

PVP Watch Newsletter – February 11, 2012

To Our Friends and Supporters

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Knock-Knock Bandits

The Knock-Knock bandits (*people knock on the door if you answer they come up with some story if not, they break in*) continue to vandalize some RPV Neighborhoods and below is an email message PVP Watch received from Eastview area Rolling Hills Rivera Homeowners Association (RHRHA) president Jeanne Lacombe. The Eastview area is presumably targeted because of the easy access to neighborhoods from Western Avenue.

"All areas have had increases in break ins recently. We just had another break in on Avenida Estudiante which is next to Dodson Middle School. This occurred today 2/9/12 between 8:45 and 9:45am. The homeowner saw someone sitting in a car parked across the street. This was reported to the Sheriff Dept. There have been four other robberies in the past two months in our neighborhood that occurred within 1 hour of the homeowner being gone. Knock-Knock bandits are here and we are being watched. Let's work together to keep them out of our neighborhoods."

The following is an excerpt from the RHRHA January Newsletter. The RHRHA delivers an excellent newsletter and PVP Watch has posted the entire January newsletter at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the Newsletter page.

Crimes in Rancho Palos Verdes

According to the Lomita Sheriff website www.LomitaSheriff.com there were approximately 177 crimes in RPV between November 15th and January 15th. Sheriff Deputy Brandon Epp informed RHRHA that there has been a rash of "knock-knock bandits" on the hill. The criminals knock and if someone answers they make up a plausible story for why they're there. If nobody answers they go around to the back or side of the house to gain entry. Vehicle theft is also rising. A common technique is for one scumbag to drive slowly down the street while their scumbag friend walks down the street trying car door handles.

Most of these crimes occurred during daylight hours and on weekdays. Monday was the most popular day. Two burglaries in our neighborhood occurred within minutes after the homeowner left home only to return a short time later. This possibly means homes are being watched and setup. We need to send the message that we are watching the criminals. So who's watching us and how are they doing it?

Read the RHRHA newsletter, lots of good data there as all neighborhoods are vulnerable. Those who leave valuables, cell phones, laptops, etc in plain sight in unlocked automobiles are likely to have them stolen. Making easy opportunities for thieves is not prudent.

PVP Schools

Kudos to Peninsula High computer-science team guided by instructor Hassan Twiet as they prepare for the "CyberPatriots" nation-wide contest in Maryland in late March. The contest will be about protecting network security from cyberthreats. Last year the Peninsula High team finished 7th nationally.

It's too bad that the three PV High students who decided to penetrate the PVPUSD system to manipulate grades and download tests might have been challenged to test their skills in a more positive manner than what they did. While it was wrong to unlawfully access the PVPUSD computer system and there will be a price to pay for their indiscretions, it does point out that young people, left unchallenged, will seek opportunities to test their skills and sometimes, unfortunately, go to the wrong places.

There was the teacher uprising at the January 24th PVPUSD board meeting in regards to changing student grades. It seems that teachers perceive themselves as the ultimate authority and that approximately 40 teachers from PV High were particularly loud, insistent, and unruly demanding autonomy to disregard the School Board directive for posting final grades. PVP

Watch has voiced our concerns previously about the union-fed frenzy that the local teachers can be seen buying into. This community just voted to support a parcel tax for our schools and in return we get spoiled teachers stomping their feet about their rights supposedly being violated. We urge the Superintendent and School Board to stand strong and remind the teachers how good they have it and get back to teaching.

Seniors: It is renewal time for filing Measure M Parcel Tax exemptions as completed exemption forms MUST be received by PVPUSD by the end of May for the 2012 / 2013 fiscal year. Forms are posted on the PVP Watch website as well as the PVPUSD website.

Rolling Hills Estates (RHE)

Rural RHE where seldom does anything controversial occurs has now stirred up a "hornets nest" by proposing to widen PV Dr. North beginning at Crenshaw and proceeding West to the PVE border. Although there might be some understanding if the project was for solving auto traffic matters or for equestrian purposes but apparently the project is to expand a BICYCLE roadway. Unknown are the plans for east of Crenshaw which is already a vehicle quagmire during heavy traffic periods. Just what we need, more bicycle traffic on the Peninsula.

RPV - San Ramon Stabilization Project

It now appears that as the Council finalizes its Goals and Priorities, the San Ramon Stabilization Project will be near the top of the list. The good news is that City Hall has received a commitment from Sacramento for some \$9.5 million which is about half of the cost for the project. City Hall has been wasting time and money (\$48,000 annually for Washington DC consultant) seeking to get funds from the "Fed's." Anyone who follows what is going on in Congress realizes that waiting for \$\$\$ from the federal government is likely to be a very long wait. Time to move on and it would be nice to learn if the Council has yet determined what the options are and what they are going to do?

In the spirit of helpfulness, we offer the following:

- We understand that RPV has already committed about \$2 million for engineering, plan development, EIR etc. There are, thank Terranea, ample funds in reserves so dedicate \$3

million of reserve funds to the San Ramon project. After all, what is more important than this project?

- Having committed this \$5 million, RPV would now be in a solid position (AKA having skin in the game) to approach Supervisor Knabe asking for a commitment of \$3 million. Is not a good portion of the Tarapaca slide being caused by storm water coming from LA County Land? Properly presented, high probability Supervisor Knabe can find \$3 million for the project.

- Now with \$8 million committed, newly elected LA City Councilman Joe Buscaino should be easily approachable for another \$2 to \$3 million to complete the project.

Will be interesting to see if we soon get a positive signal on this very important project from RPV City Hall.

New RPV - PV Net Agreement

The new PV Net agreement was item 5 on the February 7th RPV Council agenda. RPV Finance Director McLean began his PowerPoint presentation with a photo depicting Ted Vegvari, PV Net principal and Bill Gates, Microsoft. The significance of the Gates photo was not apparent. McLean included the following Full Time Employee (FTE) data in his presentation.

Help Desk Support Services - - 0.5 FTE of PV NET staff - - - - - \$11,500 / month

Server & IT Infrastructure Support Services - - 0.5 FTE of PV NET staff - - \$2,800 / month

Website Support Services - - - 0.5 FTE of PV NET staff - - - - - \$4,000 / month

GIS Services - - - - 1.0 FTE of PV NET staff - - - - - \$6,000 / month

Councilman Duhovic questioned RPV Finance Director McLean concerning the monthly cost numbers vs. the FTE's as the \$11,500 monthly "Help Desk" costs equate to approximately 13 man hours per day ($\$11,500 / 22 \text{ days} / \$40 \text{ per hour} = 13$) yet RPV Finance Director McLean's chart depicted .5 FTE for that task. RPV Finance Director McLean's response was to the effect that he had made a mistake by posting these numbers as he did not know what the actual FTE amounts were. RPV Finance Director McLean further stated that the depicted monthly costs of \$24,300 were based on HISTORICAL TREND LINE DATA NOT SPECIFIC BUSINESS CRITERIA. Is there anyone who really believes that RPV funds are being managed in a safe

and prudent manner? The question now is how much longer is the RPV Council going to tolerate what appears to be serious management incompetence.

RPV – Records Retention

Records retention was item "F" on the February 7th Consent Calendar agenda and the proposal by staff was to eliminate all electronic records retention and to only retain paper copies of those documents determined necessary by staff. Apparently staff thought that eliminating records would be a vehicle for stifling public records requests from taxpayers seeking to find out what is going on at City Hall. Mayor Pro Tem Campbell quickly saw thru the charade and made a motion that ALL records destruction cease IMMEDIATELY until the Council has had an opportunity to establish an appropriate policy. The motion carried 4 to 1 with Council member Susan Brooks dissenting. Observers have commented that City Manager Lehr was very *disturbed* that staff efforts to discard pertinent RPV records was rebuffed by the Council.

Annenberg at Lower Pt Vicente

The issue is the proposed Lower Point Vicente Parking Lot Expansion Project that was deemed to be separate and not related to the proposed "Companion Animal Facility" at Lower Pt Vicente. When the project was being developed Annenberg stated that it would be paid for by Annenberg regardless of the outcome of the proposed "Companion Animal Facility."

At the Planning Commission's request, a status update on the proposed Lower Point Vicente Parking Lot Expansion Project was provided to the Commission at its October 11, 2011 meeting. Staff reported to the Commission that while the Annenberg Foundation had not formally stated that it no longer intended to construct the parking lot project or make any other charitable contributions to the City, Staff understood that this was the Foundation's decision. The Commission suggested getting clarification from the Annenberg Foundation and recommended that this issue be reviewed by the City Council after January 2012. Staff apprised the City Manager of the Commission's discussion and on November 8, 2011, the City Manager sent a letter to Leonard Aube of the Annenberg Foundation asking for the Foundation's formal position regarding the parking lot project. In response to Staff's recent follow-up inquiries on the matter, Staff has received the following response from Mr. Aube:

"Dear Ara,

I apologize for the back and forth with the phone tag. I had hoped to connect with you in person, however, in the spirit of expediency I write to underscore the Foundation's position that we have no intent to resurrect or reconsider a relationship with the City of Rancho Palos Verdes or its affiliated entities at any level.

We wish you well in your future endeavors,

Len"

Unknown is the amount of staff time and costs that RPV consumed for this project that will not likely be recovered. This entire problem can be attributed to City Manager Lehr as she has final approval of what the staff may or may not do? Most likely former Councilmen Tom Long and Doug Stern have their fingerprints on this but they are now out of office and no longer directly accountable. RPV City Manager Lehr allowed this "deal" to go forward without apparently making a *finding* that the proposed "Companion Animal Facility" project would meet the site deed restrictions.

We are unaware if Annenberg made a written commitment for the Parking Lot Expansion Project. If they did, then RPV should seek reimbursement. If it was only a verbal commitment, then likely all is lost and the taxpayers will again "pick up the tab" for poor City Hall management

PV Drive East

Continuing the PV Drive East (PVDE) saga, RPV conducted a speed survey last November. Our understanding is that when traffic studies are being conducted there is to be no traffic enforcement in order to get a *natural* traffic flow. It was reported that, despite State guidelines, Deputy Knox was photographed in the area just prior to the traffic survey. While he apparently did not write any citations, his being in the area does raise concern about compliance and integrity of the survey.

Regardless, the survey outcome was that the whole stretch of PVDE from Miraleste Drive. to the northern city limit should be increased 5mph (minimally); to 35mph. Unknown is when the RPV will establish the new speed limits and post the appropriate signage. However, with the published results of the new survey, officers cannot legitimately issue citations using radar since the speed limit of 30mph is not defensible.

Although not yet posted, the PVDE speed limits from the top of the switchbacks at Ganado to the northern border with RHE will be a uniform 35MPH. So far, all known citations that were contested for 41MPH along PVDE have been dismissed.

RPV – Employee Union and Pensions

The Council has directed that City Manager Lehr begin drafting a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) which will be the labor agreement with the newly formed Employee Association. Now that RPV employees have decided that they desire union representation, which is their right to do, there must be an agreement (MOU) that clearly defines what the work rules are. Undoubtedly what will be included are sick days, benefits, pension contributions etc. since, going forward these topics will be negotiated and not given at the whim of the Council or the City Manager.

Of concern to all residents is the Unfunded Pension Liabilities situation. The Council has made it known that they intend to vigorously pursue this problem. Most likely when the new Finance Committee is reconstituted they will be given this assignment.

Newsletter Responses

Reader comments are welcomed and should be sent to info@pvpwatch.com. Newsletter responses are posted with names removed and with 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 in the past 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