

PVP Watch Newsletter – August 6, 2010

To Our Friends & Supporters

In this Newsletter:

- * RPV Council
- * Marymount – The Continuing Saga
- * Annenberg Project
- * RPV Trash Service
- * RPV Storm Drains
- * Peninsula High – Lights.

The RPV Council

Undoubtedly, few residents watch RPV Council meetings as they are usually boring with little substantive accomplishment. On occasion, however, there is high drama and the August 5th meeting was one of those events. At issue was the Council's decision to pursue changing RPV from a "General Law" city government to a "Charter City." Generally speaking a "General Law" city government subscribes to the laws passed by the California legislature while a "Charter" city government allows local governments to craft their own laws and not necessarily subscribe to the laws created by the State of California. In either case, laws must conform to the United States and California Constitutions. We have posted a comparison of the two types of City government provided by the League of California Cities at www.pvpwatch.com. Go to the Current Issues page.

Although having a debate on the issues might be in order, that does not seem where RPV is headed as the RPV Council has written what they perceive to be a "Charter" and the next phase is "Outreach" which in reality is an effort to sell RPV residents on the Council's decision of how a "Charter" should be constructed. So much for public debate.

So far, The Council's logic for becoming a *Charter City* is that RPV would eliminate "millions" of dollars of prevailing wage requirements. This is an unsubstantiated and questionable claim at best. The other justification is that some Legislator in Sacramento remarked during some meeting that Sacramento would be reaching into Cities for "*anything not nailed down*." How changing to a Charter City protects RPV from the grip of Sacramento has not been revealed. Observation is that when Sacramento reaches down for City funds it takes from all cities, Charter or not. This reasoning does not make the case for changing to a Charter City.

The old adage that City Hall knows best is no longer resonating in RPV.

The drama arose in that some residents, after listening to the Council's reasoning, have had the *audacity* to question the Council's motive and capabilities. Anyway, this years mayor Steve Wolowicz as well as Council members Doug Stern & Tom Long went off on verbal rampages about there being a cancer in the community and the demagoguery of some for being against this Council's actions etc. etc. In that the history of this Council preceeds itself, and based on history, past performance, past errors and lack of transparancy, there is more than ample logic for questioning this Councils actions particuarilly something as significant as changing RPV's legal charter.

Quiz for Newsletter Subscribers

Demagogue - demos(people) + agogos (**leader**) - one who tries to stir up people's emotions so as to further his/her own interests

Who does it fit?

Tom Long

Doug Stern

Bob Nelson

Don Reeves

Send responses to opinion@pvpwatch.com

We will tally postings and report results.

RPV – Marymount, The Continuing Saga

This past week found the posting of financial collections and expenses for both Marymount and the SOC III folks. These financial reports are required by the FPPC (Fair Political Practices Commission) and the most recent period ended June 30th. The next reporting period will be late September. As reported by the Daily Breeze (Aug. 6th) SOC III had collected about \$5,400 including \$1,000 from Steve Wolowicz. Marymount had spent approximately \$540,000 during the last reporting period. The Breeze also reported that "*Councilman Doug Stern who has been strident in his verbal attacks on the Initiative, compared Marymounts spending to a military operation. He questioned why the college had to spend so much to "massage the message."*

Dr. Brophy (Marymount president) responded, according to the Breeze, "*the college's investment in it's Initiative campaign was small compared to the "millions" Marymount has spent on the planning and review process which began in 2000.*" It is indeed tragic that it is necessary for anyone to have to spend such substantial sums in an effort to protect their property rights from the Doug Stern dominated RPV City Hall and the reality is that most of us cannot afford to do so. Many RPV residents who have experiences in dealing with RPV City Hall can relate to what Marymount has encountered. Think Terranea and the 10 years of seeking City Hall

approval before ever shoveling any dirt. How many "millions" did it cost Bob Lowe to obtain agreement for the Terranea plans. Not to be forgotten is the \$150,000 that Terranea had to pay for RPV's consultants to look at Terranea's request for using the TOT funds for a backup financing plan. Fortunately, Terranea was able to "open the doors" without the TOT funds and all indications are that Bob Lowe and his fine organization including Executive Director Terri Haack have & will continue to make Terranea a booming success and an asset to the Peninsula and the entire South Bay area. And we remember how disgusting Doug Stern was when he told Bob Lowe, from the protection of the Council Dais, that he did not care if Mr. Lowe went bankrupt from the Terranea venture as someone else would buy and operate the Terranea property. Wonder if Stern was contemplating a Motel 6?

Several days ago the SOC III group with former mayor (is anyone impressed with these titles?) Ken Dyda listed as treasurer and apparent spokesperson mailed a letter soliciting funds to support their anti-Marymount effort. It appears that a PVP Watch mail list was used for the SOC III letters and therefore we offer some concerns to Newsletter subscribers. Our opinion, and also that PVP Watch met with Mr. Dyda a month or so ago at his request, is that the SOC III letter is, at best, an exercise in "creative writing."

Dyda states: *The quality of life in RPV is in jeopardy and we need your help!*

How is the quality of life in RPV jeopardized by Marymount modernizing it's campus? Oh, maybe it's that the Initiative allows "dorms." Does any rational person (this obviously excludes the CCC/ME crowd) perceive that "dorms" are going to negatively impact the way of life in RPV. Before getting into a "twitter" why not listen to what Marymount is reporting before jumping to false conclusions. Marymount College has resided in RPV for 50 years, much before the City was created and has a history of being a good neighbor.

Dyda states: *Which new or existing controversial development project will try to use this special district next?*

More "the sky is falling" nonsense. So what! What if someone should decide to exercise their Constitutional Rights? Why is it wrong for a resident / fellow citizen / taxpayer who believes they have been treated unfairly by City Hall to appeal to a higher body, in this instance the taxpayers / residents of RPV? Is that not our American way of life?

Unfortunately we now have is a small group of individuals; a majority of the current RPV Council, Steve Wolowicz, Tom Long & Doug Stern, who perceive themselves as annointed to rule over us serfs in RPV. The real issue of this ongoing saga is the oversized egos of Steve Wolowicz, Tom Long & Doug Stern.

Dyda also states: Rancho Palos Verdes is NOT for sale. Excuse me but that does not seem to be the situation with the proposed Annenberg Dog & Cat Castle.

The Annenberg Project.

The DEIR (Draft Environmental Impact Report) was released about a week ago and as anticipated a real "puff" piece. When Community Director Joel Rojas announced at the February 23rd Planning Commission meeting that the Annenberg project was one of the Council's goals and that the project needed to be moved forward it was clear what the outcome would be. The Annenberg project is a misuse of Public Lands. There is no transparency to this project and one can only speculate what backroom deals are taking place. And Ken Dyda states RPV is not for sale. Wonder where the Save Our City group is on the Annenberg project and City Hall's intent to build another Nature / Learning center at Abalone Cove.

Presuming most / all RPV residents received the 16 inch by 22 inch glossy fold out Annenberg brochure last week. Wonder what this cost and that RPV City Hall and their CCC/ME accomplices criticize Marymount for merely protecting its legitimate interests as compared to Annenberg who is wanting a free handout of treasured land from RPV residents? And the RPV Council seeks to present an image of neutrality, openness and transparency?

What do RPV residents think of a public vote on the Annenberg project? Send comments to opinion@pvpwatch.com

RPV Trash Services

We are now into the second month of EDCO trash hauling services and we continue to see oversized trash containers sitting in front of homes. Clearly whoever decided that the basic package was a mid sized trash container and a full sized (96 gal) blue recycle and green waste containers made a significant mistake. These are too large to go into many backyards and we hope that this problem will be fixed soon. Many people are dissatisfied as you will find when you read the reader responses below. Yet all should be grateful because Doug Stern reports he has reduced resident trash costs.

RPV Storm Drains

PVP Watch attended the July 21st update meeting at Mireleste Intermediate School concerning the San Ramon stabilization project. We thought the presentation by RPV Senior Engineer Rod Drago and team excellent and PVP Watch supports what has been developed so far and urges the team to move rapidly to finalize a plan. For those not following this issue, the Tarapaca Canyon drain problem is exacerbated by storm water directed into the canyon by the

San Ramon storm drain system as well as other storm water drains. The plan as we understood it was to build a concrete pipe water drain to the ocean. Projected costs approximated \$10,000,000.

This project is, in the opinion of many experts, the greatest crisis facing RPV and this problem left as is has the near term potential to not only wash out the PV Drive East switchbacks but to also undermine the mobil home park on the South side of 25th St / PV Drive South. Think lawsuits there.

The RPV Council was updated on this project at their August 3rd meeting and as usual Councilman Tom Long whined that regardless of how critical this project is, RPV has no funds to allocate to this project. Fortunately for RPV that is not the case and so we will be pleased to assist the Council in developing a financial solution.

1 – During the May 4th Council meeting in a discussion of item #14, Finance Director McLean reported that there was a projected \$3,200,000 excess of General Fund reserves for the last fiscal year that ended June 30th.

2 – During the same discussion it was reported that there are \$2,500,000 in CIP reserves which apparently are funds that can be used for emergencies.

3 – The same discussion reported that Terranea TOT fees are being projected at \$2,000,000 annually.

4 - The \$2,000,000 TOT fees (already received) now budgeted to Hesse & Grandview Parks. Put those projects on hold, the San Ramon project has greater need.

5- While it would be nice to get financial assistance for LA County & LA City, RPV has ample reserves to aggressively move forward with this project. To sit and wait that there are no funds might be considered malfeasance. Let's see some leadership on this very important matter.

Peninsula High – Football Field Lights

As some are aware, there is an effort by some to install lights for nighttime football at Peninsula High. Neighbors adjacent to the stadium are objecting. How does the community view this issue? Would it be a community enhancement to have Friday Night football games at Peninsula High? Or would Friday night football at Peninsula High become a community nuisance? Make your thoughts known to opinion@pvpwatch.com.

Permanent Absentee Ballot

For those who might prefer to vote and mail in their ballot, 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.

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 July 18th Newsletter

I love the idea of an "initiative" threat on the storm drain tax to get the City's attention. Good idea.

RPV Charter City

The recent salary abuses by the (former) officials in the city of Bell should give RPV voters pause about the charter city status. In Bell, an ill informed and passive electorate passed a charter city referendum with only 400 residents voting. This created enough autonomy for City officials to loot the taxpayers. Power to the People, no to charter city status.

What is your reaction to the move to make RPV a charter city? It looks like the primary purpose is to allow the city council to write more laws, which is a net loss of freedom

So the RPV City Council is moving toward becoming a Charter City. Like the city of Bell. where the city manager gets \$787,000 annually? And the City Council members get \$100,000 annually? Not with my vote.

Trash Services

Due to the diligent efforts of the RPV city council we have progressed to a new, improved (?) trash hauler "EDCO."

For years we have been customers of Waste Management utilizing their "automated" pick up with three trash bins and two pick-ups per week. Everything worked well, their crews were friendly and helpful and "went the extra mile" to get rid of bulky or excess trash. We enjoyed a senior rate of \$256 per year paid in advance. On trash days or the night before I would roll out the black/garbage bin and blue/recycle bin on Monday and the green/landscape bin and black bin again on Thursdays. We had a nice paved area in our side yard where all the bins fit nicely.

Enter our RPV council to 'rescue' us with EDCO.

1-The new bins are way "fatter" than the same capacity WM bins. So much for storage of bins. Have had to put a new concrete pad in for the third bin, now visible to anyone in the back patio!

2- When I placed my bins for pick up they were on my property close to the curb. WM would pick them up from there, empty into their truck and place them back close to where they found them, rarely on the street. Now EDCO requires they be put in the street, which if we do is either going to block our drive or our mailbox. The mailman has already complained and says if it continues the post office will stop mail delivery and hold our mail at the post office.

3- Last Wednesday night I started to push my recycle bin back to the house and found it still half-full. Nothing prevented it from emptying if the driver had only held it upside down long enough to let gravity do its job. This never happened with WM.

4- Our street was never "pretty" the late afternoon after "trash" day, but this past Weds. it looked like a scene from a Detroit ghetto, with trashcans all over the street, some on their sides. And of course the side yard gets a little "ripe" along about day 6.

And so RPV Council, it wasn't broke-----why did you have to "fix" it?

I especially liked the letter included in your July 18th newsletter about our new trash company. I echo the person's sentiments. It was right on. I'd like to also point out that in my neighborhood we have an additional 3 trucks on the road on an additional day due to pup truck service. Our trash day is Wednesday but for those of us who have pup truck service, our trash is picked up on Tuesday. I have not seen the pup trucks but I have been told they are almost as large as the regular trash truck. So that means we have 3 trucks picking up on both Tuesday and then again Wednesday in my neighborhood.

When is the shortest time that the city can terminate the trash company we have now so that we can start promoting the old one.?

The place that we take the trash out of the house is on the West side. The space there is too small for the big, heavy containers that we have now so we saved 3 of the old containers. This way we take this trash in the 3 containers around the house to the east side where there is enough room for the new containers. We do this several times a week because we have to lift these to dump into the new ones. So we get to take out the trash several times a week. Then we get to take the new ones out to the street and hope that we don't trip trying to handle the new ones.

By the way, is it too early to start a drive to kick this bunch out of office?

I had been looking forward to reading PVP Watch's comments regarding our new trash provider EDCO and their performance the past few weeks. Your newsletter did not disappoint.

I concur with your observations. Here are some of mine:

1. Trash collection on Monday seems to last ALL day! The majority of the containers are still in the street when I get home in the evening. I've even seen EDCO trucks cruising my neighborhood at 8:00 P.M. So much for quick service.
2. The EDCO trash trucks may/may not be bigger than the Waste Management trucks but my take is that they need to be at least 10 ft. from the gutter for the arm to pick up the containers. Thus, they are driving close to the middle of the street which blocks traffic and has the potential of causing a collision between opposing vehicles attempting to pass.
3. Even the 64-gallon containers are too large for the 5 ft. clearance on the side of my house. How many tiny gray/blue/green containers must I now exchange to compensate?
4. Finally, my neighborhood (Vista Grande area) has taken on the look of a trailer park as many of my neighbors do not bring in their containers nor move them to where they are out of site. Will the City of RPV be enforcing their new trash container ordinance as effectively as they enforce the city's noise ordinance (e.g. gardeners using mowers & blowers as late as 7:30 P.M. during the week and on weekends)? Of course not. I suspect they'll address it same way they've handled the Peafowl problem...just ignore it.

Thank you for your fine work.

Initially, the new provider sounded good with a lower fee. I have nostalgia for Waste Management and would go back to our former provider with twice a week service and gladly pay even more than before. We have lost parking on the street, the mail carrier will not deliver mail with the new bins in front of the mail box (old bins no problem) and we are limited to what fits in the bin or you need to call for a special pick up. Fellow Citizens, we have lost a lot more than we have gained.

Great newsletter as always- thanks.

Re EDCO, I agree with your comments, although I am pleased that they will schedule pickup for items which I don't believe Waste Management would have handled. I too am concerned about

odor potential during the summer. Re their service, after seeing the size of the containers, we requested a smaller container for brush and a smaller container for recyclable material- they brought them the next day with no hassle. Finally, I am concerned for seniors who may not have the strength to move the container to the curb.

Re Bell saga, are you able to publish salaries of our RPV senior staff so we can see if we have a similar situation?

Keep up the good work,

Re EDCO, it initially ticked me off but then became happier when I found I could prune my yard and get a ton of stuff into the brush container. After swapping one of the two big brush containers for a small one ("everyday"), and getting a smaller one for recyclables, I was on a track to being ok. That said, it is tricky getting it thru our gate, which is ~ 38 inches wide. My wife definitely struggles with it, and our next-door elderly widow is surely in trouble. Overall, I don't think the council thought it through.

Another Side of the Trash Service

I hate to be the fly in the ointment, but would like to register my vote in favor of our EDCO service. I like it being only once a week. Handling the trash twice weekly was becoming a chore. Once is certainly enough. The cans have nice attached lids that cannot blow off as the old ones did. I was forever chasing down lids and cans that rolled away on windy days. One day a week to dodge big trucks on our streets is enough! Charles Darwin said, " It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." Change is good! That is the real problem in Palos Verdes, all this resistance to change is just wasted energy. We need to get with the program and stop whining. PS Anyone who is too weak to lug the large cans can opt for much smaller ones. \There is also a service for \$6 per month that EDCO provides in which they will come to your yard and drag the cans out and return them to the same location. That's a pretty good deal!

Editor: This person does have a point. However, my objection is that the Imperial Wizards at RPV City Hall did, as they often do, decided they new best without seeking resident's opinions & choices.

Officer Knox and speed traps in RPV

Reading the writer's account of fighting a ticket written by Officer Knox was very enlightening. Heaven help the poor soul that pulls over to take a cell phone call or to ask Ofc. Knox for directions. What ever happened to the helpful neighborhood police of the past? A friendly warning would go a long way rather than focus on writing expensive tickets (revenue) first.

You are correct. It's all about the \$\$ and ego, same goes for the new city hall. Hell, by Tom Long's reasoning, the building is 50 years old, had a major water leak, 'Oh the sky is falling, we need to rebuild, staff had to leave the building one (1-pj) day!' well then I'm ENTITLED to a new house as well, damn it, because my home is about the same age, and we have had to re plumb and re sewer it, both big major jobs, we had to leave our house for a week while they did it, but we didn't say 'oh, lets rebuild our house'. Right now there is just way too much 'happy building' going on, lets get study of City Hall by an engineer, then go from there based upon a professionals report.

Regarding Marymount College:

Like the officials at Marymount, you people also neglect to address the fact that all this initiative is about is DORMS!!!

That is precisely the issue most of us east side residents are against. NOT the modernization as the City approved.

Yes on Education and modernization NO ON DORMITORIES LOCATED ON CAMPUS
Get Real PV Watch!

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