

PVP Watch Newsletter – November 27, 2010

To Our Friends & Supporters

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The RPV City Council meeting on November 16th was a tremulous occasion lasting until almost 2 AM Wednesday morning with two major items; proposals for development at Lower Hesse Park and the Annenberg Companion Animal facility at Lower Pint Vicente.

There were approximately 50 speakers concerning the proposed Annenberg project with a majority in opposition with this item taking approximately four (4) hours of discussion. Council members Tom Long & Doug Stern were vigorous in their support of the project while Mayor Wolowicz and Council members Anthony Misetich and Brian Campbell opposed. With the final vote, 3 to 2 in opposition, Council member Tom Long became very venomous in his accusations of his fellow Council members. Subsequently Long posted Newsletters on November 17th and November 20th. The November 20th Newsletter is posted at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the Current Issues page and it is labeled "Annenberg – T. Long letter – Nov.20, 2010."

Now it really gets interesting and Tom Long can be likened to a petulant child "*screaming for attention*." In his November 20th letter, Long states, "*Over the course of the past few months Annenberg's representatives met with each councilmember and was assured of support by each. Most significantly Mayor Wolowicz assured the foundation that he was "100% in support" of allowing the application to proceed.*"

During the November 16th Council meeting discussion, Council member Brian Campbell clearly stated that he had not had any recent contact with Annenberg representatives. Mayor Wolowicz and Council member Anthony Misetich have not yet publicly responded to Council member Long's allegations. Hopefully they will soon do so as RPV residents are entitled to know the truth. Did Annenberg *improperly* seek to get Council members votes / support before the hearing or is this just more of Tom Long's irrational rhetoric?

Long went on that *in 2008 that Council voted 4-1 (Clark, Gardiner, Long and Stern in favor with Wolowicz dissenting) to proceed with the planning application for the Annenberg Project. At the time the council determined that the project would not require a general plan amendment. The project continued to move forward to the point that a Draft EIR was prepared and an initial*

hearing was held before the planning commission a few months ago. It now seems that Council erred when it declared that the project would not require a general plan amendment. Also that there are serious deed restrictions that limit the use of the Lower Point Vicente property that staff now claims it was aware of that supposedly had not previously been acknowledged. This entire issue of Annenberg paying for the "Vision Plan" and the Annenberg relationship with the previous RPV Council is beginning to have a *serious odor*.

December 7th the RPV Council will elect the Mayor & Mayor Pro Tem for 2011. Tom Long is next in line to be Mayor. In view of his recent and past actions as well, will the majority find him to be the most appropriate person to be Mayor of RPV in 2011? We shall see....

Employee Pensions & Benefits

The RPV Council has scheduled a third November meeting for November 30th with an agenda that includes item #5 Employee Pension Workshop. This is the result of the November 4th meeting wherein the Council accepted item #10 PENSION REVISION.

The essence of the Pension Revision proposal was:

* *Select and retain a retirement plan consulting firm to assist in the design of an alternative defined contribution retirement program similar to a standard 401 (k) plan and cost-saving suggestions to modify the current defined benefit plan.*

* *Based on the information provided by the consultant and subcommittee The City Council will deliberate and select a new retirement plan for all new employees hired after July 1, 2011. It is important to note that no part of this recommendation is to change any part of the current plan for existing employees.*

While the initial proposal to select a retirement plan for employees *hired after July 1, 2011* is a good start, the proposal does not go far enough as RPV, as well as other local Cities for that matter, should thoroughly evaluate employee pension and benefit plans. As we understand the current situation, requests to Calpers for "unfunded liability" and other financial requests are not receiving meaningful response. News reports are rife with commentary concerning mismanagement and excessive *finder's fee awards* by Calpers managers.

The issue of public employee benefits is a concern. While all employers, public & private should treat employees fairly, it seems that public employees are very generously compensated and a comparison between public employee and private employee benefits are in order.

Posted at www.pvpwatch.com / Current Issues page are RPV Salary Ranges FY 2010 / 2011.

There are fifteen positions having a top rate exceeding \$100,000 annually.

Following is a partial listing of RPV employee benefits obtained from the RPV website:

SICK LEAVE: Up to 12 days per year. **WELLNESS LEAVE:** Employees are eligible to earn four and one half hours of paid wellness leave for ten consecutive weeks of perfect attendance without using any sick leave time.

HEALTH INSURANCE: Medical, vision and dental coverage is provided. The City currently pays the entire premium for the employee and ½ the dependent care premium. The City also provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all employees and immediate family members.

LIFE INSURANCE: The City pays the entire premium on a life insurance policy at twice the employee's annual salary.

EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE PROGRAM: Employees are eligible to receive monetary awards of up to 5% of their gross annual pay in recognition of exemplary performance, subject to the approval of the Department Head and City Manager.

RETIREMENT: The City participates in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) using the 2.5% at 55 formula. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes pays 6.5% of the employee's 8% share, with the employee contributing the remaining 1.5% of his/her annual salary on a pre-tax basis. The City also makes additional contributions to the employee's retirement account that vary from year to year depending on investment returns. Upon early separation prior to vesting employees may cash out or roll over into an eligible account the Employee's portion (8%) plus accrued interest.

RETIREMENT HEALTH SAVINGS PROGRAM: The City maintains a mandatory Retirement Health Savings Program to provide a post-retirement health benefit to employees. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes contributes \$51.65 per pay period and the employee contributes 1% of their salary on a pre-tax basis to a retirement health savings account. Participants can manage their contributions among various offered funds. The retirement health savings account balance may then be used for health-related approved expenses by the employee upon retirement or separation of service to the City.

Question: what is current policy concerning sick leave? Are employees compensated at end of year or at any time for unused sick leave time? Can unused sick leave time be applied to pensions?

What are residents / taxpayer opinions of benefits provided RPV employees? Although we have not checked with other local Cities, it is likely that employee benefits are similar to RPV.

Saving Lower Pointe Vicente (LPV)

Although the RPV Council rejected, by a majority vote at its November 16th meeting, to not accept the Staff report concerning the Annenberg project at Lower Point Vicente, the future of Annenberg in RPV is not yet clear.

Following is a message RPV distributed on Wednesday November 24th:

On December 21, 2010, the City Council will conduct a public meeting to provide Staff with direction on procedural matters in regards to the active planning applications for the Annenberg Project at Lower Point Vicente. The purpose of bringing this item to the City Council is not for the City Council to reconsider its decision made on November 16th but to provide Staff with direction on how to move forward given the processing alternatives that now exist given the City Council's action on November 16th.

A Staff Report will be posted on the City's website before the December 21st meeting. A list-serve message will announce the availability of the Staff Report. Inquiries should be directed to Ara Mihranian at 310-544-5228 or via email at aram@rpv.com.

We understand that the Annenberg project will likely be on the December 14th Planning Commission agenda as well.

Late Breaking News

Sorry to report that Sunshine's mother suffered a massive stroke on Friday and passed away Sunday November 28th at her home in Rolling Hills Estates. She was 92 years young. Some may have known her as Mrs. Farmer G (Grimes). The Grimes were early Peninsula residents farming and raising much of their food. For the few that are not aware, Sunshine is one of the stalwarts of the Peninsula striving to protect trails and other natural attributes.

Responses to November 9th Newsletter

Annenberg Project

Thanks for the prompt delivery of your recent PVP Watch Newsletter. I found that the most interesting moment of the planning meeting came when our CITY PLANNER CHIEF Mr. Rojas confirmed my suspicions. The entire RPV or PV Vision Plan is a hoax. It was a violation of the PUBLIC TRUST to sponsor a back door obfuscated push to approve a "vision" plan proposed and paid for by outsiders---the ANNENBERG'S. This is a clear violation of every citizen on the hill regardless of PARTY affiliation or feeling about this illegal project violating DEED restrictions. This VIOLATION of public trust and the illegal back door action by the CITY

COUNCIL and PLANNING COMMISSION must be stopped immediately. Please feel free to refer this information to the US Government agencies responsible for protecting the last acres of open park space on the bluffs of the PVP. The EPA must be made aware of this attempt to poison our children with this huge LEAD excavation project that could also destabilize and cause millions of dollars of damage to the residents adjacent to the proposed project.

They are going about this backwards. The project does not comply with the general plan. There is an outpouring of opposition. The needs assessments done heretofore have NEVER indicated a need, much less a want, for this type of project. NPS has made it clear that in order to amend the POU they need to be satisfied that there is a recreational need in the community that will be satisfied by this project. The Council had better not have ANOTHER needs assessment done at taxpayer expense, and certainly better not think about having one prepared by a consultant paid for by Annenberg!

To allow staff to continue to work with Annenberg to obtain POU and deed modifications is basically flipping the finger to all the residents of RPV. They don't care what we want; all they want is the money. Maybe they should all be recalled.

There he goes again. Tom Long, RPV city councilman, bloviating about the failure of the non-believers to accept his ready, fire, aim approach to another important issue. In his latest diatribe, he publicly castigates councilmen Wolowicz, Campbell and Missetich for having the audacity to basically use common sense in postponing the misguided Annenberg project. The fact that the city bureaucrats sold their souls for a \$250,000 donation from Annenberg and have been outed for their attempt to fast track the project with little or no taxpayer input has Long in full attack mode. How the Annenberg project plays out depends on whether the National Park Service enforces the deed restrictions that were imposed when RPV was granted the property or bows to Annenberg political pressure. It also depends on the will of the people to preserve the RPV General Plan currently under attack from the special interest groups that support Long and Councilman Stern. However, the worst is yet to come as they try to convince RPV residents through an expensive special election to turn RPV into a charter city just like Bell. Be afraid, very afraid – the Annenberg caper is just a scuffle compared with the looming battle over the future of RPV.

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 here.

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