre Palos Verdes Nature Preserve.

It is likely that most RPV residents are unaware that Land Conservancy crony RPV Councilman Doug Stern has *arranged* for the Land Conservancy to be the managers of the 1,400 acre Palos Verdes Nature Preserve with RPV responsible for funding. What has become obvious (although not to the RPV Council) is that the Land Conservancy does not have the capabilities, resources nor expertise to manage the Preserve and that RPV MUST assume this responsibility. Recently RPV hired an Open Space Manager, let him earn his salary. RPV should also create a Rec & Parks Commission whose members are RPV residents to augment policy and public lands solutions development.

The Land Conservancy is controlled by hysterical habitat fanatics who only perceive *coastal sage scrub* and native habitat. That much of the current vegetation is so called non native habitat and must be removed is amusing. How did it get here? What happened to the *native habitat* to cause it to disappear? Where is Sherlock Holmes at this critical juncture?

The Land Conservancy's failure to maintain brush clearance for fire control contributed significantly to the late August Portuguese Bend area fire. That there was no wind and the outstanding response from the LA County Fire Department and their mutual aid partners from adjoining cities saved Rolling Hills from a fire storm. A usual breeze and many homes in Rolling Hills would likely have been destroyed and probable that RPV would be judged at fault for failing to maintain fire control brush clearances. And now the Land Conservancy plans to replant the burn area with their infamous *coastal sage scrub*. Are we to believe that *coastal sage scrub* does not burn? Ridiculous is what it really is.

The PUMP (Public Use Master Plan) committee spent some 16 months or so with the task of creating a *Master Plan*. The outcome, mandated by the Land Conservancy, was that people (other than the Land Conservancy crowd) are limited to a reduced amount of designated trails.

When the PUMP process began there were some 48 trails approximating almost 19 miles. Now there are only 21 trails providing less than 10 miles for public use. All 21 trails have been designated for hikers, sharing 19 with equestrians and bikes limited to 7. The public has been using most of these trails for decades, leaving people puzzled at seemingly arbitrary closures.

In addition there is a proliferation of rules created by the Conservancy and rubber stamped by the RPV Council that limit access and provide for citations and fines for those who violate the new rules for *Restricted Space*. Park Rangers have now been hired and are actively issuing citations for violating *Restricted Space* rules as dictated by the Land Conservancy. It is time to end this lunacy.

Saturday January 9th, the RPV Council had another "cumbaya" Team Building Workshop. More waste of RPV funds. RPV recently elected two successful business men, Anthony Misetich & Brian Campbell to the RPV Council. This years RPV mayor Steve Wolowicz stated (Daily Breeze 1/1/2010) that "*Our experienced council members are committed to assisting our newer colleagues in becoming our next leaders.*" Mr. Wolowicz what you might have said was "*we will listen to the new and fresh ideas of the new Councilmen who both bring needed business acumen to this Council.*"

A recent article by Thomas Elias (Daily Breeze – 12/31/2009) highlighted the current California pension funding crisis. We have noted that RPV employee benefits for 2009 / 2010 approximate \$2,000,000 which is approximately 10% of the General Funds budget. Unknown is RPV staff total salaries for the same period. In view of Sacramento's fiscal problems and the likelihood that the state legislature will continue to raid municipality's funds, it would seem appropriate that RPV tighten its finances as more rainy days are on the way. Mayor Wolowicz, a place to start is employee headcount and salaries.

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