

PVP Watch Newsletter – October 12, 2011

To Our Friends and Supporters

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- * Peninsula Schools – Measure C

ELECTION TIME ON THE PENINSULA

Vote November 8th

PVP Schools / PVPUSD Board of Education - Two Seats - PVP Watch Suggested Candidates

Larry Vanden Bos / larryvandenbosforschoolboard2011.com

Erin LaMonte / www.electerinlamonte.com

Why these two? We believe that Erin LaMonte and Larry Vanden Bos have by far the greater knowledge and experience needed by the PVPUSD.

Rancho Palos Verdes City Council – Three Seats - PVP Watch Suggested Candidates

* **Jerry Duhovic** / www.jerryduhovic.com,

* **Dora de la Rosa** / www.doradelarosa.com

* **Susan Brooks** / www.susanbrooks2011.com

Why these three?

Because they are: **Highly Competent, Extremely Knowledgeable, Have Diverse Professional Backgrounds, Absence of Special Interest Affiliations, and Most Important, a Common-Sense Capability for Ethical Discussions. All are Fiscal Conservatives.**

RPV – Council Election

This election is a critical event for RPV as residents will decide; do they wish to continue the mismanagement of RPV City Hall as demonstrated by Tom Long, Doug Stern and Steve Wolowicz, or is there a desire for transparency and open government with respect and civility to residents / taxpayers?

Following is an email message sent by Tom Long to his fellow attorneys at his law firm Nossaman LLP. Wondering when Long learned that RPV Council candidate Eric Alegria was employed by Nossaman client Healthcare Partners? While Tom Long's request does not seem illegal, his ethics in seeking contributions for an employee of a client do seem questionable.

From: Long, Thomas D.
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2011 9:31 AM
To: Nossaman_LA All Attorneys
Subject: Election 2011 City Council of Rancho Palos Verdes

I am termed out but am endorsing 3 candidates. Some of you may recall our former councilmember Susan Brooks. I am endorsing alternatives to her (please note this Howard!).

Eric Alegria works for HealthCare Partners (a Nossaman client). He is new to RPV and very much needs money to help support his campaign. As someone in his early 30s he will bring a breath of fresh air to a candidate list cluttered with worn out has beens like Susan Brooks .

Dave Emehiser and Jim Knight are the other two candidates I support.

Donations of up to \$99.99 do not result in your name being listed.

Checks can be made payable to "[Candidate Name] for RPV City Council" and sent to me.

Thomas D. Long
Attorney at Law
NOSSAMAN LLP
777 South Figueroa Street , 34th Floor
Los Angeles , CA 90017
tlong@nossaman.com
T 213.612.7800 F 213.612.7801
D 213.612.7871 M 213.718.4484
Please note our new address.

Candidates Ken Dyda, Dave Emenhiser, Jim Knight and Eric Alegria are supported by Tom Long, Doug Stern, Steve Wolowicz, Larry Clark and others who wish to continue the failed policies of the past. Following is a message sent by Tom Long on October 9th. Needless to say, Long's comments are typically illusory and lacking factual support.

Although some PVP Watch Newsletter subscribers have likely received Tom Long's outrageous and defamatory commentary, we believe all should be aware of Tom Long's disgusting behavior and the reasoning why we must elect those who are not beholden to Tom Long.

From: tomlong@palosverdes.com

To:

Subject: RPV Council Election November 2011

Date: Sun, 09 Oct 2011 16:41:28 -0800

From: tomlong@palosverdes.com

Subject: RPV Council Election November 2011

Message: October 9, 2011

Dear RPV Residents:

On Tuesday November 8th RPV residents will vote to select 3 new council members to replace Steve Wolowicz, Doug Stern and myself. There are 8 candidates, 7 of whom have been actively campaigning. I have posted connections to the candidates' webpages here

<http://www.palosverdes.com/tomlong/index.cfm?go=websites>

and answers to my questions here

<http://www.palosverdes.com/tomlong/index.cfm?go=election2011>

RPV TV (Channel 33 on Cox and 38 on Verizon) will be running broadcasts of city council candidate debates every day except Friday at 8 p.m. and school board candidate debates at 10 p.m. also every day except Friday. This election may be among the most important in the city's history.

Over the last 8 years that Steve, Doug and I have been on council some important changes have been made. The city obtained grant monies that funded the acquisition of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, establishing 2 square miles—15% of the city's land area--as open space in perpetuity. City revenues have increased from about \$1 per resident per day to about \$1.30. Most of the added revenue has been devoted to increase spending to restore decayed infrastructure that the city had neglected for decades. (*Editor: For those 8 years, Long, Stern and Wolowicz failed to address a most serious problem in RPV, The San Ramon / Tarapaca storm water runoff. It was not until Missetich and Campbell were elected did this problem get any attention and nothing has been done about the Portuguese Bend / PV*

Dr. South landslide). The council specifically decided to devote all of the new revenues from the Terranea resort to capital improvement projects rather than to the city's operating budget. We are on the brink of obtaining a \$9.4 million grant toward the repair of San Ramon canyon where the city and its staff outdid other applications from much larger agencies. We can also begin to plan for other civic improvements as well if we stay on course (*Wonder what Long has in mind, a new City Hall?*) All of this has happened with one of the smallest city payrolls and employee headcounts and, until last week, without a city employees' union—unlike most cities.

I am confident that the three candidates I endorse, Eric Alegria, Dave Emenhiser and Jim Knight will keep us on the constructive path the city chose 8 years ago with the 2003 re-election of Doug Stern and the election of Steve Wolowicz and me. Both Doug Stern and Steve Wolowicz have endorsed both Dave Emenhiser and Jim Knight as well. Dave and Jim both have considerable experience serving the city. Dave is a communications executive and a current planning commissioner and also previously chaired the city's finance committee. Dave is an exceptionally skilled consensus builder. Jim is a retired real estate professional and has been a planning commissioner for 8 years. Jim is exceptionally intelligent and detail oriented. Currently I am the only former planning commissioner on the council. The city has almost always had former planning commissioners on council. Eric is a health care executive. Eric is new to the city but has experience with other city governments and non-profits and is a state commissioner such that he can bring a valuable and different perspective to governing our city. I have seen that Eric is a quick study on the issues facing the city. Our current city manager had not lived in the area before she was hired and yet the perspective she has given us has been very helpful. Many residents of the city moved here relatively recently and deserve a voice as well. Eric can provide that voice. (*Editor: Alegria moved to RPV some 6 / 7 months ago and almost immediately declared his intent to seek an RPV Council seat. The three candidates Long is supporting all agreed to follow his agenda in effect, if elected, continuing Long's failed policies.*)

I am less confident that the 5 candidates I do not endorse will stay on a constructive path and I want to explain why. Unlike most voters I personally know all but one of the candidates and have had an opportunity to learn about their backgrounds and views. I address the candidates I do not endorse in alphabetical order below. Scroll down after my name if you are interested in these thoughts. (*Ed:Brooks, de la Rosa and Duhovic all rejected Tom Long's questions thus angering Tom Long*)

Tom Long

Mayor, Rancho Palos Verdes

(Ed.: Observe that Long signed this as Mayor and sent out using the Internet services provided to him by PV Net, RPV's IT vendor)

Susan Brooks is a former one-term councilmember from about a decade ago. She spent much of that term running for Congress. She is a charismatic public speaker, president of her HOA, and has been very involved in local issues, particularly opposition to Marymount's Measure P, although she is now supported by that Measure's proponents. Ms. Brooks has been candid about her stand on the issues. She has stressed that the city had half the employees it has now when she was on council. Even though RPV has far fewer public employees and much lower payroll costs than most other cities our size, Brooks will reduce public employment—and services--even further in a quest to return to the "good old days." Ms. Brooks claims that as mayor she "turned a \$2 million budget deficit into a \$2 million budget surplus." But she doesn't tell you she did so by abdicating the city's responsibilities. City infrastructure was neglected during Brooks' prior council term leaving the current council to deal with millions of dollars of deferred maintenance and property damage she and others left behind. Look for Brooks to seek abolition of the storm drain user fee and the utility user tax, which her PVP Watch supporters oppose and which combined make up about 20% of city revenue and are vital to street and storm drain maintenance. We could each save as much as \$90 per resident per year as a result, but the impact on our public infrastructure would damage our property values. Brooks and her fellow PVP Watch slate candidates Duhovic and De La Rosa should also be credited with the city employees' vote to form a union last week. Brooks and her supporters have exaggerated staff salary increases and have falsely stated that the council recently increased pension benefits. The council actually decreased pension benefits to the tune of estimated net savings of \$1.2 million to \$1.6 million over the next 6 years. By waging an anti-government, anti-staff campaign based on falsehoods, Brooks and her supporters have given the city a union for the first time in its history. This will lead to increased costs and reduced efficiency and undermines a positive employer-employee relationship that took years to achieve and is instrumental to the city's success in obtaining competitive grants.

Dora De La Rosa is the President of the School Board where she has served as a trustee for 8 years, a clear demonstration of her commitment to public service. Ms. De La Rosa is well spoken, intelligent, and the only lawyer among the candidates, although she has not actively practiced law for some time. Her views on city issues are a bit of a mystery. Although she is a registered Democrat, her support comes primarily from the Libertarian PVP Watch group, one of whose founders indicated that its goal is "to drive government toward zero" and which consistently opposed the city's open space preservation policies, recently describing them as "mismanagement." Ms. De La Rosa declined to answer any questions about her views indicating that "As to specific issues, I will wait until I am seated on the council and have all the information before making any decision on any issue." In sum, De La Rosa appears to be a mystery candidate. Her prior history does give some clue to her views, though. De La Rosa is a close political ally of Erin LaMonte a PVP Watch member who is currently running for School Board. LaMonte is the former PTA President who, while on a lobbying trip to Sacramento with then Board President De La Rosa met with the state official in charge of the

city's grant application for millions in state funding for the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve to urge the state to reject the city's application. (Former RPV Mayor Larry Clark confirmed the meeting by talking to the state official involved.) De La Rosa has been unhelpful on other issues important to RPV as well. Under her leadership the school board refused to cooperate with efforts to bring Eastview into the district and efforts to allow military dependents from the LA Air Force base to attend. The board also rejected the city's advice to put the Peninsula HS lights issue through the normal planning process, instead triggering a lawsuit through a confused and chaotic process that treated both sides of the question unfairly. Finally, as board president, De La Rosa has misapplied the Brown Act suggesting that it forbids board members from responding to public questions and public meetings and has stifled dissent from board members who have sought to change policy or just express an opinion De La Rosa did not like.

Jerry Duhovic is a financial services executive who has donated his time to public service as a member of the city's finance committee. Jerry is very well spoken and exceptionally intelligent. Although he declined to directly answer my questions, the issues page on his website provides a very good summary of his thinking and is very thoughtful and well written. Mr. Duhovic indicated that he would not accept endorsements from any sitting council members. But he does have the endorsement of PVP Watch and appears to share their views and distrust of city council members, city staff and city government in general. He has also repeated some of the misinformation Brooks and others have spread about city staff benefits and salaries. But his time in city government has been limited to only a couple of years so perhaps with more time he will be able to better focus on the real issues and less on political dogma. Until then I cannot support him despite his good qualifications.

Ken Dyda was on the second city council and was one of the city's founders and first mayors. No one has given more heart, soul, and time to the city than Ken Dyda and all of what he has given has been motivated purely and solely by a desire to serve the city with no thought to what is in his own best interest. Mr. Dyda is intelligent, well-spoken and a real asset to the city. He served on the council for several months with me filling a temporary vacancy. This allowed me to see that he is definitely up to the job despite his age (late 70s). Mr. Dyda would surely do his best to figure out what is best for the city. However, I think electing Mr. Dyda to council at this time would be wrong. Mr. Dyda is not shy with his opinions, so the new council will have the benefit of his views whether he is elected or not. When he was appointed to serve for a few months he hit the ground running because he was already familiar with all of the issues. He will spend the same amount of time helping the city as an elder statesman (which has been his role now for decades). It is time to develop new leadership for the future and electing Mr. Dyda would only delay developing that new leadership. I am also concerned that as a councilmember Mr. Dyda would micromanage the city. The city has changed in the decades since Mr. Dyda was first elected. It is no longer a brand new city with inexperienced staff. Instead it has a highly professional staff that needs to be allowed to run day to day affairs without improper

interference. Indeed state law requires as much, making "council manic interference" illegal. The council is a board of directors and sets policy. Day-to-day decisions are handled by staff without favoritism toward the friends of particular council members. Mr. Dada's desire to put individual council members into city hall and supervising departments, however well intentioned, would be a serious mistake. Moreover, realistically, Mr. Dyda may not be able to serve 2 terms. Term limits means we will be having a lot of turnover on council in the future. We should not make the situation even worse by electing people who are much less likely to be able to serve a second term.

Cynthia Smith is the candidate about whom I know nothing. She did not respond to my efforts to contact her and I have been unable to find a website or any campaign information about her. I have no knowledge of her background or views and have seen no means for me or other voters to learn more about her.

Editor: Tom Long's ranting clearly demonstrates why he has been such a poor Council member. His arrogance, lack of civility as well as poor judgment have been detrimental to RPV. While Doug Stern and Steve Wolowicz have not displayed as much demagoguery, their attitudes and actions have more often than not been less than positive as well.

In the last newsletter we pointed out Tom Long's website and the fact that Council candidates Emenhiser, Knight and Alegria had dutifully responded to Long's questions set wherein they clearly provided replies that satisfied Tom Long. It seems a safe conclusion that if Emenhiser, Knight and Alegria were to be elected, they would follow in Tom Long's, Doug Stern and Steve Wolowicz footsteps. Why would anyone with common sense believe otherwise?

Visitors to Tom Long's website will find that Jerry Duhovic, Dora de la Rosa & Susan Brooks all declined to respond to Tom Long's attempt to influence, future Council direction, thus unleashing Long's vicious comments about them.

RPV – EMPLOYEE UNION / PENSION REFORM

Tom Long's ranting claims that some of the Council candidates are responsible for RPV employees deciding to associate themselves with a public employees union. Long's hysteria is but more rhetorical nonsense.

Let's look at the facts. It was Tom Long, Doug Stern and Steve Wolowicz who rammed the recent "pension reform" proposal through on a 3 / 2 vote. These three denied a request by

Councilmen Campbell and Missetich to take the time to "get it right." Campbell and Missetich wanted more information and a better analysis on employee impact as it was reported that some of the senior staff, who are approaching 55, will reap a retirement financial bonanza while it appears the lower level staff will not be as well treated. One example, a 30-year employee making \$100,000 annually would receive a pension of \$75,000 annually FOR LIFE. An in-depth analysis is critical to measuring these observations.

That the staff has decided to associate themselves with a public employees union is clearly a reflection on the *current* Council and City Hall management and not on who might be elected this November. Perhaps a union is a good thing for the taxpayers as benefits and raises will henceforth be negotiated in a public forum and likely will not be as generous as recent Councils have granted to "prevent union intrusion" in RPV.

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 fairly as well. In general, there are a great many residents who perceive that public employees have cushy jobs with GREAT benefits. We found the staff protests at the September 20th Council meeting of the proposed pension changes pathetic and over the line. Few in the community have received the generous pay and benefits that the RPV staff received these past few years and Staff is not leaving the taxpayers many choices other than to reduce staff to reduce numbers to control the ballooning payroll expense.

In the last Newsletter we reported the following:

During this seven-year period, the tenure of Tom Long, Doug Stern and Stefan Wolowicz:

- Added 13 Full Time Employees, an increase of 29%
- Increased Salaries by \$2,409,700 or approximately 85%
- Increased Benefits by \$1,143, 576 or approximately 130%

And while the employee costs were increasing, City Hall failed to maintain the Ladera Linda property, drove out the Montessori school that was widely used and desired by RPV residents, losing an \$80,000 annual revenue stream, and now plans to spend \$100,000 to determine how the Ladera Linda property should be used. And Tom Long is frustrated..... How about RPV residents....?

Since then, Doug Stern commented at the October 4th Council meeting that reports of increased salaries and benefits were bogus. Well... for those interested in the true facts we have posted on the PVP Watch website (Current Issues page) the May 4, 2004 staff report titled " Revisions to the Proposed Budget for FY 2004-2005. Also posted at www.pvpwatch.com is the RPV budget for FY 2011 - 2012. As they say, figures don't lie but

Another bit of interesting data is that this staff report that surfaced during our investigations is not listed on the agenda for May 4, 2004. However, the June 1, 2004 Council agenda indicates that the Budget revision item was discussed at the May 4th Council meeting. We wonder why the May 4th Budget revision item is not posted on the May 4th agenda? Is not this the official RPV record?

PENINSULA SCHOOLS - MEASURE M

Measure "M" combines existing Measures "P" and "V" into one tax and continues the current cost of \$374 per year. Whether or not you consider this to be a new tax or an old tax, you should look at the options and the specifics of the proposal.

The unpleasant options according to the proponents include eliminating approximately 90 teaching positions and approximately 40 classified positions. There is also the potential for closing a K-5 site, reducing / eliminating athletic programs, music, arts, AP courses, etc.

At the same time, Measure M does not have a Sunset Clause and is therefore a potential tax in perpetuity regardless of future State funding. However, the Measure M Parcel Tax does have to be enacted by a board vote each year, which is something the present Parcel Taxes do not have because of the specified end date (June 2013). When one looks at the current chaos in Sacramento it does not seem like financial problems there will end any time in the foreseeable future.

Conducting a parcel tax election is expensive with the 2007 election costing almost \$270,000 and \$148,000 in 2009. This year the cost for LA County election services is estimated at \$20,000 (because PVPUSD already has a scheduled election). This does not include the public information costs which will be approximately \$125,000. Future elections, if required, would cost significantly more if scheduled in an off election year.

In general, we believe that everyone should pay a school parcel tax since everyone benefits whether or not they have kids in school. Seniors, however, will again have an exemption opportunity and we suggest that Seniors who plan on taking the exemption not vote on Measure "M." Committing others to a tax when taking an exemption does not seem appropriate. That is the same position we took on the RPV Storm Drain User Fee

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.

This issue of the Newsletter omits subscriber responses because of the length of Tom Long's epistles.

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