

PVP Watch Newsletter – July 1, 2010

To Our Friends & Supporters

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PVP Schools and Teacher Performance

Schoolteacher performance and evaluation is a topic that is getting much attention these days. One of the current constraints is the teacher's union efforts to use tenure / seniority for the basis of all teacher salary or work rule discussions.

The June 18th Wall Street Journal contained a thought provoking Op-Ed article by Timothy Knowles, the director of the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute titled "The Trouble with Teacher Tenure." Mr. Knowles with 23 years of experience as a teacher, principal and district leader, reports *"first, teachers have a greater impact on student learning than any other school-based factor. Second, we will not produce excellent schools without eliminating laws and practices that guarantee teachers – regardless of their performance – jobs for life."*

Mr. Knowles further reported a recent study by the American Federation of Teachers asking members "Which should be the higher priority? Working for professional teaching standards and good teaching... Or defending the job rights of teachers who face disciplinary action? According to the AFT president Randi Weingarten *"by a majority of 4 to 1 (69% to 16%) AFT members chose working for professional standards and good teaching as the higher priority.* She further elaborated *"Teachers have zero tolerance for people who demonstrate they are unfit for our profession."* It is too bad that we don't see more teacher interest in establishing professional standards in California and Palos Verdes.

PVP Watch has long been of the opinion that teachers who consistently perform above the standard should be compensated for their achievements. Unfortunately, the teachers union disagrees with this concept. [Read here about CA Senate Bill 955.](#) Many younger teachers with newer innovative concepts and desire to excel are being lost because the teachers union dictates tenure over professionalism is tragic and results in many students not receiving the education they require to compete in today's complex society.

RPV & Marymount – The Continuing Saga

At its June 1st meeting, the RPV Council denied the CC/ME appeals of Marymount College Plan to modernize the PV Dr. East campus thus allowing the project to move forward. Included in the authorization was the location of the much discussed athletic fields. At the June 15th meeting there were four (4) agenda items relating to the Marymount Initiative and that sufficient "qualified" signatures had been submitted thus allowing Marymount to place the proposed Initiative on the November 2nd, 2010 ballot.

Some have asked that if the RPV Council has granted approval to Marymount modernization plans, why then is Marymount continuing the Initiative process? Good question and our query to Marymount received the following:

Marymount Position Statement

For more than fifty years, Marymount College has been part of Rancho Palos Verdes, since before the residents voted to incorporate this City in 1973. Throughout that time we have been a vibrant educational institution that respected our neighbors and served as a community asset.

For over a decade Marymount College has worked diligently through the process set forth by our City Government to develop and implement the right plan for preserving our campus as a top liberal arts educational institution while serving the needs of our neighbors and the entire community.

At each turn we have faced obstacle upon obstacle as the City has served as not a partner, but as a roadblock. City Staff, the Planning Commission and the City Council have tinkered with almost every element of The Marymount Plan, creating expensive year-long delays over small issues. Going forward it has become clear that the unique operational requirements of Marymount College dictate a campus specific plan. The Marymount Plan Initiative meets those needs while concurrently maintaining a positive community relationship.

The Marymount Plan Initiative allows the citizens of our City to decide how we can serve the needs of our students and our community for the future. We are asking for their support for new and enhanced educational and recreation benefits for Rancho Palos Verdes for our students and also for families and communities to enjoy.

We believe that the voters of Rancho Palos Verdes have the judgment, knowledge and the wisdom to make the right decision for the City.

Marymount opponents claim they are only against the Initiative process because it eliminates RPV's oversight of Marymount plans have obviously not bothered to read the Initiative. For those wanting to know the facts, PVP Watch has posted the Initiative on the PVP Watch website. Other related material is posted as well.

The opponents claim that approving the initiative (process) will open Pandoras Box and that City Hall will lose control as others will likely be creating initiatives as well. First of all, any effort to reduce any of RPV City Halls repressive regulations might be a good thing. Secondly, to create an initiative requires public support as some 4,000 qualified signatures are required to place an Initiative on the Ballot. This is certainly a sufficiently high bar to prevent those without cause to frivolously create an "Initiative."

As we have previously stated, some apparently do not believe in the Initiative process and that "the people" are not qualified to decide these issues. We believe otherwise and that the voters are the final arbiter. We understand that the Save our City (SOCIII) group as well as CHOA (Council of Homeowner Associations) will attempt to influence residents to vote against the Marymount Plan, presumably under the guise that this is a matter best decided by government than citizens. Should there be any doubt as to the PVP Watch position on the Marymount Plan, we totally support Marymount in this effort and remain in opposition to *cronyism* government now being practiced in RPV.

RPV Trash Service

Well... it's here and we shall see how well it works with the new trash hauler EDCO. Service began July 1st and most everyone has now received new trash containers. Apparently those who did not respond with a selection of sizes desired were delivered a standard package of a midsized (65 gal) trash container and one each large (96 gal) recycle and green waste containers. How do you like the "big guy's" the 96 gallon containers? Have a place for them? Have a hill to traverse, hold on tight!!!

Those Seniors who have not yet submitted their application for a Senior discount, the application form is posted at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the top of the Current Issues page. The form can be downloaded / printed from there.

The Permanent Absentee Voter application is also posted at www.pvpwatch.com. For those that might have difficulties getting to the polls on Election Day, an absentee ballot does simplify the process.

RPV – A New City Hall?

At the June 29th Council workshop, staff updated the Council on developing plans for the proposed new City Hall. We observed that staff had added an item to the progress report "*Currently soliciting proposals from qualified firms to prepare a structural analysis of the existing City Hall buildings.*" Since this is a point that PVP Watch has been making that there should first be an structural evaluation of the existing building before spending scarce funds planning a new building we are pleased that City Manager Lehr has positively responded. As a point of information, we have

learned that Palos Verdes Estates Council has initiated a structural (seismic) assessment of the PVE City Hall and has budgeted \$10,000 for this project.

RPV Budget / Spending Priorities

It's that time of year and the RPV finance staff will again be recommending that the Storm Drain Tax be collected for FY 2010 / 2011. Like a typical bureaucrat if you have a tax enacted, why not collect it? As many will likely recall, we previously reported that RPV received a windfall of over \$3,000,000 in unanticipated FY 2009 / 2010 General Fund revenues. Of course that was quickly moved to Council Restricted Funds which allows the Council to spend where they may so decide. Some believe that 80% of RPV residents would be better served if \$1,000,000 or so was used to replace the Storm Drain Tax.

There is also the new revenues from Terranea including the \$2,000,000 already received plus a likely greater amount for FY 2010 / 2011.

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. Lots of good info posted here.

Responses To June 6th Newsletter

Now with Abalone Cove, as with Annenberg, Councilman Long is yet again supporting more development and paving of our open space. Of all people, Democrat Long should be embracing every inch of our precious open space, and protecting it, instead he is giving away the keys to the bulldozers!! His idea of 'progress' appears to be development and paving.

The new EXTRA LARGE trash containers arrived yesterday as planned by the council. As I drive Grandview today I see about fifty percent of the homes are proudly appreciating them either in the driveway or still in the street, especially some of the residents that decided to order a double set of containers. With the older smaller containers of Waste Management it was a rarity to see containers after 5:00PM on a collection day.

As I explained to Larry Clark last year, we fully expect a fly problem later this year due to a reduction to singular weekly collection, especially when a resident misses a collection day. I also expect that the large number of seniors in our neighborhood to have much difficulty with the near twice-size containers.

We enjoy your "Watch Letter" and thank you for putting it together.

Another good one! Great letter re Officer Knox. My favorite law enforcement agent.

A response concerning Marymount. This was sent to the RPV Council with copy to PVP Watch. Due to the length, comments have been edited.

* It appears you have heartburn because you & the rest of the council are losing power; power that many of my neighbors and RPV citizens believe the RPV City Council has been abusing for a long while.

* I suggest that the council get out of the way, quit impeding and let Marymount College build its facility. I support Marymount, its measure, and I am willing to march with them along with supporting the ballot measure - obviously Marymount needs the measure because it does not trust RPV city government.

* I can empathize what Marymount has had to deal with over the years in dealing with the city. I was fortunate in not having to do an Environmental Impact Report for my replacement shed, although I was given the impression that if I complained too much, I might have to do one or not have a shed at all.

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