

PVP Watch Newsletter – August 28, 2013

To Our Friends and Supporters

In this Newsletter:

- * November Elections
- * RPV – RPV in Chaos...
- * RPV – CIP (Capital Improvement Program)
- * RPV - Sewers
- * RPV – Spending
- * RPV - Crime Data
- * Peninsula - Elections
- * PVE – Via Panorama

From the Editor

As I begin writing this Newsletter it is a time for reflection. Continuing to write about the incompetence and mismanagement of taxpayer assets is not a “heartwarming” experience. To what extent do residents care about how their City Hall is being mismanaged is always a concern. While most issues are at RPV City Hall, recently PVE has begun to have issues as well. It seems that whatever issues may arise at RHE, they are promptly managed in an expeditious manner. Rolling Hills did recently have a land use controversy but a recent Council election appears to have returned RH to peace and tranquility. PVP Watch welcomes reader comments which should be sent to info@pvpwatch.com.

November Elections

RHE has two open seats with one incumbent, Steve Zuckerman seeking reelection and the other incumbent Susan Seamans is not seeking reelection. Three new candidates are Britt Huff, Cat Spydell and Clark Davis. At RPV, two incumbents, Brian Campbell and Anthony Misetich are seeking reelection and a familiar face at RPV Council meetings, former RPV Council member and Mayor Ken Dyda is a candidate as well. We will report further on these positions below.

Peninsula Library Board had two open positions and neither incumbents sought reelection. Only two candidates, Kay Jue and Kingston Wong were certified thus they will be appointed and there will be no election for the Peninsula Library Board.

Peninsula Schools. The three Trustees whose terms were ending, Barbara Lucky, Anthony Collatos and Malcolm Sharp sought reelection and no other candidates submitted petitions thus the three Trustees will be reappointed thus saving the school district the cost of an election.

RPV in Chaos...

In the July 25th Newsletter we reported on the fiasco concerning changing the type of pipe being used in the San Ramon project. A matter not yet discussed is project financing. During 2012, Anthony Missetich was Mayor and he appointed Council members Brooks and Knight as the Council San Ramon project committee. Mid 2012 Brooks and Knight met with LA County (LAC) Supervisor Knabe to seek LAC assistance for financing the San Ramon project. There was little community feedback (public awareness) until late 2012 when the RPV community was made aware that LAC had declined to participate. That LAC would not participate was puzzling and a letter written by a private citizen was sent to Supervisor Knabe seeking a meeting to discuss LAC's participation in the San Ramon project. After several months, and other correspondence, RPV resident Ken DeLong met with LAC Department of Public Works officials in mid-August. A very candid and forthright discussion revealed that LAC's decision not to "participate" was that RPV's San Ramon project did not conform with LAC storm drain / flood control design principals.

- Specifically, San Ramon was too costly and less costly solutions were available.
- The design diverted the natural course of water flow thus RPV now has liability should there ever be a legal action because of water flow issues.

LAC's position was that the water should have retained its natural canyon flow and that a rebuilt catch basin at 25th street would have eliminated the more significant problem; **mud** on 25th street. In so far as the switchbacks were concerned, LAC would have proposed a "wall" that would have diverted water away from the bluffs supporting PV Dr. East. Some may recall that this was proposed as an RPV interim solution had it been necessary

In fairness, the San Ramon design was approved in January 2011 and the Council majority then was Tom Long, Doug Stern and Stefan Wolowicz. Posted on the PVP Watch website (Current Issues page) is a letter dated October 11, 2012 addressed to then RPV Interim Public Works Director Jim Hendrickson that summarizes discussions with LAC. To what extent Council members Brooks or Knight may have had further discussions with either Supervisor Knabe or LAC Public Works staff is unknown. LAC staff did report that RPV only presented "here is what we are doing" and did not ask for an LAC engineering opinion. LAC explained that the San Ramon project is entirely within RPV and therefore an

RPV decision to make. Since an LAC opinion was not requested, an LAC opinion was not offered. Bottom line is that construction is underway and RPV residents are stuck with some \$8 to \$9 million expense. Staff's answer, debt financing with taxpayers footing the bill.

RPV Watch believes that RPV taxpayers have a right to know what occurred; who knew what and when did they know it. Was the City Manager forthright in advising the Council when City Hall received LAC's October 11th letter? Did anyone ask Supervisor Knabe or the LAC staff the reason for the LAC decision? Why is it that citizens can get an answer from LAC while apparently neither Council members Brooks, Knight or RPV staff bothered to ask? Should not the RPV Council with Anthony Misetich as Mayor or City Manager Lehr have sought 3rd party Value Engineering to confirm that RPV was proceeding with the most cost effective solution? This situation is but another example of the lack of competency and mismanagement at RPV City Hall.

RPV – CIP (Capital Improvement Program)

Two CIP documents are posted on the PVP Watch website / Current Issues page.

- RPV – Five Year CIPlan – June 2013 which is the complete CIP document
- RPV – Five Year CIP 2013 which is a one page spreadsheet depict the CIP line items.

The complete CIPlan provides greater overall detail but the spreadsheet provides a much clearer view in one page. That is of course if you can read it (small font). It seems more likely than not that City Hall prefers you not read nor comprehend. However, the font size can be increased by clicking on the “+” symbol that appears when the cursor is moved towards the bottom of the page.

Staff seems to purposely misrepresent overall costs as some projects are paid for by different funding sources. For example, road repair / maintenance is paid by certain State restricted funds i.e. auto related taxes. Projects exceeding designated funds can be paid by whatever method the Council so decides. Road projects should be prioritized and funded by project which would provide greater clarity and accountability. Including as a line item in the CIP program distorts the overall CIP program.

The CIP plan for FY 2003 / 2004 includes \$745,000 for PV Drive South in the slide area. WHY? Supposedly to realign PV Drive South at the Eastern end of the slide area. WHY is this necessary? It seems to us this is but another instance of questionable RPV Public Works Department judgment. Funds might be better spent on “dewatering wells” or other methods to somewhat stabilize the slide.

RPV - Sewers

RPV sewers are owned by RPV and maintained, under contract, by LA County, Department of Public Works, Sewer Maintenance Division. There are some exceptions but those exceptions are limited and not worthy of comment. Residents pay for this service via annual property taxes under the item – Consolidated Sewers.

There are nine (9) sewer projects identified for the 2013 / 2014 Fiscal Year with a projected cost of \$1,852,275.

RPV states on page 48 of the CIPlan “*that the City conducted a survey of the system (when is unknown), and in 2004 the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan was created to help in the management of this asset. The study examined sample areas throughout the City and assessed the overall system as "fair." The inspection revealed root intrusion in the pipes and cracking in the pipes, in addition to accumulated fats and grease clogging certain areas. **It appeared that the County had not been performing adequate maintenance over the years.** (editor emphasis) Without regular maintenance, overflows due to root and grease blockages will occur. To minimize the potential for overflow and to restore and maintain the system in "good" condition, a significant investment in pipeline inspection, repair and maintenance is required. The projects identified herein were included in the City's Wastewater Master Plan Update which was completed in 2009. The City's desire to contribute to a more proactive approach to maintenance of the City's sewer system was originally funded in FY 07-08. The program account for the cost of updating the Sewer System Master Plan, industrial waste monitoring, filming, and investigating, cleaning sewer pipes, and addressing capacity issues throughout the City. Not only does this work enable the City to propose capital improvement projects to the County and perform small crack repair discovered during pipe filming, any roots or obstructions discovered during the video inspections are removed which minimizes the opportunity for overflows.”*

RPV's allegations that LA County has been doing a poor job maintaining RPV Sewers is not in concert with the facts. In fact, the opposite is true; LA County has been doing an outstanding job of maintaining RPV Sewers.

The following LA County website contains reports of LA County Inspection and Maintenance of RPV Sewers. <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/smd/cctv/city/Rancho%20Palos%20Verdes/>

This current Inspection and Maintenance process began in 2005 and so far reports for about 68% of RPV Sewers have been delivered to RPV City Hall. The current project YOTV1112C is for the

remaining RPV Sewers, the Inspection phase is nearing completion and a report will then be written. A reading of these project reports finds they are quite complex and there is reams of detail.

At issue is the veracity of RPV's statements above: *Creation of Master Plan 2004, FY 2007 / 2008 funding for Wastewater Master Plan, 2009 Master Plan Update* and now the current CIP to repair nine sewer segments. The LA County reports that identified problems have been resolved by LA County Department of Public Works does contradict RPV staff reports that LA County does a poor job in maintaining RPV Sewers. We urge those interested to look at the LA County reports. Does RPV's commentary make any logical sense in view of the completeness of the LA County reports? Subscriber comments welcomed.

RPV is responsible for sewer "capacity" issues and there are some instances of limited capacity situations. However, LA County reports that these situations are NOT unusual and are usually caused by a sag in the pipe due to ground settlement and do not cause a concern when adjoining sections are OK.

Conclusion; Projects MUST be better prioritized and it does not seem prudent to spend \$1,852,275 for unnecessary sewer repairs. Furthermore, the RPV Council must organize itself to better assess the viability of Staff recommendations.

RPV – Spending

PVP Watch has commented repeatedly about the frivolous spending of taxpayer funds by RPV City Hall. While staff has successfully promoted a perception (staff) that more taxes are needed (recent 4% unnneeded storm drain tax increase) there has been little control of City Hall spending. Not long ago the Council approved the City Managers request to hire some seven (7) employees. The logic was the positions were In The Budget. Does this make sense to the residents? We heard no reasoning of why or what functions were not being accomplished.

Did anyone consider employee benefits or pension liabilities? Discussions concerning ObamaCare have a focus on 50 employees relative to healthcare cost impact. How does ObamaCare impact municipal employees? Does anyone at City Hall care? The City Manager is hired to manage the City for the benefit of the taxpayers / residents. The Council is elected by the people to properly represent the people's interests. The RPV Council has long failed to properly represent the people's best interests.

Posted on the PVP Watch website / Current Issues page are the current CIP, FY 2013 / 2014 Budget. We encourage everyone to look at these documents and decide for yourselves how well RPV finances and infrastructure are being managed. Send comments to info@pvpwatch.com.

RPV – Crime Data

The part I crime data for the 2nd quarter of 2013 indicates that the more serious crimes; Homicide, Rape, Robbery are either nonexistent or well under control in RPV. Other part I crimes

2 nd Qtr	2013	2012	
Burglary, Residence	44	44	
Vehicle Burglary, Vehicle	29	21	
Theft from Vehicle **	53	21	** Unlocked Vehicles
Other Larceny / Theft	36	32	
Grand Theft Auto	9	6	

Home Burglary remains high and Theft from Vehicle increased significantly. Lomita Sheriff Commander Captain Bolin and his team have been engaged in a door to door campaign advising residents “Do Not Leave Valuables in Plain Sight” in either locked or unlocked vehicles. Don’t make entry to your homes easy for “Bad Guys.” Neighbor Watch is a great tool for neighbors watching out for neighbors. If you see someone / something suspicious call the Lomita Sheriff’s office at 310.5239.1661. Should the situation seem to be a “Hot Crime” with criminal action taking place, call 911.

Peninsula Elections

We will update our positions as time goes forth. In RHE Steve Zuckerman has performed admirably and as of this time we know little of the other three candidates.

RPV residents should look closely at the accomplishments (or lack of) by the current Council either this year with Susan Brooks as Mayor or last year with Anthony Misetich as Mayor. There has been a Brooks led majority of herself, Jim Knight and Anthony Misetich that has dictated direction. This majority has given the City Manager virtually endless control of the agenda thus controlling what the Council can discuss.

The view of many is that City Manager Lehr is divisive and fails her responsibilities as City Manager. Her contract expires June 30, 2014 and many believe she should be allowed to move on to “greener

Pastures.” A great question to ask all three Council candidates; Anthony Missetich, Brian Campbell and Ken Dyda is for a commitment as to whether or not he would agree to renew or terminate Ms. Lehr’s employment with RPV as City Manager.

PVE – Via Panorama

The PVE – Via Panorama action was scheduled for a court hearing on Friday August 23rd. The defendants (PVE) attorney was granted a continuance as they had not had time to prepare a defense. More taxpayer \$\$\$\$. Apparently there may be other breaking issues. When we get the facts.....

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.

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The Editorial Committee
