



Mission Viejo Buzz

Keeping the California Promise
Week of December 17, 2005

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STAFF EDITORIAL

STEADFAST'S DEVELOPMENT ASSAULT CONTINUES

Watching the Planning Commission in action is depressing. Except for Brad Morton, the commission is unfocused on significant issues. Approximately 75 people attended the Dec. 12 meeting, which included a public hearing for Steadfast's project at Los Alisos Blvd. / Jeronimo Road. The chairwoman and three of the other commissioners droned on about trivia while members of the audience waited to speak. Two hours of droning is excessive by anyone's standards. By the time public comments began, many residents had gone home. After four hours, the developer had demonstrated no reason the city should accept more housing of any kind on the parcel, and the commissioners apparently forgot to ask why our built-out city should have more housing. No decision was made.



Steadfast's proposal of splitting the 23-acre parcel between housing and retail makes no sense. The developer gave a convoluted explanation of why Steadfast is involved in a proposal between a retail store and Fieldstone, a homebuilder. Those representing Steadfast are from its low-income apartment division, and they have no experience building condos. Residents who have been following

the project for two years know that Steadfast made a bad decision to buy the property with the intent of building 800 low-income apartments in a commercial zone. Even after selling all 23 acres to Target, Steadfast is still contractually entangled in the development mess.

Steadfast for the past year has had an aggressive public relations program to find housing supporters. It held many "neighborhood" meetings to present a one-sided sales pitch. After its costly, year-long effort, it managed to attract around 15 people to the Dec. 12 meeting. Steadfast's "supporters" included its own employees (who didn't reveal they are employees) and a strange assortment of other speakers making illogical remarks. One said the affordable units, which are all one bedroom, would be nice for a family of five. Another said affordable housing is needed for policemen, firemen and teachers – who don't qualify for affordable housing. Some Steadfast shills made one-sentence remarks, only saying they favored the project.



The best-organized neighbors in opposition reside in Lake Forest, and their homes are closest to the proposed project. They get it. They wrote and spoke about the project degrading the entire area. Mission Viejo neighbors should be so wise to organize against the developer's assault.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MISSION VIEJO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

One of the encouraging items on the Dec. 5 council agenda was the progress report on the Mission Viejo Community Foundation. The foundation was set up to allow philanthropic donors to contribute to city projects, including the Norman Murray Community and Senior Center expansion. The foundation has 13 board members representing a good cross section of various businesses and community groups. It has acquired 501(c)(3) non-profit status. A Website and log are in the works. Donors have pledged \$313,000, with approximately \$22,000 in cash donations to date.



The city on July 5 approved an initial donation of seed money to the foundation of \$188,625. A second city grant has been appropriated for 2006. With a promising start for the foundation, it is entirely possible that the second donation will not be necessary.

The taxpayers should have the opportunity to view financial statements to assess the costs of the foundation, including salaries, expenses and overhead for the organization since tax money was donated. Ratios such as expenses to donations and percentage of costs to beneficiaries (i.e., the city) need to be evaluated, including the executive director's salary.

The foundation chairman stated that the foundation's year end is either on Dec. 31, 2005, or Jan. 31, 2006. Let us – the taxpayers – expect that a complete financial disclosure will be made in a timely manner in order to assess the need for the second donation by the city.

James Edward Woodin
Mission Viejo

Merry Christmas!

I haven't shopped at any of the retail chains that have decided not to celebrate Christmas this year. I don't know of anyone who glorifies winter, and I don't support stores that are avoiding reference to the birth of Jesus.

As a surprise on Sun., Dec. 11, a Target commercial appeared on TV that said Merry Christmas. Perhaps the retailer is having second thoughts if the promotion of season's greetings or a merry winter hasn't brought in the anticipated profits.

I'll be watching to see if stores advertise their sales beginning Dec. 26 as "after winter sales" for merchandise that isn't selling. Any latent grab for Christian cash doesn't set well with me, and a slump in sales should serve as a learning experience for retailers.

Elizabeth Mimm
Mission Viejo



IMPORTING TROUBLE WITH SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

A reader of [The Buzz](#) forwarded the following excerpt by Thomas Sowell, published Dec. 5, 2005, in *The Federalist Patriot*. "... Among the most unconscionable attempts to unsort people who have sorted themselves out by behavior are government programs to relocate (con't on page 3)

people into neighborhoods where they could not afford to live without subsidies. Often the people in those neighborhoods have sacrificed for years in order to be able to live where they could raise their children in decent surroundings and not have to live in fear of hoodlums—only to have the government import the bad neighbors and hoodlums they have tried so hard to escape. Blacks as well as whites have objected to having problem people thrust into their midst through housing subsidies or government housing projects being built in their neighborhoods. Almost never do the social experimenters relocate dysfunctional and dangerous people into their own elite neighborhoods. They unsort other people's neighborhoods and embitter other people's lives."

"Almost never do the social experimenters relocate dysfunctional and dangerous people into their own elite neighborhoods."

the project was given to Roger Faubel Oct. 17 with a 4-1 council vote. During the meeting, Council Member Trish Kelley said the contract "wouldn't cost the city" anything, and she favored giving Faubel someone else's money (funds from such sources as Measure M and Ladera Ranch development). Her comment about someone else's money didn't tell the whole story. By the end of the Dec. 13 special meeting of the council, City Manager Dennis Wilberg said the city will kick in \$15,000 above and beyond the \$100,000 contract for a telephone survey as part of public outreach. And how high will it go -- \$15,000 at a time?

Details have surfaced regarding Faubel's description of services his firm will provide, including a whopping \$14,000 for a catered VIP ceremony and photo op upon completion of the project. This amount includes \$1,000 for balloons, \$2,000 for tent rental and \$500 for such things as "golden shovels." For the price of golden shovels, they could purchase a manure spreader.

At the Dec. 12 meeting, Council Members Gail Reavis and John Paul Ledesma voted against ratifying the contract, which passed 3-2.

Councilman MacLean held a fundraiser for himself on Nov. 30. Throughout his campaign prior to his 2002 election, he advocated economic development for the city. The city's "great new program" of economic development touted by Council Member Kelley in her Dec. 5 State of the City Address consists of a certificate presented to Mission Viejo businesses that manage to survive for five years. No explanation was given by Kelley on how this promotes economic development, but perhaps MacLean will continue the "great new program" of certificate presentations during his year as mayor in 2006. His Nov. 30 fundraiser was held at Fox Sports Grill – located in Irvine.

MacLean received a gift at the council's Dec. 13 special meeting to mark the beginning of his year as mayor. Joe Holtzman presented MacLean with two sets of headgear designed as basketball goals. Apparently, two opponents wear the headgear – hoops with nets – strapped to their heads and aim basketballs into each other's hoops. The name of the headgear: **Basket Case** (con't on page 4)

The Buzz

Councilman Lance MacLean's Planning Commissioner, Mary Binning, resigned this week. Dec. 12 was her last meeting on the commission, where she has served since January 2003. As The Buzz reported, she works for John Cavanaugh, who has applied for the position of Mission Viejo's city attorney. Cavanaugh might believe he has three votes on the council, in which case he could bring Binning in as assistant city attorney.

Details of the \$100,000 public outreach contract for widening Crown Valley Parkway became available on Dec. 13. This contract to inform the public about



Gifts & Playgroup, Inc.

A positive note for open government: After the Dec. 12 Planning Commission meeting, a citizen was told by the city clerk's office that the city would not supply an audiotape of the meeting to the library. The citizen then spoke to Kim Schmitt in the city clerk's office about the problem. Schmitt talked with City Manager Dennis Wilberg, and they decided to change the policy to accommodate better public disclosure and place audiotapes of all Planning Commission meetings in the library. The Buzz welcomes this change and appreciates when the city is responsive to citizen requests for information about the workings of government.

Residents of State Assembly District 71 recently received a mailer from Assemblyman Todd Spitzer. The mailer includes a Report Card whereby constituents can participate in a survey about California schools. Survey items include accountability and spending money wisely. Capistrano USD residents are still awaiting results of a more specific type of survey. Steven Rodermund, Orange County Registrar of Voters, will announce results of the recall petition drive on Dec. 23. At last report, he said his office would need every minute to verify 177,000 signatures. The count for several trustees has been completed, but Rodermund won't release any information until everything is finished Dec. 23.

A group of residents put together an initiative to give the people of Mission Viejo the right to vote on all major development projects in the city. Patterned after the Yorba Linda "Right to Vote" measure and Newport Beach's "Greenlight" law, it would require the residents to approve any major change to the Mission Viejo General Plan or other planning documents. This would mean such projects as Steadfast's proposed development and the two proposed housing complexes in south Mission Viejo would have to meet with voter approval before being built. This proposed measure was presented to the Planning Commission Dec. 13. The commissioners unanimously said at a previous meeting they would recommend such a measure to the City Council. If the council doesn't place this on the ballot, the residents can do so by submitting petitions to the city with about 8,000 signatures.

The Buzz broke the news two weeks ago that the city will likely be sued by the Public Law Center regarding affordable housing. Insiders say it's coming. While some residents couldn't care less, one should consider that the litigant could get an

injunction to hold up all building permits in the city – everything from a remodel to installing a new water heater. If anyone questions why the Public Law Center would choose Mission Viejo to make its case, consider that Councilman MacLean has repeatedly run to the newspapers, particularly the L.A. Times, regarding affordable housing issues. Both MacLean and Planning Commissioner Chandra Krout have called Mission Viejo residents "elitists" in the L.A. Times. Putting Mission Viejo on the Public Law Center's radar screen could be a costly stunt by these two publicity hounds. Affordable housing goals wouldn't be an issue in this built-out city if irresponsible council majorities had stopped rolling out the red carpet for developers when there was no remaining space for residential development. Pro-developer former council members who triggered the problems with affordable housing were Sherri Butterfield, Susan Withrow and Bill Craycraft when they approved additional housing complexes without affordable components.



**Steadfast and Mission Viejo
(A modern-day story of Jacob and Esau)
By Paula Steinhauer**

Part 1

**Jacob and Esau were brothers.
Jacob was crafty, Esau was dumb.
Just for immediate gain,
Just for a saucer of Jacob's stew
Esau was willing to sell.
To sell his birthright – the Covenant Promise
The Covenant Promise true.
All of God's blessings and oodles of wealth
Just for a saucer of stew!
That's what he was willing,
Willing to do.**

**Now why do I tell you this story?
Just listen and you will see.**

**Steadfast and Mission Viejo were talking 'bout
property.
Steadfast was crafty.
Was Mission Viejo dumb?
How could it be? Could it be?**

(con't on page 5)

Mission Viejo was given a birthright
A planned community.
Everyone held the promise
The California Promise true:
Here was a neighborhood. There a park.
Here was a hospital. There a mall.
Here was a ball park. There a lake.
Here was a church. There a school.

Then just for immediate gain
Just for commercial and residential stew
Mission was thinking 'bout selling.
'bout selling out!
'bout selling the California Promise true.

To sell planned commercial property
With all of its blessings
With its oodles of wealth
That would pay on for years and years.

To sell it all for immediate gain
Like selling a goose for an egg
Like selling a school for a desk
Like selling a car for a ride.

Part 2

Then just to cement the deal
Just to be sure it came true
Jacob planned to disguise himself
To fool his father and his rule.
Since Esau his brother was hairy
Jacob did something quite scary.
He put on a mantle of fur and dressed himself
up in disguise.
Jacob, you see, thought himself so wise.

With some fur on his arm
He was his brother – no harm.
His father – so blind and so easily fooled.

We know the end of this part of the story
It could have been gory:
When Esau realized what had been done,
Jacob went on the run.
He had the money and ran like a bunny.
He'd saved his neck so what the heck!
The family a disaster?
Well, flabbergaster!

And now I'm sure you can see the point of this
story:
Steadfast thinks everything will be hunky-dory.
The deal will be done and Steadfast's riches
won.

Steadfast decided to disguise itself
All in order to gain more wealth.
It put on the mantle of a Target store
To get its proverbial foot in the door.
Deceive old Mission Viejo?
No problem, no harm.
Soothing words would bring no alarm.

And Mission would think it was getting a deal
When the whole thing was really a steal
Of the California Promise
The California Promise true
... and oodles and oodles of wealth that would
pay on for years and years!

**The
Promise!**

THE FEDERALIST PATRIOT FOUNDERS' QUOTE DAILY

"Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right, from the frame of their nature, to knowledge, as their great Creator, who does nothing in vain, has given them understandings, and a desire to know; but besides this, they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge; I mean, of the characters and conduct of their rulers."

-- John Adams (Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law, 1765)

Reference: Our Sacred Honor, Bennett, 253.

THE END