

PVP Watch Newsletter – May - 1 - 2017

To Our Friends and Supporters

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This November (2017) RPV will be electing two new Councilmen as the terms for Councilman Anthony Misetich and Mayor Brian Campbell will be ending due to term limits. So far one person – John Cruikshank - has declared intent and has filed forms with the California Secretary of State (FPPC) office. Filing with the RPV Clerk’s office begins in early July.

RPV Council Candidates

John Cruikshank, a licensed civil engineer by profession, is a local, business owner and currently Chair of the Rancho Palos Verdes Planning Commission.

John sees community involvement as a way of helping to insure the safety, accountability, and resource preservation of our great City.

John can be reached at john@johncruikshank.us. Give him a call...

PVP Watch will post other candidates as they become known.

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes

The Absence of Responsibility, Accountability & Authority

Most California cities use the Council-City Manager form of government, as does Rancho Palos Verdes. Typically, the City Council sets policy, passes ordinances, approves new projects and programs, gives direction and ratifies the annual budget and ensures adherence to the budget throughout the year. Most importantly, through a clear system of Policies and Procedures the City Council oversees and holds accountable the City Manager and the City Attorney.

Again typically, the City Manager, operates with a clear set of Responsibility, Accountability and Authority definitions designed to ensure City Council "Oversight", implements the policies, advises the council, makes recommendations for City Council decisions, formulates the budget and oversees the day-to-day administration and management of staff and resources, all consistent with the specific Authorities as provided by the City Council.

For such a system to be effective there must be very clear Policies and Procedures, especially for essential Role Clarity. Authority definitions are essential to ensuring a productive City Council-City Manager relationship.

These practices are NOT presently the case in Rancho Palos Verdes

A number of the present RPV City Council members have campaigned on the need for such Role Clarity & Oversight. But for some reason this has escaped implementation thus creating an environment wherein the City Manager makes decisions without the involvement or knowledge of the City Council. This is not the City Manager's direct fault as lacking specific Oversight Policies & Procedures the City Manager cannot be held responsible for conducting business however he chooses with a complacent majority on the council.

First and foremost, the relationship between the City Council and the City Manager should be a professional relationship, guided by clear Policies and Procedures to competently serve the community. The RPV City Council and the City Manager do not presently function as designed. The City Manager openly admits that he picks and chooses whom he shares information with on the council. Those Council members that knowingly engage in this divisive behavior are not only violating their own campaign promises but are undermining the very foundation of our local form of government.

If the present arbitrary and capricious communications between the City Council and the City Manager continues, and authorities are not made clear, problems will continue to occur often detrimental to the residents. Think of the chaos that would potentially ensue if a major earthquake or other significant emergency occurred with the current fractured communications. It would slow our governmental response and ability to work effectively with other public agencies and possibly put lives and property unnecessarily in danger.

Why do we have a complacent City Council that leaves a City Manager without defined levels of Responsibility, Accountability & Authority thus with no Oversight? This avoidance by the City Council of formalizing Responsibility, Accountability and Authority definitions in the City Policies & Procedures is paralyzing the city and undermining governance by the City Council.

This must be changed and those City Council members who campaigned on the need for such Clarity and Oversight, but have not proceeded to create such Policies & Procedures, must do so immediately.

As residents we suggest the following:

Appoint a Citizens Committee to formalize and present to the City Council a set of Policies & Procedures that will bring Role Clarity to the City Council and the City Manager by providing a clear set of Responsibility, Accountability and Authority definitions. Most of all these will provide the City Council "Oversight" and then ensure Accountability of all operating areas within our local government.

Breaking News.....

Peninsula People / Issue May 2017 an article about RPV City Manager Doug Willmore and his accomplishments making city officials law abiding citizens. Really.....

Wonder what RPV Councilmembers perceive of being described as dishonest by the City Manager?

Wonder how Peninsula People writer David Mendez validated his facts? There are many people in the RPV Community that would disagree with Mendez's description of Doug Willmore.

Vista Verde Homeowners Legal Settlement.

Vista Verde is a condominium complex that borders on Green Hills Cemetery on its South side (rear) and fronts on PV Drive North. It has long been a contentious issue with lawsuits being initiated by the Vista Verde residents against the City of RPV and possibly Green Hills Cemetery as well. However, after suing the City of RPV in several lawsuits for millions of \$\$\$, the legal settlement is a \$500,000 settlement negotiated by Mediator Gerry Hastings for payment to the condo owners. This matter was approved by the RPV Council at its April 18th Council meeting.

This matter has long been included in the controversy relating to Green Hills burial plots but as we understand the situation, it is separate and distinct issue from Green Hills burial plots. What may further develop between Green Hills and other parties is unknown, at least by PVP Watch, and we will wait to see what may occur in the future.

PVE – Election: Measure D

March 7, 2017 PVE held a city-wide election and in addition to the defeat of the controversial "Measure D" which was used to support PVE's contract with LA County Fire Dept. for emergency services including Paramedic services, two Council members were replaced as well.

The vote was:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>2,194</u>	<u>~60%</u>
	<u>No</u>	<u>1,470</u>	<u>~40%</u>

A 2/3's vote was required to carry the vote.

A primary question of the YES vs No Measure D quickly became WHY does PVE pay a special assessment for fire and Paramedic services as other peninsula cities do not have a special assessment for fire and Paramedic services?

A resident group called Pvrrg.org conducted a survey which provided an array of reasons the measure failed. Results posted at: <https://www.pvrrg.org/polls-measure-d/>.

Of significance was the concern of many residents that city funds were not being properly managed and directed towards residents' priorities.

After the election, Council directed Staff to conduct due diligence review and make recommendations for reducing costs. At a subsequent PVE Council on April 25th, Staff's response to the Council was that Staff could not identify a single savings or efficiency.

Councilman Davidson spoke up, he said that he had reviewed the current warrant sheet (list of payables Staff sought to have approved) and that there were quite a few items that were wasteful and suggested Staff needed to change how they do business. Yet, no action or recognition was made by Staff.

However, multiple Councilpersons and the Treasurer stated that they had heard from residents that residents wanted the City to "tighten their belts". Staff recommended that Council address the budget shortfall themselves and hire outside consultants if needed. **Yet**, the recent increase of 15% of staffing reported by the City Manager in February amounted to millions year over year.

At a community meeting last week, Mayor Vandever discussed Measure D failure. As a member of the "Financial" team, Mayor Vandever stated that he will seek cost savings and efficiencies, but did not expect to find any - and would fully rely on another "Measure D".

PVE – Election: Council and Treasurer

March 7th PVE residents elected 2 new Councilmen and a new City Treasurer.

Incumbents Jim Goodhart and John Rea were not reelected

Former Planning Commissioner Kenny Kao and doctor Sanford Davidson were elected

Victoria Lozzi was elected Treasurer.

Much of the discussion during the election was about parkland sales, resonating great concern for residents. The issue at hand was an agreement which the Council entered into that allowed a resident to purchase 1.7 acres of land upon which he had built extensive encroachments over a period of 38 years. This resulted in a lawsuit by other residents because it violated deed covenants and protections in the CC&Rs which protected parkland from sales. The transaction was found to be illegal by the judge in Torrance and ordered reversed and the encroachments removed. Of discussion in this election was the PVE Council's continued

funding of the appeal; which reduced the protection of open land by the CC&Rs. The election outcome reflected a significant change in leadership, when neither of the two long-time Council members were reelected.

In the Council meeting last week, April 25th, newly elected Councilperson Davidson asked the Council to take steps to reduce costs. He specifically recommended the Council pull out of the Parkland Appeal because of cost and the reduced protection of the CC&Rs of parkland. **Councilperson King and Mayor Vandever strongly recommended that the City continue to support the appeal, including any necessary further spending.** No other members of Council stated support of a vote to stop the appeal.

PVPUSD

Recently, PVP Watch learned that the PVPUSD administration / PVPUSD school board had hired consultants for \$350,000 to develop a Master Facilities Plan wish list. Reportedly, the consultants are currently doing a community input road show seeking resident / taxpayer input.

After the many years of needed education funds deferment it is indeed likely that school facilities need serious maintenance. However, PVP Watch wonders why taxpayer input is needed? Is the school administration contemplating a new tax?

PVP Watch will investigate and report to Peninsula residents.

PVP Watch Welcomes Subscriber Comments

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

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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.

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