

PVP Watch Newsletter – March 22, 2010

To Our Friends & Supporters

Peninsula Schools

I guess we don't need to remind everyone that Sacramento budget problems remain **UGLY**. While some issues remain distant, PVP school budget cuts are real and the consequences are bleak.

Several documents, Personnel Matters and Teachers Seniority are posted at www.pvpwatch.com. Click on the PVP Schools button in the lower left corner. Both documents are well worth reading. One of the current (among many) issues is that union agreements dictate that layoffs are by teacher seniority and many fine teachers with lesser seniority are those losing their jobs. Some maintain that this is discriminatory and that teacher performance should be a consideration as well. The Teachers Seniority posting presents good arguments for this discussion.

The current PVPUSD agreement with the teachers union terminates in a June / July time frame. One of the PVPUSD proposals is to eliminate 5 days from the current school calendar. Days selected would be those where typically there is greater absence (day before Thanksgiving etc). We would hope that the union would display greater flexibility than it has in the past and work constructively with the school board to find ways to have more teachers share the problem rather than having the newer teachers make the greater sacrifices. We also believe that is past time for incentive pay for teachers. The long trumpeted teacher concerns about favoritism and arbitrariness among principals in determining teacher quality is no longer tenable. First of all school principals, like any other business manager, favor those who do their job well and please their customers (students / parents). It is those who do not do their job well and aggravate their customers with poor performance whose jobs are protected by unions that make it difficult for all. In the case of schools, students (customers) in these classes suffer. We wonder why teacher unions do not have greater interest in maintaining standards based on proficiency rather than seniority?

Public Notice

The PVPUSD Science Fair displaying science research by over 100 high school students will be held at the South Coast Botanical Gardens this Thursday, March 25. Public viewing is from 2:00 PM until 3:30 PM with the awards ceremony at 3:30 PM. For more information, you may contact Mr. Peter Starodub, Director of Science Research at Peninsula High School at 377-4888 ext 210.

RPV – Marymount College

The Marymount saga continues on. Marymount has recently declared that it intends to place an initiative on the November 2010 for RPV residents to vote their approval / disapproval for the *Marymount Plan*. For those wondering why Marymount finds this action necessary, briefly the answer is the endless delays caused by RPV City Hall. Information concerning the *Marymount Plan* can be found at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the Current Issues page and click on *Marymount Plan – March 2010*. Also on the Current Issues page is an epistle distributed by RPV Councilman Doug Stern on March 13th *questioning* the *Marymount Plan*. Apparently Marymount attorneys found some / many of Councilman Stern's comments to not be accurate and so advised Mr. Stern.

We find many of Stern's comments impudent. Several of his comments:

... *"and some of the reasons that I am troubled that a significant and complex land use decision may become a voter initiative."*

.... *"I am not a fan of the initiative process, and do not believe that it leads to good laws or good public policy."*

.... *Once the Initiative Petitions are circulating, I would urge RPV residents to NOT sign them"*

..... *"Placing the matters on the ballot will also cost the residents tens of thousands of dollars, as the city is obligated to pay the costs of the election, and there otherwise would be no RPV election in November 2010."* (Editor: apparently Stern believes residents / voters are not qualified to make good decisions and therefore the wisdom of City Hall is required for proper resolution. Stern has caused many residents to spend virtually endless funds having to respond to his / Council nonsensical dictates).

Mr Stern, yes it is unfortunate that Marymount has to resort to the initiative process but you and your cronies have been "kicking the can down the road" for some time with one delay after another. The initiative process may have some flaws but it does provide an alternative when elected officials fail to act responsibly.

As long as there will be an election in November why not add a few other items, several considerations;

- * Recall - Doug Stern
- * A public vote on the Annenberg Companion Animal facility at lower Point Vicente.
- * A Yes / No vote on the so called "Vision Plan"
- * The taxpayers Yes / No approval or disapproval of the plans for a new City Hall.
- * Whether or not to continue the Land Conservancy's costly mismanagement of the RPV owned 1,400 acre land preserve.

It is past time to end the "backroom" deals and demand greater transparency at RPV City Hall.

RPV – City Hall

On November 17, 2009, the City Council initiated a formal Master Plan of the Civic Center site, which included authorizing staff to return with a Professional Services Agreement with Magis Advisors, the City's financial advisor, to assist the City in the development of funding alternatives for the Civic Center Project, including the replacement of City Hall. The staff report from the November 17th meeting contained the following budget expense items:

- Magis Advisors - - \$57,000
- Melendrez - - - - -\$10,000
- LPA Architectural Consultants - \$25,000
- Civic Center Planning Studies - \$350,000 (Not clear if this was overall budget item and that the \$92,000 would be from this item or if \$92,000 to be paid from other funds. Staff report did note that \$350,000 would be from **Terranea receipts.**)

The Magis Advisors project was then approved at the February 16th Council meeting.

The November 17th staff report further expounded on the desire by then Mayor Larry Clark and Councilmen Stern & Long that a new City Hall be built. Well folks, Larry Clark is no longer a Council member and the majority has changed. We the taxpayers of RPV expect some financial responsibility from the new Council majority.

While PVP Watch might agree that some upgrades to RPV City Hall *may be* warranted, It seems that new City Hall proposition is but another "humpty dumpty" fable with some seemingly looking for a monument upon which to place their names. That the current building is antiquated is yet to be demonstrated. It would seem a logical first step would be to have a registered structural engineer make an actual structural assessment. Let's see a credible report before spending more staff time or funds on another *feel good want*.

RPV – City Manager Salary / Contract

At the March 16th Council meeting the City Managers employee contract was approved increasing her salary from \$179,388 to \$182,076 annually. This is an increase of \$2,688 which is about .015% annually. However, a new item #6 / Section 6, Salary was added that now provides a deferred compensation plan of \$1,250 per month or \$15,000 annually. Combing the two, the increase is \$17,688 annually or almost 10%. This is OUTRAGEOUS. How in these current times can this Council justify a 10% increase for anyone? How can this Council consider themselves fiscally prudent with taxpayer funds? Perhaps the Council should allow Mrs. Lehr to check the marketplace for open City Manager positions. Perhaps she would be happier somewhere else. The City Manager Agreement is now posted at www.pvpwatch.com / Current Issues page for everyone to read & comment.

Employee Benefits

There has been much reporting in various media concerning California public employee benefits. Reports include that over 15,000 statewide employees have pensions exceeding \$100,000 annually. Also reported is the commonality of unused vacation days, unused sick days and other unused compensation being used to increase pensions.

The question is: How do Peninsula cities manage unused vacation days, unused sick days and other unused compensation? Can these days be saved? For how long? Can they be "sold" back for added compensation? Why should sick days be allowed to accumulate? PVP Watch will be asking each Peninsula city specifically what their respective procedures are in regard to these topics.

RPV – Trash Hauling

Every RPV household should have received the informational brochure for EDCO the new trash hauler that will replace Waste management on July 1st. ALL residents need to pick the size container each desire. For readers convenience, PVP Watch has posted the **senior discount application form** at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the Current Issues page.

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.

We have been reminded that not ALL subscribers are aware of the PVP Watch website; www.pvpwatch.com. Typically there are over 600 visits and 6,000 hits per month. We try to post pertinent Peninsula information. If you have not been there recently we encourage readers to visit and look around.

Responses and comments last Newsletter

Always a fantastic read! Thanks for getting out the real news.

Thank you for sending out the newsletter. I feel much more on top of what is going on the Peninsula as a result.

The California legislature has decided to give our money to illegal's rather than legal students. We must live with this as long as we have the present legislature.

I think that this is the best newsletter that I have ever seen. Great job and very informative.

Keep up the good work.

This is the first time I've read your newsletter - I like your style

In addition to the YMCA pool proposal, which I just heard about in the comments to the last newsletter, I also understand that the Art Center was in negotiations with the City of RPV to build a bigger public art facility on the current town hall site. Similar to the pool proposal, the art center thought everything was moving along brilliantly when all of a sudden the discussion were cut short and the entire thing dropped. Wouldn't it be nice to have a facility where all ages could take art classes up by city hall rather than some grant City Hall building that benefits only the few people who work there – most not even RPV residents? I wonder how long the city councilmen have been scheming to create their big edifice in honor of themselves rather than using city lands to benefit the residents of this city. I also wonder whether what is really driving the proposed Annenberg dog and cat facility is the city council's belief that, if they let Annenberg use prime ocean-front RPV citizen-owned real estate for her "pet project," then perhaps she will turn around and donate the money to build a really fancy city hall with Long, Stern, Wolowicz and Clark's names emblazoned thereon?

As I stated at a planning meeting recently, this is a sneaky, back door deal that reflects little of the PALOS VERDES VISION. This is another violation of privacy and view rights by the RPV City Council and Planners. Who is paying for all this study on PARK land? Why are we giving this land away? This is a dog and cat pound (dungeon) and is an absurd deal that council and planners have cut with the Annenberg Foundation. This Outrageous Proposal reflects the ANNENBERG vision of exactly what this PENINSULA never wants to look like. Thanks for your continued interest in this issue.

I enjoyed the info on the "speed traps" the police dept. is responsible for. However, that's not the only thing they're giving "illegal" tickets for! In short, they've targeted the Peninsula to give out citations only because we're not a group of drug pushers, burglars, homeless, welfare recipients! Therefore, they assume we can pay their salaries! We're law abiding, responsible citizens! Where is the justice in this?!!!

You must be on Marymount's payroll....asset to our community - in what way? Do they provide revenue to our city? NO let's see, what do they give us - oh, I know - students speeding out of control (I've almost been head-oned on the switchbacks as well as my son); parking problems, now we get to have more noise problems. I just wonder where you live???? Could it be, you will not be affected by this expansion? Probably so.. as usual, those not affected are making all the rules !!! What's new. Thanks for your OPINION - now publish mine !!!! (Editor – we just did and we will publish all others...)

Today's snarky comments emailed from Doug Stern prefaced his appending the Breeze article about Marymount's forced choice to appeal to the public directly through the initiative process. Who has the ability to break through Doug's one-sided, Preconceived, non-representative viewpoint?

Doug: It's called DEMOCRACY. You can look it up.

PVP Watch received one other response which was too long and rambling and therefore was not published.

To PVP Watch Newsletter Authors;

By the way, the attached PVP Watch Newsletter is not a 'news'letter after all.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Citizen

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](mailto:info@pvpwatch.com).

PVP Watch strives to bring current issues to www.pvpwatch.com. Those who have topics of community interest are encouraged to bring those issues to PVP Watch.

The Editorial Committee