

PVP Watch Newsletter – August 27, 2011

To Our Friends & Supporters

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Election Time on the Peninsula

Rolling Hills Estates

There will be no election this year in RHE. Three existing Council members; John Addleman, Judy Mitchell and Frank Zerunyan filed for reelection and no other candidates filed thus RHE will reseat the three Council members, thus saving the cost of an election. From our observations, residents have reason to be satisfied with current Council performance. Residents are listened to with respect & civility and major issues seem to have ample dialog.

PVP Schools / PVPUSD - Two Seats / Three Candidates

Two Trustee terms are up; Dora de la Rosa & Larry Vanden Bos. Dora is not running for reelection but Larry Vanden Bos is / larryvandenbosforschoolboard2011.com

Two new candidates are:

Erin LaMonte / www.electerinlamonte.com

Dianna Chooljian / www.drdianna4pvpschools.com - Not yet operational.

Rancho Palos Verdes

Three Councilmen, Tom Long, Doug Stern & Stefan Wolowicz are "termed out" and cannot run for reelection.

New Candidates are;

Dora de la Rosa / www.doradelarosa.com

Jerry Duhovic / www.jerryduhovic.com,

Susan Brooks / www.susanbrooks2011.com

Ken Dyda / www.kendyda.com

Jim Knight / www.palosverdes.com/jimknight,

Dave Emenhiser / www.daveemenhiser.com

Eric Algeria / www.ericalegria4rpv.org,

Cynthia Smith / website not located,

We urge everyone to attend candidate forums and get to know the candidates. We have candidate websites identified to aid in that process.

For those who would like to vote in the comfort of their own home, we have the permanent absentee ballot posted at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the top of the Current Issues page. The form can be downloaded and printed on your computer.

In the next Newsletter we will make our recommendations.

Peninsula Schools

Well..... it appears that California voters have been "thrown under the bus" one more time. Will it ever end? This time it is AB 114 which was enacted by the California Legislature and signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on June 29th. We have posted an article by Larry Sand, President of the non-profit California Teachers Empowerment Network at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the PVP Schools page & click on AB 114 – Attack on Calif. Schools. Please read the entire article to see how State legislators like Bonnie Lowenthal, Ted Lieu, Betsy Butler etc. have conspired with the teachers union forsaking their responsibilities to the taxpayers.

Several Clips:

* AB 114, a one hundred page monstrosity, was rammed through both houses of the state legislature late on the 28th and was not published until the following morning. Governor Brown signed it into law the next day. As the Sacramento Bee reported, there were no committee hearings and no chance for the public to scrutinize the bill, which became public less than an hour before it was approved for passage.

* AB 114 eliminates the option that "districts would have over the next 45 days to make staff adjustments if they view this as necessary. Instead, the legislature is suspending that capability under the law for the next year. As School Services noted, 'this provision is clearly designed to protect union positions, even if the district cannot afford to pay for the services.'"

Lots C & D: These are two lots owned by PVPUSD in Palos Verdes Estates adjacent to PV High that have been in dispute for some years with the school district wanting to sell the lots for residential use. The Palos Verdes Homes Association has long objected and the issue went to Court. The Court recently decided that the deed restrictions remain in place and the Palos Verdes Homes Association prevailed thus PVPUSD must use them for school district purposes and cannot sell them for residential development. We wonder..... is there not an on street parking problem at PV High? Could not these lots be used by the school district for off street parking?

Parcel Tax: Some may be unaware that PVPUSD has placed a parcel tax renewal item on this November ballot. This is not a new tax but a continuation of the current parcel tax that expires in June 30, 2013. While most have a natural aversion to taxes, parcel taxes go directly to schools and are not laundered in Sacramento. Although there is no sunset on the continuation, every year a board vote will required to continue for the next budget period. In view of the shenanigans that go on in Sacramento, it seems clear that education on the Peninsula will seriously suffer if this funding source is lost. Seniors will continue to have an exemption.

RPV - Employee Salaries & Benefits

There has been much hyperbole about the RPV staff and how they are over worked and underpaid. It is really more of self-indulging fantasy that the RPV Council has been zealous in their protection of taxpayer funds than any prudent fiscal management.

Well... let us share some facts: At the **May 4, 2004** Council meeting, revisions to the fiscal year 2004 / 2005 budget were presented, discussed and apparently approved.

That document budgeted for - 45 FTE (full time employees)

- Salaries - \$2,850,000

- Benefits - \$876,524.

In comparison, the approved Fiscal Year 2011 / 2012 budget is:

- 58 FTE (full time employees)

- Salaries - \$5,259,700

- Benefits - \$2,020,100

During this seven year period, the tenure of Tom Long, Doug Stern & Stefan Wolowicz :

- Added 13 Full Time Employees, an increase of 29%

- Increased Salaries by \$2,409,700 or approximately 85%
- Increased Benefits by \$1,143, 576 or approximately 130%.

And this is supposedly prudent fiscal management? Currently there are also 25 Part Time making a total of 75.5 Equivalent Full Time Employees.

And while the employee costs were increasing, City Hall failed to maintain the Ladera Linda property, drove out the Montessori school that was widely used & desired by RPV residents and lost an \$80,000 annual revenue stream and now plans to spend \$100,000 to determine how the Ladera Linda property should be used. Does this make sense to anyone?

RPV – Council Candidate Training

When one thinks of Bizarre... why does the RPV Council usually surface? Well.... the latest is their decision to again conduct the Dr. Thomas Shanks "Electing and Establishing a New Council of Trust" program. Cost is \$4,500.00 plus travel expense which will likely include taxpayer reimbursement for time spent at Terranea. Not included is staff time which will substantially increase costs.

August 12th, Jeff Lewis an RPV resident and Council candidate that participated in the 2009 Shanks program, wrote to this years Mayor Tom Long the following;

"I am writing to you regarding item 5 on your August 16, 2011 city council calendar regarding the appointment of Dr. Shanks for ethics training for candidates for RPV City Council. I believe this to be a complete waste of city funds. Either people have ethics or they do not and Dr. Shanks' program did not, in my opinion, add anything of value to the November 2009 election. On a related point, one of Dr. Shanks' past suggestions has merit and I suggest the city council consider it: Dr. Shanks suggested that the city reserve Hesse Park the evening before the election for a live televised "final thoughts" segment to address any last minute misleading mailings or other issues that the candidates need to raise. The \$4,500 in fees for Dr. Shanks plus the costs of his airfare would be better spent on other city needs."

In our opinion, Mr. Lewis said it well and many others echoed his perceptions. Did it make a difference, not a chance. In our opinion, the Shanks program is complete nonsense and but another example of costly waste & mismanagement by the past eight years and why we need fresh new faces sitting in the Council chambers.

RPV – Speed Traps

The Speed Trap problem reported in the last PVP Watch Newsletter received more than usual responses and clearly a problem confronted by more than a few. Some letters are posted

below. That residents are reporting receiving citations for 40 / 41 MPH in a 30 MPH zone does seem problematic when the speed zone engineering is known to be questionable. Some residents believe that PV Drive East is unfairly targeted and the constant and consistent presence of the radar police has become a nuisance to many residents and their guests.

Those that responded that they were going to contest their citations, how about some feedback on your "day in court."

For more information about the details of the current survey and the merits of the petitioners' complaints email Barbara Hartl at PVDEspeedtrappetition@cox.net. The website "speedtrap.org" is illuminating, check it out.

Although the current RPV Council believes in aggressive traffic control, the question is whether RPV residents want to be known as "Speed Traps" city or for some of its finer venues like Marymount College, Terranea, Trump National but to name a worthy few.

Lower Point Vicente & Annenberg

As many Peninsula residents are likely aware, Annenberg notified RPV City Hall on August 10th that "*changed circumstances related to entitlements compel the Foundation to withdraw its application.*" The termination letter resulted in outbursts by this years RPV Mayor Tom Long that he was unhappy that the Annenberg project was not supported by many RPV residents. Several response letters are posted at Newsletter responses.

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.

Response - From July 29th Newsletter

I just wanted to say that I really enjoy reading the hard work you put into the newsletter. We appreciate your love and interest in the peninsula. Please keep up the great work. It is appreciated by many.

(Thank you, you made our day!!)

Speed Traps

I read your Newsletter - and the portion on speed traps was dead on. Back in the day - an officer would pull you over and say Mr. So and So your tail light is out take care of it. Now they write a fix it ticket. I got one within 300 yards of my home in RPV. What happened to the day that law enforcement would say I see you live down the road please take care of it and my response would thank officer for pointing it out and I will do it today.

I have 2 son's that drive - 1 who is 19 and at the University of Washington and a 15 year old driving with me on a permit. I spend more time telling them where the speed traps are than good driving habits.

Thank you for the information on the speed trap petition. I created a website about a year ago regarding my disgust with the Palos Verdes Speed traps.

http://pvspeedtraps.com/End_Speed_Traps_in_Palos_Verdes/Welcomes.html

I hope more citizens will wake up and realize that these speed trap tickets do nothing to increase the safety of the citizens of Palos Verdes but are just another tax on the people.

I am one of at least 7 people that have recently been ticketed by Officer Carter for going 41 in a 30 mile zone. Each of us has the same speed. Out of the 7, four of us have court on the same day. We have heard that it is best to request Trial By Declaration and plan to do so. I am attempting to find out if a traffic survey has been done at 29270 Palos Verdes Drive East, or the stretch right at Miraleste School. Incidentally none of us were going 41, as we had just come out of that awful curve that is clearly posted 25MPH.

If I knew a lawyer I would call one, but I know that PVP Watch is the next best thing.

Thank you, PVP Watch Newsletter!

Your timely article about the local speed traps was right on the money!

I am a recent "victim" of a speed trap on PV Drive East, just past Miraleste Library, where the speed, even in this straight wide road, is the same as the 30mph on the winding road up from the reservoir. When I received a \$308 ticket for going 40mph that sure smacks of a moneymaker for the LA County Sheriff. And to add insult to injury, the young brash motorcycle patrolman, whose music continued to play throughout my stop, refused to answer my questions concerning my infraction. Through Neighborhood Watch and other community programs, I have encountered only courteous, professional sheriff representatives. Patrolman Carter was a whole different class of law enforcement.

I'm taking my complaint and information and telling it to the judge.

Your information and petition will assist my cause.

Annenberg

Score one for preserving our priceless open space from development!!!

Tom Long still doesn't get it. His quote in the paper today "I'm not happy, not happy" sounds like a little kid who didn't get his way and is stomping his feet. Like we really care if Long's ego is bruised because his name will not be on a plaque fastened for 99 years to the concrete monolith Annenberg Pet Project of RPV. It was not the People's will to cower and let Annenberg have their way with our open space for the fulfillment of their vision just based upon the name Annenberg. Mr. Long never accepted that fact as it appears he never got past the siren of the name.

Mr. Long, excuse me, you are ashamed of RPVers?

I suspect that the Annenberg decision to pull the plug was based on their most recent telephone polling, and a desire not to repeat the Marymount fiasco.

Your zealous representation of the project reminds me of a case I once had. Instead of "triable issues of fact" allow me to substitute "passive" and "marine" and you for the moving party. The judge gave the dictionary definition of each of the contested term: marine, a) pertaining to the sea, b) native to or formed by the sea; and passive, a) not participating, acting or operating, inert, b) subjected to an action without responding. You proffer, "Yes, your honor, passive, a 51,000 square ft. building, roads, parking for six dozen cars, treating and caring for a couple of dozen companion animals, dogs and cats compatible with our marine theme." The judge in abundant patience again defines the terms. You Mr. Long reiterate, "yes, yes, yes , a building for the care and well-being of companion animals, meeting halls, lecture rooms, park benches, hardscape, landscape and walking trails all for the benefit of the community on the edge of the bluffs right by the ocean: passive and marine. Honestly, the judge tried again and so do you.

Finally, in exasperation, the judge ruled, "You just don't get it; judgment for the responding party."

Mr. Long, you just don't get it. You didn't get it when you supported the zone change to allow another big block drugstore on a piece of property specifically reserved for a gas station or revert back to residential. Once again, you show stubborn opposition to the clear definitions of our General Plan. Frankly, I see nothing wrong in the vast majority of the community wanting to stick to its original plan and purpose. Many of us relied on those factors when we invested in this community. And the community has told you time and again that they want to keep the features that make this community unique. There is serious disconnect between your interpretation of the clearly definable terms. And to say fair hearings were lacking is just disingenuous.

I know that you're writing a sharply critical letter to Mr. Siegenthaler, the National Park Service coordinator overseeing the use of formerly Federal land is no idle threat. You never miss an opportunity to chastise and burn a bridge. And Mr. Siegenthaler, will be as nonplused we are by your distortion of the words defining the deed restricts. At least do the P-C thing, send an email, save a tree.

An Annenberg Proponent.

Two thoughts.

First, a letter from RPV to NPS/State saying they acted with a lack of administrative due process, and with undue delay, may be worth considering and publishing.

Mr. Siegenthaler of NPS in particular seems to have been less than transparent (giving interviews to newspapers and talking to opponents, writing for opponents but not coordinating with or engaging proponents or the foundation).

Why the NPS/State could not have "office hours" or "open fora" sessions at the site, to hear views pro and con and get into the factual context, escapes me. They have had the "lead role" (in effect) since November 2010.

Second, as the Annenberg people request proposals from other local governments (which are thrilled about getting \$35 mm in community investments and long term jobs), RPV should ask to be allowed to make its own proposals, ideally proposals pre-approved by NPS/State as needed. Plan B might be for land around the City Hall.

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