

PVP Watch Newsletter – May 15, 2010

To Our Friends & Supporters

In this Newsletter:

- Less School Days, Unions Rule and Parking Lots
- New City Hall for RPV
- New pay increases coming for RPV Staff?
- Proposed Annenberg project at Lower Point Vicente
- Marymount College plans move forward

Peninsula Schools

The May 13th edition of the PV News headlined "*PVFA, School District reach agreement, save jobs*" the PVFA being the local teachers union. According to PVFA President Kathy Santarosa the new agreement was a middle ground accomplishment by removing four (4) days from school calendar. Excuse me but how is four less school days for Peninsula students a good thing? If the teachers union really wanted to make a contribution they would have worked the four days at no pay. As usual, the teachers union would not forgo salary increases to keep more teachers employed. We recognize there are many fine teachers; however there are also too many agitators who think only of themselves. Prima donnas is another word that comes to mind.

It is disappointing for taxpayers that school negotiators are not more challenging in union negotiations. It has been well documented how the California Teachers Association and other paralleling organizations have adversely affected the quality of education in California and the United States as well. It is past time for Peninsula Schools as well as California at large to begin to break the iron grip that the teachers union has on our schools.

Another issue is "Lots C & D" located in Palos Verdes Estates and adjacent to Palos Verdes High School. The issue is whether the school district has the "right" to sell these unused lots or must, according to a 1937 deed restriction return them to the Palos Verdes Home Association.

It was surprising that there was limited (one) response to this question in the last PVP Watch Newsletter with perhaps four or five letters in the PV News. The responses seem equally divided with both sides of the argument represented. It is beyond disappointing (perhaps childish is more appropriate) that neither the Palos Verdes Home Association (PVHA) or the Palos Verdes Estates (PVE) Council will agree to meet with the PVP schools Board (PVPUSD) to resolve their differences. Perhaps the neighbors would prefer a parking lot for PV High rather than having new homes built on these properties? An old axiom: Be careful what you ask for....

RPV

The continuing saga..... A new City Hall for RPV!!!!!!!

In response to the April 22nd Newsletter, we received the following response from Tom Long:

"Gentlemen: In fairness shouldn't you mention the likelihood that the army barracks will collapse in a significant earthquake? It's not wood frame like most homes in RPV and therefore not as resilient. As engineers you should understand the importance of having public buildings that are viable in an emergency situation. Take the time to learn about what conditions are likely to be like in RPV after a major earthquake. The so-called "city hall" that we have right now is not likely to be part of those post-earthquake conditions."

Tom Long

RPV Mayor Pro Tem

Unfortunately Tom Long's assertions have little merit and apparently not based on known facts (*proven need*) but likely on a feel good (*want*). What evidence is there to support Mayor Pro Tem (man o man do they like these titles) Tom Long's assertions? Has a licensed structural engineer made an evaluation? Apparently not. Has there been an assessment of likely earthquake faults? No reports of that having occurred. It appears to us that an expert in seismic behavior of the peninsula should look at recent (and past) earthquake intensities and determine the probability of damage to the existing city hall structure and the expected dollar cost of any damage before deciding that a new City Hall is a MUST in order to "save the staff and public from certain death."

The RPV City Hall was originally constructed as a military installation, a Nike site to be exact. As such, it is doubtful the construction would be too flimsy since it would be vulnerable to attack by the enemy. Chances are the block walls are loaded with steel and the cells are poured solid with concrete. In the event of an earthquake City Hall could possibly be the safest place in town.

Does not responsible management of the "peoples money" demand that a complete assessment of the building structure be conducted before charging forth to build a new one? By the way, Tom Long's reference to PVP Watch as "*engineers*", while we value the skills of our associates who are "engineers" not all of us can legitimately claim that title.

Until factually proven otherwise, PVP Watch disagrees with RPV City Hall's belief that the current City Hall has structural issues and MUST be replaced.

RPV Spending Priorities

The RPV Council has approved City Manager Lehr's request for some \$300,000 funds, tax revenues from Terranea, to move ahead with planning a new City Hall. Found in the May 7th edition of the Daily Breeze (Pg D9) a Notice Inviting Bids for *Energy Savings Upgrades for the City Facilities* project.

While the project is questionable it appears that not only does RPV City Hall again "*have the cart in front of the horse, the cart is also upside down & missing a wheel.*"

A few issues:

* It appears there has been NO assessment of needs as the Scope is limited to "listed savings measures as stated in the Special Provisions and the bid sheets." Would it have not been more appropriate to have an architect make an assessment and determine what needs to be done?

* The City Hall complex is included in the bid process. Why spend reportedly scarce funds to upgrade City Hall if in fact it is to be replaced? Does this type of planning make sense?

* The entire process seems convoluted.

RPV Salary Increases

On the May 18th Council agenda (item #11) is the annual staff salary survey. Bottom line staff reports they are underpaid and are asking for salary increases. If approved, the senior staff, Deputy City Manager & Directors will increase from \$12,347 / \$148,164 annually to \$13,255 / \$159,060 annually + benefits with commensurate increases for the rest of the staff. Reportedly, the estimated fiscal impact is approximately \$20,000 which seems to be but more **fuzzy math.** The Salary Survey report is posted at www.pvpwatch.com / Current Issues page for all to read. It is PVP Watch's opinion that RPV staff is already excessively compensated. This is especially true if compared to comparable jobs in private industry.

RPV Revenues

During the May 4th Council meeting it was reported that current General Fund revenues were running about \$3,200,000 greater than estimated with Terranea providing about \$2,000,000 of these welcome \$\$\$\$. This is no surprise as revenues exceeding projections is typical at RPV City Hall. When other Terranea taxes and fees are computed financial results will be even greater.

It seems, in spite of this good news, that Finance will again recommend that RPV assess the unneeded Storm Drain User Fee for the 2010 / 2011 property tax period. How else could City Hall spend on frivolous purchases i.e. \$181 for the Mayor's license plate frame, \$500 month for bottled water, new City Hall planning etc. etc. How can the Mayor possibly drive around without a license plate frame identifying his exalted position.

Hopefully all residents will be observant and make proper salutation when the Mayor drives by.

To what extent do residents believe that City Hall should set an example? Is there something wrong with "tap" water that causes City Hall to use bottled water? Or do they just not care?

Some time ago the PVP school district decided bottled water was NOT an appropriate use of public funds and stopped funding bottled water.

What do residents think about City Hall using bottled water instead of "tap" water? Send comments to opinion@pvpwatch.com

Proposed Annenberg Companion Facility at Lower Point Vicente.

Recently Annenberg Managing Director Leonard Aube presented the "Annenberg Plan" to PVP Watch. While Mr. Aube is extremely skillful in presenting the Annenberg Plan, it seemed there was a lack of substance in the Annenberg proposal. One positive issue was reported that there will not be an animal crematorium. Mr. Aube reported that there will be a maximum of 20 animals at one time, 12 dogs and 8 cats awaiting adoption. Wondering... is there presently a shortage of animal adoption facilities in the South Bay? Is this a sufficient reason to build the proposed Annenberg companion animal facility as proposed? Send comments to opinion@pvpwatch.com.

Mr. Aube reported that plans were still fluid and that the only decided factor were the perimeter walls. Unfortunately few PVP Watch questions were answered. We question how an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) can be conducted when there is little data concerning how the facility will be used. Compare this to all the hyperbole concerning Marymount, a true asset to RPV.

At the February 23rd Planning Commission meeting Community Development Director Joel Rojas stated to the Planning Commission that the Annenberg Project is one of the Council's goals and as such needs to move forward. In view of previous City Council's having deemed the Lower Point Vicente property as being "HANDS OFF TO ANYTHING" including open-space play areas (i.e. softball OR soccer fields, both of which are in short supply in RPV), why should RPV devote this "treasured place" (per Larry Clark and Tom Long) to house pets and not for RPV active use?

There has been no public discussion concerning property management and "Terms & Conditions" of land use. Aube did report that RPV would continue to pay the 1st \$150,000 annual cost to operate the PVIC. Unknown what funding commitments Annenberg may have?

RPV - Marymount College

Athletic field issues of the Marymount plan, as approved by the RPV Planning Commission were accepted by the City Council at its May 4th meeting with the final reading scheduled for May 18th. Hopefully that will be the conclusion of the objections and Marymount can, at last, move forward. The issue of the initiative remains undecided while RPV validates resident signatures. Hopefully both sides can reasonably agree on undecided issues and move forward with a modernized Marymount that will bring further benefits to the Peninsula and the surrounding community.

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.

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. PVP Watch strives to bring current issues to www.pvpwatch.com. Those who have topics of community interest are encouraged to bring those issues to PVP Watch.

The Editorial Committee