

PVP Watch Newsletter – March 18, 2015

To Our Friends and Supporters

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Crime on the Peninsula

Fourth quarter 2014 crime on the Peninsula took an *uptick* in comparison to 2013 crime statistics for the same period. The individual components were Burglary, Residence which increased from 27 to 45 (65%); Burglary, Other Structure from 5 to 14 (180%) and Vehicle Burglary from 15 to 20 (33%). Theft from Vehicles and Other Larceny / Theft decreased slightly. Grand Theft Auto increased 37% (from 8 to 11). It is not our intent to trivialize these events nor to make victims into villains, but when one reads the crime reports much what has been stolen (Burglary) is from unlocked vehicles; cell phones, I-pads etc. left in plain sight in both locked and unlocked vehicles. Yes, there are home break-in robberies but thankfully they are not as prevalent but certainly are traumatic when they do occur.

Some perceive that Prop 47, the early release from prison program, is the cause by putting criminals on the streets that otherwise would be in jail. Our understanding is that there are no facts to support those beliefs. As we have previously posted, there appears to be a significant increase in “professional” thief’s that have found the Peninsula to be “good pickings.” Often these thief’s have spent time checking neighborhoods, selecting targets in advance. Leaving newspapers and other material on driveways and front yards is a signal for thieves that a homeowner may be away thus that property may be a lower risk target.

The “first responders” to neighborhood crime are neighbors assisting neighbors. Those who go away and don’t advise neighbors are inviting trouble. Neighbors need to be vigilant for unusual people and unknown vehicles roaming about. When unusual people and unknown vehicles are observed, call Lomita Sheriff’s at 310.539.1661. We cannot over emphasize the necessity of filing crime reports and observations with the Lomita Sheriff’s office. No report or observation is too small and might fit with other information already known by the Sheriff. To protect residents, the Sheriff’s need actionable information. When neighbors report strange / unusual

situations to the Sheriff's office in a timely manner, the Sheriffs can promptly respond and have made some good arrests. We commend Captain Bolin and the Lomita Sheriff's for the many good arrests they have made.

Some may be unaware that the Sheriff has an active volunteer patrol that aids in observing neighborhoods. Recently the RPV Council authorized \$25,000 to assist the Sheriff in adding to the volunteer patrol program with additional patrol cars and volunteers. If you wish to assist the community call Lomita Sheriff (310.539.1661) for more information.

RPV

PVP Watch welcomes new RPV City Manager Doug Willmore. Mr. Willmore began his duties as City Manager on March 1st and hopefully his tenure will be beneficial for RPV residents as well as RPV staff.

RPV – Utility Users Tax

PVP Watch has previously posted concerning the UUT and the City's improper (illegal) collection of the telecommunications portion of the UUT. Not to regurgitate this lengthy matter but to focus on the present, all RPV residents should have received correspondence explaining the situation with accompanying claim forms. While the forms have two places for entering billing accounts (wireline & wireless) some residents have additional telecom accounts if they were using a long distance carrier different from their local service (AT&T or Verizon) provider and may need additional forms.

The refund information indicates the refund period. RPV residents should be aware that there is a pending lawsuit for the 6+ year period back to when the telecom portion of the UUT was first billed. As that matter goes forward, PVP Watch will keep subscribers so advised.

While refunds will typically be \$25 per billing account, residents should not forget that RPV City Hall illegally collected this tax for many years and the staff and previous Council knew what they were doing was illegal. It was only after a Public Records Request was submitted on or about May 28th 2014 did either City Attorney Lynch or acting City Manager Petru move on this matter. At special meeting on July 4th the Council was first informed of the situation although the City Attorney and Acting City Manager had been aware for over one month. Staff's answer for the situation was a scheme for a Special Election to obtain voter approval of the UUT tax that RPV had been illegally collecting for years.

What is even a greater issue is that some of the Council (Brooks, Knight, Missetich) voted in favor of having a special election so that RPV could continue collecting the UUT. Fortunately two Councilman, Campbell and Duhovic saw thru staff's subterfuge and opposed the Special Election. There will be further commentary concerning RPV finances.

RPV - Finances

As new City Manager Willmore begins his oversight of RPV finances and expenditures, hopefully his tenure will be beneficial to RPV residents. Kathryn Downs, the Deputy Finance Director, is now the acting Finance Director

as former RPV Finance Director McLean resigned / retired on January 31st. We anticipate that Mr. Willmore will initiate transparency and accountability to RPV's financial matters. There was a time that RPV had financial issues but that is no longer the situation.

The January 2015 Cash Balance report contains the following:

General Fund Cash Balance - \$15,683,564

Council Restricted Funds - \$18,169,960

Restricted by Law or External Agreements - \$15,844,744

Included in the Restricted by Law or External Agreements is \$2,866,170 in the "Water Quality" or AKA Storm Drain fund. The storm drain tax expires in about two years and residents can anticipate a "doom & gloom" scenario from City Hall for continuing, in our opinion, an unneeded "Water Quality" tax now approximating almost \$100 per residence annually.

We understand that the GF (General Fund) revenues approximate about \$2.5 million over expectations. This is created partially by "going out of business" budget forecasting and that RPV business, and Terranea in particular, have seen dynamic improvements in business.

What is needed in RPV is sound financial management and better attention to Capital Projects selection. We are optimistic that City Manager Willmore will "deliver" sound management principles.

RPV – Emergency Services

An interesting development at the March 3rd RPV Council meeting was Councilman Jerry Duhovic's proposal to place on a future Council agenda the topic of improving emergency rescue services on the "South Side." As we understand the situation, it seems that during Duhovic's term as Mayor last year, LA County Fire initiated a discussion concerning Fire Station 53 on PV Dr. South. Anyone familiar with Fire Station 53 recognizes how old and small it is and the prospect of expanding for increasing services is unquestionably in the public interest. An issue is land where a new fire station could be built. Apparently Duhovic had made some inquiries and it appears a "deal" has potential and his purpose was for a time and place to update the entire Council.

Councilwoman Brooks seemed distraught about Duhovic's proposal. Her rhetoric was not discernable as she was not speaking into her "mic" but her body actions were evident. Possibly because some time ago Brooks had proposed adding an ambulance somewhere along PV Dr. South. What Brooks apparently does not recognize is that LA County Fire is responsible for dispatching ambulances on the Peninsula. Ambulances are merely a transport vehicle operating at LA County Fire direction. Perhaps not all residents are aware that LA County Fire is the first responder in emergency medical situations and that each "fire truck" has a trained Paramedic on that vehicle. Although the smaller "rescue" vehicles have a greater array of life saving equipment, the fire fighting vehicles have sufficient equipment to manage emergency situations. Not to impugn the ambulance personnel but they have EMT training and are not Paramedics.

This year is election time in RPV and we will be voting for three Council seats (Brooks, Knight, Duhovic) in November. We are optimistic that new candidates will develop and that will have a spirited election campaign this year.

RPV - Green Hills

Presently, little has changed concerning the current debate with Green Hills Cemetery. Underway is the “unbiased investigation” and when will the investigators report be delivered / presented? Until that occurs, everything else is on hold.

Hopefully RPV residents are feeling “warm and comfy” that RPV City Hall is representing us well. That staff has bypassed and excluded Council oversight is a concern.

RPV – Parklands

For those unaware, RPV is currently engaged in an Update of the Parks Master Plan. RPV is overly subscribed to passive recreation such as the nature preserve / hiking trails etc. While hiking trails are good, active recreation in RPV has been seriously neglected for many years. Interesting is that the Parks Master Plan which is now being updated was prepared in 1989 and many of the deficiencies then remain deficiencies today. Go to www.palosverdes.com/rpv/parksmasterplan to learn about the project or to take an online survey. This is an opportunity to make your concerns about RPV Parklands known.

RPV as well as the other Cities on the Peninsula need to develop Multi Party sharing agreements with PVPUSD, the Peninsula School District. PV Schools, for the most part, have the open space / ball fields, gymnasiums, swimming pools etc. but the schools responsibilities are education not community Parks and Recreation which are the “cities” responsibilities. “Rec & Parks” is clearly a priority for the taxpayers and our respective Councils must adopt the taxpayer’s interests as their own. It is essential that that the Cities work with the schools to provide “Rec & Parks” facilities because the taxpayers deserve better facilities with lower taxes.

One of the concerns shared by the RPV community is RPV’s relationship with the PVPLC (PVP Land Conservancy). The PVP Watch position is that RPV should have primary management responsibility for managing RPV’s parklands rather than the land conservancy. Costs for the PVPLC are excessive and the PVPLC has demonstrated a lack of parklands management expertise.

PVE – Via Panorama

The hearing to be held by Judge Meiers was changed to March 25th is important to both parties. For further information contact Renata Harbison at Renata_Harbison@yahoo.com or 310.373.2349.

Subscriber Comments

The following letter was sent to PVP Watch by former RPV Councilman & Mayor Larry Clark

Gentlemen,

It would really behoove you to check the facts before making statements of beliefs attributed to me in your newsletter.

For the record, during my time in RPV City Council for most of the last decade, I consistently held the position that the City Manager operated as the COO and the City Council operated as a 'collective' CEO for our city...

Mayor (ret.) Larry Clark
Rancho Palos Verdes
Ambassadors Circle
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

We responded to Mr. Clark that although we disagree with his comment, we would post his commentary which we have done. Our response to Mr. Clark was *"In fact were you not a participant in the June 3^d campaign to not give consideration to Duhovic's proposal to discuss and update MC's 2.04 & 2.08? However, we will print your comments that we misrepresented your position in the next PVP Watch newsletter."*

PVP Watch

PVP Watch welcomes reader comments. Please send comments to info@pvpwatch.com

We recognize that many PVP Watch newsletter subscribers use mobile devices to read newsletters. However, mobile devices do not provide acknowledgement that a newsletter has been opened and read; that must come from the primary computer whether desktop or laptop. PVP Watch is now using a new system with capability to report opening and reading newsletters which is a very important tool for newsletter management. We ask that those who do read newsletters from mobile devices also open the newsletter at their primary computer before deleting.

One of the current email issues is overactive "spam" detectors and we urge everyone to enter info@pvpwatch.com and PVP Watch into their computer address book

PVP Watch welcomes all input and awaits subscriber feedback on the new newsletter format and postings.

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 also suggest that info@pvpwatch.com be added to your computer Contacts Directory 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 2041 / 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 info@pvpwatch.com as well.
