

PVP Watch Newsletter – January 13, 2012

To Our Friends and Supporters

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Breaking News

- Knock Knock Bandits

It has been reported that the Peninsula is currently under attack by "knock-knock" bandits who knock on doors during the day and if someone comes to the door, they make up some story of earning points for college or being new to the neighborhood or asking for someone that doesn't live there. If no one answers, they go around back and break-in. How wide spread is not yet clear but this is to advise all of the current situation.

RPV has a *no solicitation ordinance* but at this point PVP Watch is unaware of any similar ordinances in the other cities. Rolling Hills has entrance security and it would seem that any door-to-door activity would be quickly terminated there. There has been some discussion that RPV should update its *no solicitation ordinance* to include business cards and flyers put on homes and car doors.

Unfortunately times have changed and crime has increased with drugs being deposited on our beaches with smugglers trying to evade arrest to those invading our neighborhoods like the "knock-knock" bandits. While we thank our Sheriff Deputies for what they do accomplish, they cannot be everywhere at once and it remains essential that neighbors watch out for neighbors and notify Lomita Sheriff Station when unusual circumstances occur.

- New Council Challenges

Last November RPV residents elected Susan Brooks, Jerry Duhovic and Jim Knight to the RPV Council replacing Tom Long, Doug Stern & Stefan Wolowicz. The new Council is now in place and, with Anthony Misetich as Mayor, have significant challenges facing them as they strive to bring "Transparency & Accountability" to RPV City Hall.

One can only speculate as to whether or not Tom Long, Doug Stern & Stefan Wolowicz will retire to their personal matters or will attempt to interfere with RPV issues in days ahead? As Long, Stern and Wolowicz went out the door they enacted a number of agreements and ordinances attempting to maintain their past as well as to make things more difficult for the new Council's efforts to install "Transparency & Accountability" at RPV City Hall.

A few of those issues and the respective agreements are posted at www.pvpwatch.com / Current Issues page

- Maintenance Agreement with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC).

Enacted November 1, 2011

This agreement is for maintaining what is now known as the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, the 1,200-acre property that cost California residents some \$25 million for land purchases. Since Tom Long and Doug Stern are lawyers one would presume they would have protected RPV taxpayer interests but true to form they approved an agreement that lacks performance clauses.

The problems with the agreement are several and indicative of how it disproportionately favors the PVPLC. The clearest examples are the lack of a termination clause, an unreasonably long 50-year term, and the lack of specific performance section.

Current agreement costs are approximated at \$425,000 for the current fiscal year. This is undoubtedly a minimum number that will significantly increase in the future. RPV residents should be questioning as to why they have to fund this burden when control has been given to the PVPLC by the last Council i.e. Tom Long, Doug Stern and Stefan Wolowicz.

- Information Technology (IT) Enhancement Plan.

Enacted November 1, 2011

We urge IT professionals to read and comment on the IT enhancement plan approved by the last Council as they "went out the door." As previously noted, the IT enhancement plan is

posted on the PVP Watch website for everyone to easily access. PVP Watch believes a 3rd party independent consultant should make an unbiased evaluation of the approved IT enhancement plan as the relationship between PV Net and RPV incurs excessive costs. For example, during 2010 RPV paid PV Net over \$500,000 and in 2011 IT payments to PV Net exceeded \$440,000. However, in past years PV Net has deferred invoices for 3 months or more so it is possible that invoices for activities in 2011 may be forthcoming.

- Revised PV Net Agreement

Enacted November 15, 2011

In reading this agreement residents will find that RPV Finance Director McLean, with the approval of City Manager Lehr, is now paying PV Net a minimum of \$23,500 per month without any specificity of "deliverables" and vague conditions of performance. The premise of this amount is that it is a cost reduction in comparison to past payments. In a business environment with cost management controls, services going forward would be based on specific criteria for desired services rather than questionable historical payments. There is recent data that suggests that RPV is not providing adequate oversight of PV Net invoices and payments and the relationship between RPV Senior Staff and PV Net needs greater Council oversight.

RPV – Fire January 9th

Monday evening about 7PM, as reported by the PV News, a fire burned about 15 acres in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve in an area known as the Three Sisters Reserve. This segment is adjacent to the Monaco area which is at Hawthorne Blvd and Crest Rd. In the past RPV has been remiss in the oversight of the Land Conservancy's fire abatement programs (the lack of). The PVPLC's single focus on replacing existing chaparral with "Native Habitat" Coastal Sage Scrub is beyond absurd and RPV needs to demand better fire abatement programs before we have another wind driven fire that the outstanding LA County Fire Department cannot control.

While the cause of the fire has not been pinpointed it appears possibly to be **another** electrical / transformer problem. It would seem that with the past history of electrical caused fires and with all the money being spent, an effort could be made to clear the areas along electrical pathways thus minimizing future fuel sources.

From a recent Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association Newsletter

State targets property-tax payers

By Mary Ann Milbourn / Orange County Register

As many as 5 million California property-tax payers who have been taking the entire amount they pay off their state income taxes could see a major cut in their deductions when they file next year. Beginning with the 2012 tax bill (the one due in April 2013), the state Franchise Tax Board will require property owners to break down their property taxes into deductible and non-deductible portions.

That means property owners who have been deducting their Mello-Roos fees — often running into thousands of dollars — will no longer be able to deduct those or any other special assessments like vector control or mosquito abatement.

The entire story is posted on the Orange County Register's website,

RPV - Trump National

On the January 17th Council agenda is a request by Trump to plant shrubs on the westerly side of the driving range. As seems the usual case, there are some who object to whatever Trump may want to do. Trump General Manager Lili Amini has offered to meet with concerned residents and we trust that those potentially impacted by Trump have accepted her offer. Rather than heated disputes, hopefully calmness will prevail and a common sense solution will triumph. Trump National is a valued asset to the Peninsula and should be given due consideration for their public efforts.

It is also time to reverse some of illogical political decisions of the past. Golfers will key in on the matter but the issue is that "the rough" on the golf course was mandated to be *habitat* and is planted with environmentalist dictated "*native habitat*." Mandated is that golf balls in these areas cannot be retrieved and thus many golfers will not play Trump National, which costs Trump revenues, and RPV revenues as well.

Many readers will recall that the LPWA (Lady Professionals) held a tournament at Trump some years ago. It was a disaster caused by inaccessible "Rough" which resulted in a very high need for Marshal rulings. RPV now has over 1,200 acres set aside for Coastal Sage Scrub for the beloved Gnatcatchers, which by the way, do not seem to be happy in the costly nature

preserve. Ten years ago it was reported that there were some 80 or so gnatcatchers and last report it appears the number of gnatcatchers still remains about 80. Perhaps the folks at the PVPLC have some later numbers. The new RPV Council has stated that they will be business friendly. Eliminating the "*habitat*" mandates at Trump National is a good place to start.

RPV – EMPLOYEE UNION

We don't recall the exact date but believe it was early last November when RPV employees announced they had formed an association that was in effect a labor union. While some previous Council members proclaimed that the cause was the rhetoric of some Council candidates during the recent election, reality is undoubtedly otherwise. While some employees may have been persuaded that a union would be a panacea for management issues at RPV City Hall, much flexibility is lost when working conditions must be observed by everyone.

Pension and other employee benefits are an unresolved issue that the new Council will have to deal with. The current pensions and employee benefits are unsustainable and Staff should not leave the taxpayers with any choices other than to reduce staff to control the ballooning payroll expense.

We wish to acknowledge that there are many fine "staffers" working at RPV City Hall and without question all employees should be treated fairly. However it is important that taxpayers be treated equitably as well. Currently there is an imbalance between public and private salaries and benefits and the taxpayers are demanding that there be more parity as we go forward.

A Public Notice

Electronic Waste Collection – Home and Office Items for PVP Schools

Our schools receive the full list value for unused electronic items.

ELECTRONIC WASTE RECYCLING to Benefit PVP Schools!
Multiple drop-off locations for your convenience!

Friday, January 20, 2010

1:00 PM – 5PM

Palos Verdes High School / 600 Cloyden Rd, Palos Verdes Estates

Peninsula High School / 27118 Silver Spur Rd, Rolling Hills Estates

Saturday, January 21, 2012

9AM – 4PM

Palos Verdes High School

Peninsula High School

Miraleste Intermediate School / 29323 Palos Verdes Dr. E, Rancho Palos Verdes

Some of the items being accepted:

TVs - DVD Players – VCRs – Computers - Monitors - Printers - Cell phones - Digital cameras –

Video game consoles - Laser and inkjet cartridges - Video games - I-pods / MP3 players –

PDA's - Fax machines

Sponsored by Peninsula Education Foundation and Waste Management

Newsletter Responses

Reader comments are welcomed and should be sent to info@pvpwatch.com. Newsletter responses are posted with names removed and no editing other than obvious grammatical changes. These are subscriber thoughts and opinions and PVP Watch does not vouch for those opinions. That so many have sent their comments has made the Newsletter more interesting and we appreciate the input.

We have been reminded that not ALL subscribers are aware of the PVP Watch website; www.pvpwatch.com. Lots of good info posted there.

PVP Watch – Newsletter List

A reminder to ALL PVP Watch supporters, should you change your e-mail address don't forget to advise PVP Watch of your new address. We suggest that pvpwatch.com be added to your computer address book to assure delivery of PVP Watch Newsletters.

PVP Watch – Contributions

PVP Watch thanks the many subscribers who have contributed to PVP Watch. Those desiring to make a modest contribution, please send checks to PVP Watch PO Box 7000-22 Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

Subscribers

The PVP Watch e-mail list continues to grow. For those who wish their addresses removed, please send notice to info@pvpwatch.com. Those who have topics of community interest are encouraged to bring those issues to PVP Watch.

The Editorial Committee