

PVP Watch Newsletter – August 26, 2015

To Our Friends and Supporters

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The filing period for submitting candidate papers at both Rolling Hills Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes has closed.

RHE – Three Council members; John Addleman, Judy Mitchell and Frank Zerunyan terms expire this year and longtime Council member John Addleman decided not to run for reelection. Mr. Addleman was first elected to the RHE Council in 1997 and has served the Peninsula community admirably over the past years. Thanks John for your positive contributions to this community.

Judy Mitchell and Frank Zerunyan have filed for reelection. Two new Council candidates are Velveth Schmitz and Carl Southwell, both now serving on the RHE Planning Commission.

RPV – Three Council terms are expiring; Susan Brooks, Jerry Duhovic and Jim Knight have filed for reelection. Former RPV Councilmember / Mayor Ken Dyda and Greg Royston have also qualified as candidates.

PVPUSD

Two Schoolboard Trustees whose terms are expiring are Larry Vanden Bos and Linda Reid. Mr. Vanden Bos has served two terms and will not stand for reelection. Ms. Reid was appointed to replace Erin LaMonte who resigned last year and thus Ms. Reid is now an incumbent. Three other candidates are Dawn Lenzie, Suzanne Seymour and Barry Rondinella.

RPV Council Elections

PVP Watch supports Jerry Duhovic, Ken Dyda and Greg Royston for the RPV Council. Those who watch City Hall know the positive impact Jerry Duhovic has made at RPV City Hall. Duhovic was Mayor during 2014 and set an example of knowledge, integrity and fairness not seen in the Mayors position in recent history. That Mr. Duhovic has decided to run for a second term will undoubtedly be supported by a majority of RPV residents.

Ken Dyda is a known individual with many years of experience as a past Council member and former Mayor. Dyda is a "straight shooter" who is above the political gamesmanship that is so frequent today. Electing Ken Dyda to the RPV Council will be a big step in building "Transparency and Accountability" at RPV City Hall.

Greg Royston and family have resided in RPV for some 10 years or so. Royston is an attorney specializing in Real Estate matters. Royston is new to local politics and can provide differing views to many pressing issues.

Unfortunately there is nothing positive to report on the past four years with Susan Brooks and Jim Knight as Council members other than Brooks did a very good job in organizing RPV's 40 year celebration at Terranea. Both have been Mayor with more controversy than distinction.

Brooks has a propensity to make claims for accomplishments that she has not achieved. For example in her August 16th announcement letter she wrote "*Concerns regarding transparency, accountability and oversight have been addressed and resolved over the past term*" is an untrue statement. It was June 3, 2014 when then Mayor Jerry Duhovic presented a plan that would provide an "oversight" capability that the Council could use when necessary. When Brooks became aware of what Duhovic was proposing she organized an opposition to ensure that Duhovic's proposal was voted down, without a hearing of any kind, by herself and her two minions Jim Knight and Anthony Misetich. RPV residents today suffer because of Susan Brooks opposition to Council "*oversight*" of staff operations. And she now has the audacity to report that oversight has been resolved by this Council. There are many more examples as to why Susan Brooks is unfit to serve on the RPV Council.

Jim Knight's term has been lackluster with his efforts of ignoring public interests and focusing on harassing RPV businesses. RPV residents will recall that Knight voted against the Trump flagpole until virtually the final vote. Apparently Knight had received sufficient community criticism that he decided to join with the majority. Jim Knight has been a vociferous opponent of Jim York's "farm" on PV Drive South which we understand is welcomed by neighbors in Portuguese Bend

Recently (Aug. 11) the Planning Commission received and discussed an updated "draft" of the Western Ave. Beautification Plan. A primary point of discussion was bicycle lanes on Western Ave. Neighbors who use Western Ave. every day are "up in arms" over the lack of responsibility for resolving the horrendous traffic problems on Western Ave. While some may consider Western Ave. to be a "Destination," one RPV resident "nailed it" when she declared that Western Ave. was merely a "Highway through Suburbia."

Both RPV Mayor Knight and RPV City Manager Willmore attended the Planning Commission meeting both speaking at some length extolling the virtues of bicycle lanes on Western Ave. Why Mayor Knight and City Manager Willmore perceive that RPV should "cozy up" with the City of Los Angeles for bicycle lanes rather than addressing Western Ave. traffic flow is puzzling but Jim Knight's position is not surprising. Furthermore, Knight, as he has done previously, misrepresented himself from the Mayors position when he had not been authorized by the Council to do so in his support of the ill-conceived Western Ave plan. Some seem to forget that the only unique power the RPV Mayor has is to conduct Council meetings. What Mr. Knight should have done is to

speak for himself as a resident and to have observed the 3 minute speaking rule as all residents are required to do. Jim Knight abuses his power as an elected official and should not be reelected this November.

All Council candidates should be queried on RPV taxes. Both Brooks and Knight have established a position supporting unneeded and questionable taxes. Two taxes come to mind, the telecom portion of the UUT (Utilities User Tax) and the Storm Drain User fee. In her August 16th announcement letter, Brooks stated "*Our City is financially secure, with health reserves*" and she is correct, RPV does have healthy reserves with an annual income from Terranea TOT (Transit Occupancy Tax) now exceeding \$5 million annually. That does not include other Terranea fees such as property taxes, sales taxes, utility taxes etc. *In this election year it is what a person has done not what they might say they have done. Be aware.....* What is needed is at RPV City Hall is good management, not unnecessary taxes.

This November RPV voters have a choice between; RPV the way it was envisioned by our Founding Fathers or the way it is now envisioned by the hard core environmentalists. An election is the only time when the RPV residents get to express a preference on a big issue. This November, this election is more than a glossy mailers personality contest.

PVP Watch will continue to post our reasons for believing the three best candidates for RPV Council this November are Jerry Duhovic, Ken Dyda and Greg Royston.

RPV – The Hawthorne Blvd. Traffic Signal Control “Boondoggle”

PVP Watch has been posting for some time that RPV’s project for “synchronization” of the traffic signals along Hawthorne Blvd. makes no sense and is a waste of taxpayer funds. It is anticipated that City Hall will have to soon bring this matter to the Council and thus we will continue to post on staff’s costly Boondoggle.

Overall project costs will likely exceed \$1,334,891 for a project whose true purpose is not the unnecessary synchronization of traffic lights but an expensive "communication want" that will cost the taxpayers of RPV approximately \$800,000.

As readers may recall, staff’s primary purpose for installing a “Fiber Optic” cable between City Hall, Ryan & Hesse Parks is for TV broadcasting of Council and other meetings. Staff’s concept is that the Fiber Optic cable would be “piggybacked” on the traffic signal synchronization project. To our knowledge, never was there a cost benefit analysis of alternative options available to the City.

Apparently Staff never looked at alternatives and we have recently ascertained that Cox can provide a TV broadcast channel for about **\$1,200 per month or less than \$15,000 annually**. This option allows continuation of RPV meetings on Channel 35 (Cox) and Verizon FiOS on Channel 39 as they are now. Other issues that may be of concern to the City, likely have better solutions as well..

As has been previously reported, synchronization of traffic signals on Hawthorne Blvd. will not provide any benefits to those motorists traveling on Hawthorne Blvd. in RPV. In fact *synchronization* may add delay.

A side note, while the staff apparently perceives that spending \$1,334,891 of taxpayer funds is a better alternative than spending \$1,200 per month. Staff also urges that RPV residents should continue paying the unneeded Storm Drain User Fee.

A Comparison of Two Peninsula Cities

The other story that has not been told; PVP Watch has posted extensively concerning the RPV and the Hawthorne Blvd. Boondoggle. Are Peninsula residents aware that two Hawthorne Blvd. intersections; Silver Spur and Indian Peak are both in the City of Rolling Hills Estates (RHE) and thus not part of RPV's traffic signal synchronization project? We understand that when RHE was approached by RPV to be included in the unneeded Hawthorne Blvd. traffic signal synchronization, RHE wisely declined. The two busiest intersections on Hawthorne Blvd on the Peninsula and when has anyone not passed through on one signal rotation sequence at either of these two busiest locations? The fact that there are no traffic flow problems on Hawthorne Blvd. again demonstrates the poor judgment of RPV City Hall and congratulations to RHE in their wisdom of not wasting taxpayer funds on needless boondoggles.

RPV – Storm Drain Fee / Tax

The RPV Storm Drain Tax is old news but City Hall is programmed to soon begin a campaign to convince taxpayers to vote in favor of renewing the unneeded and unfair Storm Drain User Fee / Tax.

As previously reported, the ten year sunset clause of the “Storm Water Tax / Fee” will terminate the collection of this fee on June 30, 2016. The current Council majority of Brooks, Knight and Missetich have made it clear that they are in favor of reinstating the user fee when the current fee expires next year. Residents should ask Ms. Brooks why it is necessary to continue the Storm Drain Fee Tax when she stated in her August 16th letter that “*Our City is financially secure, with healthy reserves*”.

With Susan Brooks and Jim Knight running for reelection this November, a good question for both is “why do we need a Storm Drain Tax when there is almost \$20 million in CIP Funds.

Let there be no doubt, PVP Watch will oppose any continuation of the Storm Drain tax as it is NOT needed, unfair and discriminates because only 80% of RPV residents have to pay the user fee.

RPV - Green Hills

In an August 5th PVP Watch Update we commented that City Manager Willmore had held the March 11th investigative report and not released it to either the Council or the public. Mr. Willmore took exception reporting that he did not have authority to release the report, only the Council could do so. The report we saw was dated March 11 date and was labeled Final Report so we presumed that it was the Final Report. Subsequently we learned that the March 11 report was NOT the Final Report and that investigations apparently continue.

Brooks in her August 25th email blast stated; “*Concerns about transparency, accountability and oversight have made amazing progress. We are one of the most transparent cities in all of CA – “ Really.... Then why after*

some eight months or so has the matter been restricted and Public Record Requests were needed to obtain the Green Hills investigative reports? Is this TRANSPARENCY?

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