

PVP Watch Newsletter – May 13, 2015

To Our Friends and Supporters

In this Newsletter:

- * Crime on the Peninsula
- * RPV – Utility Users Tax
- * RPV – Storm Drain Fee / Tax
- * RPV – Hawthorne Blvd. - Traffic Signal Control
- * RPV - Green Hills
- * RPV – Parklands
- * PVE – Via Panorama

Crime on the Peninsula

In the last newsletter (March 18th) PVP Watch reported on increased crime in RPV and the Peninsula. A recent report from the Lomita Sheriff's office stated that the increased crime rate continued into 2015 with 25 residential burglaries occurring in January / February. However, the Good News is that numbers for residential burglaries during March decreased to 7. This is significant and the opinion of Lomita Sheriff Captain Bolin is that the arrest of three particular individuals helped cause the decline.

Another situation occurred February 17th when an alert neighbor, out walking her dog, saw an unfamiliar car, with two unfamiliar faces, pass her on the street. She called Lomita Station to report this suspicious vehicle and was able to remember some digits from the license plate. A burglary was subsequently reported on in the same neighborhood on Coveview. Lomita Sheriff detectives immediately went to work using the neighbors input, the Sheriff's Crime database and other investigative tools; the detectives were able to identify a car that had been rented near LAX. Fortunately, the vehicle had a tracker on it and through GPS, deputies learned it had been on Coveview for approximately 50 minutes, at a Pawn Shop in South Central LA, and at the Downtown Jewelry Mart District all within hours of the crime. Detectives identified the occupants of the car and arrests were made.

Unfortunately the Sheriffs could not recoup the stolen jewelry nevertheless it was a bit of outstanding police work resulting in two arrests that initially began with a call made from a Neighborhood Watch member. Kudos to her for being observant and taking the time to call the Lomita Sheriff' office. PVP Watch as well as Neighborhood Watch and Lomita Sheriffs have on many occasions urged neighbors to be observant of what is going on in their neighborhood as the "first responders" to neighborhood crime are neighbors assisting neighbors. Lomita Sheriffs is also experiencing an increase in suspicious person calls and potential burglary in progress calls. Fortunately, most turn out to be innocent activity (vendors, relatives of homeowners, etc.) but Captain Bolin reports that they are grateful for the calls nonetheless.

The good folks in the community are being observant, looking out for their neighbors, and calling us to report what they believe is suspicious activity. This is precisely what we ask them to do. This community/law enforcement partnership is a successful crime suppression strategy.

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.

Although the crime rate increased in the latter portion of 2014, actually during 2014 RPV experienced the third lowest overall crime rate (Part 1 & Part 2 Crimes) in the past 15 years. Only 2005 and 2009 were lower. At a recent Council budget meeting there was discussion about having the Sheriff provide two additional patrol units at an approximate cost of \$500,000 annually for the two units. It does not seem that circumstances support the cost of two additional units when the community patrol program as not been enhanced as proposed by the RPV Council.

RPV – Utility Users Tax

First the good news, at the April 21st Council meeting the Council accepted staff's proposal to stop any further pursuit of the telecom portion of the UUT tax. Of course staff's recommendation was not based on reality that the City did not need this \$700,000 but that having residents vote on this matter with the Storm Drain Fee / Tax renewal likely being on the same ballot would likely result in voter rejection of both proposals. More on Storm Drain fees below.

Reminder, have you submitted your claim for reimbursement of the illegally collected telecom UUT? Claims are now being processed and the deadline to complete and submit your claim form is August 5, 2015. You may submit it by mail, fax, or online to the Claims Administrator. If you did not receive a Claim Form, contact the Claims Administrator at (888) 287-4974 or by email at info@RanchoPalosVerdesUUTRefund.com.

RPV – Storm Drain Fee / Tax

It's that time of year and as anticipated the annual RPV Storm Drain kabuki dance has begun. However, this year will be different as there is the annual fee renewal matter. However, in addition the "Water Quality / Storm Drain Fee / Tax that expires in one year, at the end of the 2015 / 2016 fiscal year, and that renewal effort has already begun.

Let there be no doubt, PVP Watch opposes any continuation of the Storm Drain tax as it is NOT needed, unfair and discriminates by only 80% of RPV residents having to pay the user fee. So far, staff is presenting numbers that do not include the current Capital (CIP) fund approximating \$20 million or the ~\$4 million currently in the storm drain account (Feb. 2015 Cash Balance Report). Also apparently being ignored is the Terranea TOT windfall payments to RPV now projected to exceed \$5 million annually. While it is the staff that prepares the "numbers" the Council must approve staff recommendations in order to move forward. We urge ALL residents to

make their opinions known to the Council that this unneeded and unfair Storm Drain User Fee / Tax must be terminated. We have posted further financial data on the PVP Watch website – www.pvpwatch.com – go to the bottom of the Current Issues page.

RPV – Hawthorne Blvd. Traffic Signal Control

PVP Watch has reported previously about prior RPV Finance Director McLean's cockamamie scheme to obtain a grant from the LA County MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) for synchronizing the traffic signals on Hawthorne Blvd. from Highridge (Chevron station) to PV Drive West, 3.7 miles / 8 traffic signals. There are a number of reasons why the idea is beyond unscientific but let's stick with the top two; Most of these 8 signals are "Demand" that is they remain green on Hawthorne until the sensor is *tripped* by an auto attempting to enter / cross Hawthorne Blvd, from a side street (i.e. Eddinghill etc.) The result of this folly would be that many autos would have a red light stop even though there were no auto's waiting to enter Hawthorne Blvd.

The other part of McLean's scheme is that RPV could "piggyback" a *fiber optic cable* in the same trench used for a telecommunications cable to control the traffic signals to connect Hesse Park, Ryan Park and City Hall thus in effect LA County would pay for the installing RPV's *fiber optic cable*.

Recognizing that Mr. McLean had departed RPV for other endeavors, Public Works Director Michael Throne was queried as to whether or not RPV was going to continue this folly and he responded with an email message March 11th *stating that RPV had received a grant from the MTA for the traffic signal work on Hawthorne Blvd. and that the City is taking the opportunity to piggyback improvements to the communications link etc.....*

We found that interesting and wrote the MTA on April 8th seeking confirmation that LA County was in fact providing a grant to RPV for the traffic signal modernization project. April 24th MTA responded; "*Your April 8, 2015 letter regarding a project within City of Rancho Palos Verdes has been received. The referenced traffic signal synchronization project along Hawthorne Blvd. between Highridge Road and Palos Verdes Drive West is **not*** (editors emphasis) *a Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority **grant funded effort.***"

So far this discourse has been limited to addressing an ill-conceived project that seems to lack funding and have not yet discussed the questionable technology direction. Of significant concern is Public Works Director Michael Throne's commentary on March 11th that MTA is providing a grant for the project and then MTA's subsequent denial of project funding on April 24th. One would presume that Mr. Throne would know how the ill-conceived project was to be funded.

PVP Watch has met with RPV's new City Manager Doug Willmore and we were impressed with his knowledge and candor and are optimistic that he will deal with this matter forthwith.

RPV - Green Hills

It is reported that the 3rd party investigator has completed their assignment and has provided an initial *draft* report to City Manager Willmore and presumably the Council as well. This matter has been postponed until June 30th. We shall have to wait to learn what occurred.

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.

There is growing concern about visitor parking for the preserve area and that for the most part parking is limited to the Del Cerro area. If you have not been in the Del Cerro area on a nice Saturday or Sunday afternoon we urge you to look around and see what those neighbors have to contend with. We understand that City Manager Willmore has staff working on this problem.

PVE – Via Panorama

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

Subscriber Comments

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.
