

Mr. Jim Kellogg, Chairman
Wildlife Conservation Board
1807 13th Street, Suite 103
Sacramento, CA, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Kellogg

The purpose of this correspondence is to document for the public record my opposition to the granting of \$10.025 Million to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) for the \$17 Million purchase of approximately 463+/- acres to be included in the proposed Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve.

I believe that I can speak directly for over 1000 residents plus the silent majority that was not consulted by referendum or any other means in approving the long term (50-year) commitment to this "experiment" as it was described in early documents. This project was sold on the basis of a survey of 3.3% of the RPV households under the guise of "Open Space" not a Preserve restricted by and for the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy (PVPLC). Even then, when the possibility of a \$3 Million bond issue was raised support plummeted. The following points have been made many times and have not been acknowledged by the City Council (CC). They are repeated herein for the public record as previously noted.

(1) There is no strong opposition to the use of public funds for the purchase of this land plus an additional 260+/- acres if a private group like the PVPLC would take responsibility for the long-term (50-year) costs and liabilities. Many of us, however, believe that the purchase of this almost totally useless land - the City has zoned the vast majority of the 424+/- acres "Open Space/Hazard" and have had a building moratorium for 30 years - at \$38,000 per acre is a profitable bailout for two (2) land developers at the public's expense.

(2) RPV currently has a total of about 800 acres of Habitat Reserve or about 18 acres per 1,000 residents compared with a National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) guideline of 1 acre per 1,000 people. With 1500 acres in the Preserve this ratio jumps to about 33 acres per 1,000 people. By comparison the Community Playfields guideline is 2 acres per 1,000 people and RPV has only 0.8 acre. While the \$1 Million RPV has committed to these purchases could have been used to rectify this inequity, the fact that the city has spent almost another \$1 Million for planning and pursuit of the other \$20 Million in public funds and \$6 Million in PVPLC funds for the two (2) developers is a greater concern.

The RPV General Plan states "Encourage the building of playing fields for multiple uses by various recreational groups---" and "Develop recreational programs that will address the recreational needs of all citizens---" but this has been superseded by the wants of special interest groups such as the PVPLC.

The history of the PVPLC in managing properties such as White Point and Forrestal has hardly been in the best interest of those who promote any form of active recreation. While advertised as Open Space they formulate restrictive measures including potential laws that eliminate these activities.

(3) While the city is bearing the brunt of the 50-year operational costs the PVPLC will have the authority to control the property. The fact that the sub-area plan will "encompass the entire city" is a future concern although it is asserted by the proponents that rules and regulations will only apply to the 1500 acre Preserve which happens to be about 17% of the total city land (public and private). While sold to the public as Open Space the record of the PVPLC in managing Preserves has been very different. Forrestal and White Point are examples of how other users are severely restricted in the interest of habitat. Of course that is how the WCB and other agencies have been convinced to allocate funds. Perhaps the WCB needs to explain to the public why 17% of the total Rancho Palos Verdes land should be dedicated to coastal sage scrub habitat while the needs of our youth are neglected.

(4) The CC talks about building a civic center but in reality 65 of the 79 acres plus "boundaries" will be committed to the NCCP. At the same time the PVPLC had originally planned to not only raise \$6 Million for the purchase of the two (2) properties but to also create a \$4 Million endowment to pay for the then estimated \$200,000 per year operational expenses. As we shall see the annual costs have escalated and as the endowment requirement increased this idea was quietly abandoned. Many of these bait and switch techniques have gone unpublicized while the city's Planning Director was named "Man of the Year" by the PVPLC.

(5) The real long term (50-year) total cost estimates are difficult to track but they have apparently increased from about \$200,000 to almost \$400,000 per year. This bounds the total cost at \$10-20 Million in '05 dollars although the estimates were made 1-2 years ago. With COLA increases and real inflation the total cost could be \$35-50 Million or more.

While there is disagreement on some of the in-kind costs the following is not unreasonable: paid to PVPLC (\$100,000), in-kind costs including increased security (\$113,000), lost RDA, property tax and ACLAD revenues (\$57,000), and PVPLC contributions guaranteed by the city (\$125,000) for a total of \$395,000 per year.

While the CC, the Finance Advisory Committee and the PVPLC will disagree on what it will cost the citizens of RPV it is equally likely that these numbers will increase under the terms of the contract. These groups have not exactly been forthright in telling the world how much has been spent to date and therefore their projections are questionable. At the same time the CC has asked the taxpayers to approve a Storm Drain User Fee because we cannot afford to pay for our infrastructure

(6) Finally, according to the "flowchart" created by the Director of the PVPLC as well as the original plan and schedule (the Preserve was targeted by the City to open in March '05) it appears that none of the documents required to secure the \$10.025 Million have been completed and/or approved and in some cases even started. This includes the EIR/EA, NCCP, Implementing Agreement, PUMP, CEQA/NEPA reviews/approvals, HOA agreements, etc. The Homeowners Association (HOA) agreements are of special note since their properties have been designated "Neutral Lands" with restrictions. One can only wonder how the City and the PVPLC will handle Neutral Lands and other private properties at some future date since the entire city is covered by the NCCP.

I believe that the WCB should reject this application because it is not in the best interests of the citizens of RPV in its present form. However, I do not think that the WCB will change its mind on this matter since it is in their best interest to allocate the funds even if it takes another 3 years to complete the fund raising and document work at the expense of RPV residents. It appears questionable whether the PVPLC will be able to raise their \$4M by the September 15 deadline and whether all of the other funds are truly available. It now appears that the purchase of the second property that was considered to be absolutely imperative is now in jeopardy due to financial and other issues. That developer would like to develop Point View as part of the deal and he will be fiercely opposed. I also believe that the public should be made aware of what this Preserve (not Open Space) will actually cost in terms of dollars and other impacts.

Sincerely,

Donald F. Reeves

