



MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of January 20, 2006

CARL SCHULTHESS, EDITOR IN CHIEF carl.s@cox.net
DALE TYLER, PUBLISHER edt@missionviejoca.org
KATHY MIRAMONTES, CONTENT/DESIGN MANAGER katmiris@cox.net

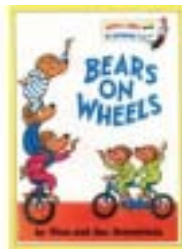
STAFF EDITORIAL

CITY COUNCIL MEETING, JAN. 16

The Jan. 16 council meeting may have set all kinds of records: the shortest meeting; the smallest audience; the first "in a long string" of meetings providing entertainment; and the meeting in which "sex" was mentioned the most times.

As an aside, Mayor Lance MacLean unveiled what is likely his major contribution of the year – rearranging the meeting agenda to place the flag salute and invocation after the closed session. The city has 18 meetings to go with Mayor MacLean until the next mayor can put God and country before the closed session again.

When MacLean said during the Jan. 3 meeting he would bring "entertainment" to council meetings, some people in the audience laughed out loud. With meetings already rivaling "[The Three Stooges](#)," the demand, instead, is for a more businesslike atmosphere. Considering that two council members – MacLean and Kelley – have probably never experienced a real business meeting in a corporate setting, it's no surprise that council meetings could soon feature bears on unicycles.



The mayor's attempt at show biz had a shaky start. The microphone wasn't working when an octet sang the national anthem a *cappella* in the keys of A through G major. Throughout the meeting, the big screen randomly flashed, but it failed to register any vote. That's entertainment.

Was it the city's shortest-ever council meeting?

The presentations and "entertainment" ran from 6 to 6:30 p.m. Council business ended before 7:30.

With little business on the agenda, a discussion developed over the difference between "should" and "shall." MacLean enjoined interim City Attorney Bill Curley to opine.

Curley, who charges the city \$250 an hour, said there's no difference. He should have instead used a "life line" and called a 10-year-old child.



Was it the smallest-ever crowd? The number of singers exceeded the number of people who stayed for the meeting – six. The Jan. 16 meeting was in the running, but a blog staffer recalls a 1990 council meeting when only two people attended.

During public comments, a resident referred to a feature story, "Spicing it up," in The Register on Jan. 11. Gail Sheehy's book, [Sex and the Seasoned Woman](#), has a Mission Viejo connection – a city commissioner. The general reaction to a 70-something woman discussing her sex life is not *Oooh* but *Eeew!* Just throw some cold water on these old folks already. The speaker at the Jan. 16 meeting concluded the city government doesn't need such spicing up. It could tarnish Mission Viejo's civic image of buffoonery.



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MacLean's ceremonial stint as mayor will end Dec. 4. A potential ending worth mentioning is the Nov. 7 city election, at which time residents could send out the clowns.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JUST SAY **NO** TO EXTORTION

I could not agree more with Larry Gilbert's letter in the Jan. 13 Saddleback Valley News. Anybody who has been involved with the City of Mission Viejo and who is committed to Mission Viejo is aware of the games Steadfast has played concerning the Aliso Ridge development. Steadfast kept changing the project. They were playing bait and switch. They presented one project to staff and the ad hoc committee and then would present a totally different project in open session. Like my father said, they were playing the shell game of hide the pea.

As I stated during public comments before the Planning and Transportation Commission, the affordable housing numbers are ADVISORY. Repeat, ADVISORY. How are these numbers developed? SCAG – Southern California Association of Governments – develops these ADVISORY numbers.

Anyone knowledgeable of SCAG's questionable past performance knows just how flaky SCAG is. Does anyone remember the numbers SCAG developed on daily trips involving the proposed El Toro Airport? Those numbers were completely discredited. Just ask Chuck Wilson of the City of Mission Viejo about some of SCAG's flaky numbers presented to the city in the past. When I called SCAG – four times – no one could or would define their methodology for developing the ADVISORY affordable housing numbers. The SCAG numbers on affordable housing could not hold up to scrutiny in court – period.

The time has come for the city council to say no to the extortionists: The Public Law Center (self-appointed and self-anointed), The Kennedy Commission (with very questionable motives) and their developer friends.

Joe Holtzman
Mission Viejo

WHY REZONE WITHOUT FULL DISCLOSURE?

Is it in the public interest to rezone a property to residential or mixed use from commercial when the terms of sale have not been disclosed? To rezone a property for development contrary to its principle use in the original site map would seem to require full disclosure. The public interest is the prevailing underlying premise.

If the use conformed to the zoning specifications on the site map, such a disclosure would not seem pertinent except to the extent it conformed to the municipal code. Why would the city rezone a property when the terms and conditions may not be in the public interest? In order to determine if they are in the public interest, I would presume that one would have to know what those conditions are, particularly when the use permit or rezoning is at stake.

We know that Target, as a matter of record in the Jan. 9 Planning and Transportation meeting, is restricted in its full use of the property by terms specifying that the residential and commercial developments are coexistent or tied together. Is the public's interest served when the public can only guess at what's going on or when Target must develop the property contrary to the original zoning or site map?

James Edward Woodin
Mission Viejo

POPULAR HISTORY UNDERESTIMATES FRANKLIN



Benjamin Franklin is a towering figure in the American Revolution but he often appears as a comic figure in "popular" history. First, he was a hard-headed businessman who entered politics to increase his printing business. His choice of epitaph was the word "Printer." He was a great scien-

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tist, and there is little appreciation of just how important he was in that role.

Christopher Hitchens has written a piece suggesting that Philadelphia in 1776 was a modern equivalent of ancient Athens. Joseph Priestley, discoverer of oxygen, fled England to Philadelphia to escape religious persecution. Others of similar significance followed him. Franklin began as an opponent of independence and tried to resolve the dispute with the King as a colonial representative. Had the British government not treated him shabbily, history might be very different. He was sent to France, once revolution was inevitable, and he succeeded in obtaining the assistance of the most reactionary monarchy in Europe for the new nation. He negotiated the treaty that ended the war with Britain.

At last, his labors successful, he returned to Philadelphia where he dominated the Constitutional Convention. His private garden became the setting for many compromises as the debates grew too heated in the convention hall. He was the only person to sign all the major documents of the founding: the Declaration of Independence, the treaty with France that led to victory, the treaty with England that ended the war, and the Constitution. His habit of joking and sense of humor have resulted in his posterity underestimating him. That is too bad.

Michael Kennedy, M.D.
Mission Viejo

**A STATEMENT FOR LIMITED LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
SADDLEBACK REPUBLICAN ASSEMBLY**

**FOLLOWING ARE SADDLEBACK REPUBLICAN
ASSEMBLY POSITION STATEMENTS ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT THAT REFLECT CONSERVATIVE
VALUES:**

Limited government. We believe city government should be limited to public infrastructure, public safety and maintenance of existing facilities, such as parks and recreation facilities. Our cities need to build reserves to maintain services as the cities age and the infrastructure and facilities wear down. School

government should be limited to provide quality education in all fundamental disciplines. Schools should build reserves to avoid seeking bond issues for building repairs. All local government should, wherever and whenever possible, contract out services to private vendors, with formal or informal competitive bidding on new contracts over \$5,000 in value and biennial bidding on ongoing services such as landscaping.

Free market. City government should allow the marketplace to function freely in providing goods and services, with limited regulations to ensure the health and safety of the public. City code such as zoning and signing should be strictly enforced, with limited room for exceptions and with no favoritism. The SRA opposes redevelopment abuse, which allows cities to take on debt without voter approval by diverting property and sales taxes from public to private use. The SRA opposes school districts using redevelopment pass-through funds to take on debt without voter approval for capital improvements, including discretionary, non-classroom projects.

Personal rights and responsibilities. All local government should honor personal and property rights, limiting eminent domain to property required to provide vital public services of limited government. The government, however, should expect citizens to exercise responsibility in their own actions regarding basic safety, health and welfare.

Open government. All local government must adhere to the Ralph M. Brown Act and the California Public Records Act. The public should be able to comment on any public meeting agenda item, including those on a consent calendar. Public meetings should be limited to five hours duration unless under emergency conditions affecting the health or safety of the public. A policy of limited government will reduce the public agenda.

Contributed by Allan Pilger, apilger@cox.net
Member, Board of Directors
Saddleback Republican Assembly

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The Buzz

Jan 20

It's official – the city's "new" attorney is the city's old attorney. (DUH!) Perhaps the council majority wanted to see how many thousands of dollars it could spend on "finding" its current law firm. The process took a year and how much money? On a closed-session 3-2 vote on Tues., Jan. 17, the council majority decided to award the contract to Richards, Watson and Gershon. While the public announcement didn't reveal which three council members were in the majority, the contract will be ratified in open session on Feb. 6. Wasn't Frank Ury the one who campaigned on getting rid of Richards, Watson and Gershon? It will be interesting to see how he votes Feb. 6.

Among the council's few agenda items on Jan. 16 was the public hearing to amend Chapter 9.45 Minor Exceptions of city code. Apparently, the planning commission wanted to tighten the planning director's authority to grant minor exceptions. The director previously had the authority to allow exceptions varying up to 30 percent from code. The council unanimously approved the planning commission's recommendation to tighten the code to 15 percent.

Some cities are divided into districts, whereby each council member represents a region of the city. Mission Viejo has a similar practice, if one is in a joking mood. Trish Kelley is the Capo school board's representative, voting to benefit CUSD at city expense. Lance MacLean represents tall, middle-aged men who want to play basketball at night. John Paul Ledesma attempts to represent ethical views, which explains why he's in the minority. Gail Reavis tries to represent the city at large, which is why she's in the minority. And Frank Ury represents those who live outside the city.

Multiple choice questions are evidently not a strong suit for Chandra Krout, Ury's far-left and

far-out planning commission appointee. According to Registrar of Voters records, Krout had three different party affiliations in 2005. She changed from Democrat to American Independent to decline to state. Her first choice, Democrat, appears to be the correct one. If Ury asked her to change her Democrat affiliation to save face with his far-right supporters, she may have mistakenly chosen the conservative

American Independent Party, which is to the right of the Republican Party. Considering the views Krout espouses from the dais, that's funny.

Did the failed attempt to recall the Capistrano school board trustees mark the beginning or the end of the parents' effort to solve problems? According to Jonathan Volzke in the Jan. 12 Capistrano Dispatch, "Depending on which side you were rooting for, you either supported what was sure to be a very bloody coup, or a somewhat imperialistic government beating down the masses." Voters will have another opportunity in November, when three trustees are up for reelection.

During Trish Kelley's year as mayor in 2005, she handed out more than 500 "awards" to citizens during council meetings. The high number alone tends to devalue receiving a city award. Was the real mission to engage some of the honorees in the councilwoman's reelection campaign? Mayor MacLean is now faced with the dilemma that anyone who ever wanted a city award already has one.

FOUNDERS QUOTE:

"I think we have more machinery of government than is necessary, too many parasites living on the labor of the industrious."
Reference: Jefferson: Writings, Peterson ed., Library of America (1497)



~ THE END ~