

PVP Watch Newsletter – March 21, 2011

To Our Friends & Supporters

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Congratulations to RPV residents for recognizing the wisdom of voting **NO** on RPV Measure C on March 8th. For those who did not check out the final results, **No** won by over 72%. However, as PVP Watch reported during the recent Measure C campaign, we were not against all charters, just the proposed Measure C charter. While it does seem that a well-written charter might be beneficial to RPV, it is critical that citizen input be obtained and included to determine what is best for RPV and its residents."

Some may conclude that being a General Law city has worked well for over 35 years and why should we change? We believe there are potential benefits that should be explored and therefore, in view of the potential opportunity for improvement, PVP Watch has determined that our resources can lead the public debate on the Charter City concept for RPV. We plan to speak with others who have experience developing charters and who understand the management of a City in a charter environment. We will report what we learn, what residents say and will likely host some public discussion forums as we go forward. Again, public input is critical and please send comments to info@pvpwatch.com.

Lower Point Vicente & Annenberg

Likely most have observed the full-page advertisements in both the PV News and the Daily Breeze for what is now being identified as "Discovery Park." How the sizzle does change!

A letter in the Daily Breeze (March 20th) by George Neuner said it well:

"Annenberg may have done many good things elsewhere but their proposed project for Lower Point Vicente Park is largely inappropriate, not needed and not wanted. The main objection is the large new building (five times the size of the existing museum), with acres of surrounding hardscape and half-acre dog run, which would be managed and operated by Annenberg."

According to Mr. Neuner, "roughly a third of the building would be for an executive office complex on the second floor accommodating about 25 people, which would be served by a separate elevator from an indoor parking area for 27 cars".... "It is more likely these facilities are for Annenberg's private use".... "The remaining third of the building would include lobbies, an auditorium and two classrooms. These were added to the original plan so the building could be touted as an "education" center. However, the design layout nicely lends itself to using this part of the building, plus the second floor ocean view terrace, for private social affairs after normal closing hours."" The Annenberg project would destroy much of the current serene environment and undeveloped open space views."

— George Neuner

(Editor – Mr. Neuner's letter was parsed for brevity)

(Editor – one of many issues concerning the Annenberg project is the ambiguity of what is being planned and that current RPV Mayor Tom Long & Councilman Doug Stern are aggressively pushing this project. Why are Long & Stern so aggressive in their desire to approve this project?) What are subscriber opinions concerning this important issue?

San Ramon Stabilization Project

The San Ramon Stabilization Project was on the March 1st RPV Council agenda and we must compliment both the RPV staff and Harris Associates for a quality product. Our concerns, however, relate to costs and time frames. Projected design and construction costs are approximately \$12,700,000 to which a contingency cost of \$6,500,000 or approximately 50% has been added. Does not a 50% contingency cost seem excessive? Some perceive that if RPV could obtain a matching grant for 50% of an inflated cost of ~\$20,000,000 then RPV could pocket the difference. We wonder, are the granting agencies that stupid that they would not want to verify hard cost data before making funding commitments? Of course looking at what goes on in Sacramento and Washington DC perhaps that is the case.

It does seem however that snails are moving faster than the critical Sam Ramon Stabilization Project with current scheduling:

- * Complete Design – 9 months.
- * Bid Ready Documents – 12 months (9 + 3)
- * Environmental Approval 9 - 24 months after Design.
- * Ready to Bid 18 - 33 Months.

It would seem that as critical as this project is to protection of life and property, the RPV Council would direct this project to move at a much faster pace. San Ramon / Tarapaca has been at the top of the “to do” list for several years. Is the Council waiting for collapse of the PV Drive East switchbacks so that it can be declared a “disaster” and get Federal assistance \$\$\$? The big question: Why doesn't the budget reflect the stated “concern” of the Council?

RPV – Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for Residential Properties.

Item #12 on the March 15th RPV Council agenda was a proposal to develop floor area ratios for residential properties in RPV. Interesting was that Staff reported that the existing *Neighborhood Compatibility* review process has been working well and Staff did not see a need for further regulations. Several Planning Commissioners were present including current Chair Dave Tomlin who concurred with the Staff report. Not surprising was that Mayor Tom Long disagreed with the Staff & Planning Commissioners and thought Staff should go "back to the drawing board" as sometime in the future there may be a need for floor area ratios (FAR). Councilmen Stern & Wolowicz, to their credit, disagreed with Long and voted to terminate the FAR proposal as they believed adding an FAR would create more problems than solutions. Unfortunately, Anthony Misetich & Brian Campbell explicitly followed along with Tom Long and the motion carried. We mention this because this is but another example of how the Council wastes valuable staff resources to satisfy Council whims.

Public Employee Pensions & the Need for Reform.

It would seem that few are unaware of the current crisis in California and elsewhere concerning public employee pensions and benefits. Some recent numbers have been reported that RPV's Unfunded Liability for employee pensions likely now exceeds \$9,000,000. Among other factors, the Unfunded Liability crisis is subject to increases / decreases in CalPERS asset value.

Recently the "Little Hoover Commission" published a report on what California must do to solve the Unfunded Liability crisis. The Executive Summary is posted at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the Position Papers page.

Among the various recommendations are:

- 1. The Legislature should give state and local governments the authority to alter the future, unaccrued benefits for current public employees.*
- 2. California should move to a "hybrid" retirement model - a lower level of Defined Benefit combined with a 401(k) style Defined Contribution plan.*
- 3. Cap the salary that can be used to determine pension allowances, or cap the pension, at a level that is reasonable and fair.*
- 4. The Legislature must prohibit retroactive pension increases.*

As significant as pension issues are, the RPV problem is aggravated by generous benefits packages and liberal salary programs.

Palos Verdes Marathon (PV Marathon)

This year the PV Marathon will begin & end in RPV adjacent to Terranea at the fisherman's access parking lot on PV Drive South. Date is May 14th and the event is sponsored by the Peninsula Kiwanis Club. Kudos to the RPV Council for overcoming the many initial problems and making this event "happen." For more information go to www.palosverdes.com/marathon.

PVP Schools

PVP schools have their issues as well and await budget news from Sacramento. On March 15th, PVPUSD did the usual by issuing "pink slips" to an unknown number of teachers and other employees while the board awaits budget numbers from Sacramento. Apparently Governor Brown's latest is attempting to have a June ballot to maintain past tax increases. Unfortunately we have not seen any serious effort by Sacramento to reduce pension and other ongoing expenses. Seems to be the typical Sacramento scenario, attempt to hold the taxpayers hostage by cutting their children's education. Of course the teachers union is culpable as well.

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.

Subscriber Comments:

We are not posting Newsletter responses in this newsletter as most were related to Measure C. The People have spoken and it is time to move on.

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 com-puter 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