



MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise
Week of February 28, 2006

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The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"States, like individuals, who observe their engagements, are respected and trusted: while the reverse is the fate of those who pursue an opposite conduct." -- Alexander Hamilton (Report on Public Credit, 9 January 1790) — Reference: The Reports of Alexander Hamilton, Cooke, ed. (3) ---
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POST-MORTEM ON REZONING STAFF EDITORIAL

Residents know the council's Feb. 20 decision was a bad one regarding Steadfast's parcel next to Unisys. The council voted 5-0 to rezone 10 acres of commercial property to high-density residential. As a result, 144 condos will be built in a declining area impacted by high-density housing.



Residents attending the meeting said the council is inept and misdirected. All five so-called representatives advocated for the developer and other outside interests. Except for a developer's cash going to campaign treasuries, why did the council rezone the property?



The only excuse for the initial housing proposal three years ago was to kowtow to state affordable housing goals. Residents speaking against the project for any reason during the past three years were called elitists, racists and/or bigots. Steadfast first hurled such in-

sults, which were parroted by Councilman Lance MacLean and Planning Commissioner Chandra Krout, who is Councilman Frank Ury's appointee.



One must know this basis to understand the ironic discussion on Feb. 20 about a clause in Steadfast's contract. Councilmen Ury and MacLean both advocated at length that Steadfast should have a loophole to escape building any affordable units whatsoever. Both councilmen argued that Steadfast should be allowed to pay an in-lieu fee, whereby the city would accept cash instead of requiring affordable units in the project. Thus, the only excuse for permitting any residential development at Los Alisos and Jeronimo was revealed as a sham. Council members continue to favor developers, advocacy groups and just about anyone but the residents they were elected to represent.



If this sounds insane, it gets worse. Ury has quietly been meeting with a developer – UDR/Pacific – and The Pacific Law Center. The latter is a developer-funded affordable housing advocacy group that

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has threatened to sue the city over housing issues. Ury and MacLean both want a large complex of affordable apartments, which became quite clear during the Feb. 20 meeting. Ury has apparently looked at two sites – one near Oso and the freeway, and a second in north Mission Viejo adjacent to Palmia.

The in-lieu developer fee supported by Ury and MacLean would be used toward funding affordable apartments elsewhere in town. On Feb. 20, Council Members Ledesma, Reavis and Kelley voted against the loop-hole. Thus, Steadfast is stuck with affordable units – at least until Kelley flip-flops on this issue. She appeared to make conciliatory statements to Ury and MacLean, saying the affordable apartment complex will probably be built.



As described in last week's blog, Kelley made ludicrous statements with the help of the equally ludicrous city attorney. Together, they concluded that the state could halt all building permits if the city didn't immediately build more affordable housing. As an especially outrageous example, they said residents would be prevented from replacing broken water heaters. Why doesn't Kelley instead tell residents a story about the bogeyman?http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/boogeyman/spinvision/boogeyman_home.html



The November election is approximately 250 days away. Will the real leaders in the community please stand up? It's time to remove these incompetent council members who dishonestly pretended they would represent the residents.

SOME FAVORITE QUOTES:

The ballot is stronger than the bullet. ~ Abraham Lincoln

Politicians are like diapers. They both need changing regularly and for the same reason. ~Author Unknown

**OUR READERS REACTIONS
FEBRUARY 28**

STEADFAST'S HOUSING PROJECT:

"I knew Steadfast would eventually win. These big companies know how to play the game. They have the money, and this is what speaks loud and clear. What a sad day for Mission Viejo. People just don't understand what's going to happen. No one in power thinks past their time in office. The rest of us have to live with the mess."
-- Marilyn Anderson, ltsthenana@verizon.net



UNETHICAL "Our city council is a huge disappointment. Some of us worked hard during the election, thinking we were getting ethical representatives into office. Look what they've become." -- Elizabeth Mimm, Mission Viejo

pompous

egoistical



REACTION TO

"The Mission Viejo News Blog is getting an important message out to the residents. The Acrobat version (newsletter) deserves circulation. People should print it out and pass it on to someone who doesn't know about it. Lisa DePaul-Snyder's cartoon last week was priceless." -- Dorothy Wedel, Dodubya@cox.net
Thank You Dorothy!! MVNN Staff

POLITICS:

"Wouldn't it be great if everyone would take a deep breath, consider arguments to their own thoughts, remarks, wishes and desires before making any judicial comments. Their statements would be considerably more (at least) entertaining!" -- Jo Arklin, epicart@cox.net



JOINT-USE GYMNASIUM:

"I believe the council members think they're not doing a good job unless they're spending our money. As for the idea to build the gym at Newhart, there are other issues, such as parking. After school and weekends, the lots are filled with families using the parking lots next to the school. The ongoing funding for gym equipment, repair, theft and vandalism would be very costly. Who pays for night secu-

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ity? How do they keep the kids, teenagers and nonresidents from entering during the night use? Why not build up the city's cash reserves? If there would ever be a disaster such as an earthquake, we would need it all." -- Joe Chavez, Mission Viejo

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

UNFUNDED PENSION LIABILITIES

It is interesting to note the discussion by our city council majority that the city's pension liabilities may be addressed this spring. In an impromptu speech at Casta Del Sol, the mayor said the city's pension obligations would possibly be paid off over the course of three years. Could you tell your bank that your mortgage which is due will be paid in three years?



The city has two unfunded liabilities, and both relate to defined benefit plans. The first is the pension plan payment, which is for the retirement benefit of employees and usually paid monthly after retirement. The second unfunded liability is for the health-plan benefits of employees past retirement.

Pension obligations and retirement health-benefit payments compound annually.

When one year is paid, another year's obligation is created unless the investment assets outperform expectations.



The city plays the perpetual payment game with taxpayer funds. The health retirement plan compounds actuarially at an even higher rate since medical costs are recently compounding annually by double digits, and life expectancy for all people is longer.

The city needs to pay up all current pension plan obligations (monthly retirement benefits) and take a serious look at retirement health-benefit plan costs in the future.

When such an unfunded obligation is funded, the city's balance sheet takes a major reduc-

tion due to the heavy payments. This is one of the dilemmas of procrastinating for so long. This is the crux issue when council members say there is money to pay for pet projects.

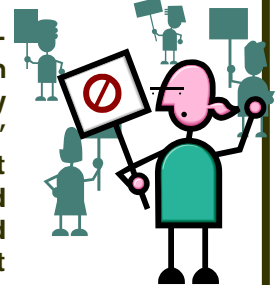
There are many cities that fund retirement health care for retired employees with defined contribution plans until Medicare becomes available.

Let's hope our city not only takes care of its unfunded liabilities but addresses the cause of those liabilities.

James Edward Woodin
Mission Viejo

PUT IT ON THE BALLOT

The letter in the Saddleback Valley News from Barbara Casserly ("Activists speak for few," Feb. 24) complains that the people who attend city council meetings and speak do not represent the voters.



The source of her complaint is the defeat, once again, of a gym to be built at city expense that would be "joint-use" but located at a school. We pay taxes to support the local schools. We pay taxes to support our city. If Ms Casserly wants the city to deplete its reserve funds again to build a gym for her children, I suggest she organize and put it on the ballot.

Some of us think the city has already been weakened by special interest spending and would prefer that it concentrate on city matters. We threw out a city council majority once on that issue. Elections are coming again this year and Ms. Casserly has an opportunity to make her case to the voters. Maybe she should run for office.

Michael Kennedy, M.D.
Former Planning Commissioner
Mission Viejo



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CUSD UPDATES

CUSD RECALL GROUP REQUESTS INVESTIGATION

Leaders of a California citizens revolt in south Orange County are launching an assault against what they claim is a corrupt recall process. They say thousands of signatures were unfairly invalidated in a campaign to recall all seven members of the Board of Trustees of the Capistrano Unified School District. Recall members are featured in a 12-minute video news blog available at <http://www.fulldisclosure.net/flash/VideoBlogs/VideoBlog24.php> "on demand" 24/7 at Full Disclosure Network.



The video describes how the Orange County Registrar of Voters' office imposed arbitrary rules and regulations that favored and protected the trustees. Four members of the recall committee appear in the video: Spokesman Tom Russell, Jennifer Beall, Kathy Goff and Connie Lee.

The recall committee requested an investigation and submitted reports to the Secretary of State, Attorney General, Board of Supervisors, District Attorney and the Orange County Grand Jury. The committee is also requesting the petitions be taken into protective custody to protect the rights of voters.

The following actions have been cited as reasons for an investigation: unauthorized extension for beginning the petition verification process; lack of a standard verification process for voter registration; failure to provide tally sheets and other means to verify accuracy of the count; and rescinding official representations given to and relied upon by petition circulators, which resulted in disqualifying valid signatures.

Hosted by Leslie Dutton, the Full Disclosure Network public affairs television programs are billed as "the news behind the news" and featured on 43 cable systems and the worldwide Internet website at <http://www.fulldisclosure.net/>

PETITION SIGNATURES WERE IMPROPERLY REJECTED by Connie Lee

Last December, many people were shocked when the Orange County Registrar of Voters decided not to certify the petitions to recall all seven trustees of the Capistrano Unified School District. What happened?



The CUSD Recall Committee sent teams of inspectors to review the petition signatures rejected by the Registrar. The inspection results are quite disturbing. The Registrar improperly rejected thousands of valid petition signatures, thereby disenfranchising thousands of registered voters.

For example, the Registrar rejected thousands of signatures claiming the signatories were not registered voters. Astonishingly, inspectors found the Registrar erred 24 percent of the time when rejecting these signatures. The Registrar should have validated roughly 700 additional signatures per trustee.

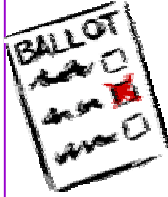
The Registrar rejected thousands of signatures by claiming that each signatory, while validly registered within CUSD boundaries, was registered at a different address. The registered voter had not updated his/her voter registration information. Since the Registrar allows these voters to vote in regular elections, should these signatures not count? This decision by the Registrar negated nearly 1,000 signatures per trustee.

The Registrar rejected thousands of signatures from registered voters who personally signed all seven recall petitions, claiming the voters may not have personally filled in their addresses on each petition. Despite numerous assurances from the Registrar's office that petition gatherers could assist voters in filling in address information (a statute permits this), the Registrar excluded roughly 2,600 signatures per trustee for this reason alone.

The Registrar liberally used at least eleven categories to reject thousands of signatures. Detailed results of the inspection can reviewed at www.CUSDRecall.com.

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The CUSD Recall Committee submitted more than 177,000 petition signatures to recall all seven CUSD trustees. Each of these voters expected their voices would be heard. As the November elections draw near, the public has to have faith their votes will be accurately

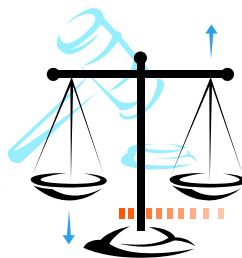
counted. Public institutions must work properly, but when they do not, people must find out why. In this case, many questions remain unanswered.

Was the Registrar's Office properly staffed to review more than 177,000 petitions in 30 days? Were the employees at the Registrar's Office properly screened and trained? Were employees overworked or preoccupied with handling upcoming special elections? Was there a bias in favor of the CUSD trustees?

Answers to these questions remain unknown. In order to protect the Constitutional rights of those who were disenfranchised and to preserve the public's confidence in the electoral system, the authorities need to investigate what went wrong at the Registrar's office – and why. This is something all voters can agree upon, whether they supported the CUSD recall or not.

ORANGE COUNTY D.A. ANNOUNCES INVESTIGATION

The Orange County District Attorney has begun an investigation of the Capistrano Unified School District. The announcement was made Feb. 27 by Deputy District Attorney Susan Schroeder.



Tom Russell, spokesman for the CUSD Recall Committee, said the allegations include fiscal mismanagement, conflicts of interest and contracting improprieties. The committee held a press conference on March 1.

According to observers, the investigation began on Mon., Feb. 27. A school district representative was quoted in the March 1 Orange County Register as saying the school district had not been contacted by the district attorney.

The Buzz

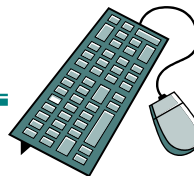
Feb. 28th



Former Councilman Bill Craycraft is telling residents he wants to run for council in November. Perhaps he thinks the council is short on law-breaking egomaniacs who name public facilities after themselves. With Bill's name removed from a city park (unofficially dubbed Craycraft Regional Athletic Park – C.R.A.P.), he might have delusions about reinstalling the park's old monument sign bearing his name.



In an email read during the Feb. 20 council meeting by Councilman John Paul Ledesma, CUSD Supt. James Fleming mentioned "the distraction of the recall" and a possible bond issue to address needs at Newhart Intermediated, the district's long-neglected stepchild. News about Ledesma's public reading of the email may have set off a furor at CUSD. Turns out, the email was



internal, and such information must first go through the district's spin cycle. CUSD's reaction to Ledesma was minor when compared with the March 1 news release of a criminal investigation raining bricks on the trustees.



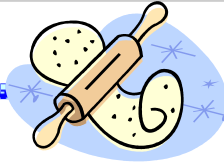
An L.A. Times reporter, apparently mainlining the bilge from Councilman Lance MacLean, would like to know if Mayor MacClown's Happy Hour preceding council meetings is improving the tone of the meetings. Is she asking if MacLean's "entertainment feature" can substitute for Prozac? To the contrary, the warfare ratcheted up a notch when Ury struck out twice at the last meeting while trying to fund a large project of affordable apartments with developer



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fees and taxpayer dough.



The CUSD recall group spent nearly two months investigating results following the petition drive to put a recall election on the ballot. The Registrar of Voters announced on Dec. 22 that one-third of the 177,000 signatures had been disqualified; thus, the recall effort failed. Check out the video :

<http://fulldisclosure.net/flash/VideoBlogs/VideoBlog24.php> for a view of the investigation.

According to press releases, findings of the investigation have been presented to the Orange County District Attorney and Grand Jury.



County Treasurer-Tax Collector John Moorlach spoke at Casta Del Sol's Lincoln Day Champagne Brunch on Feb. 26. Moorlach, a candidate for supervisor (O.C. Second District), focused on the county's unfunded pension problems. Mission Viejo resident Jim Woodin was introduced at the event as a city council candidate in the November 2006 race. Woodin, a former banker and trust officer, has spoken during council meetings on the city's financial obligations, including approximately \$3 million of under funded retiree healthcare benefits.

"A council is a group of people who individually can do nothing but together can decide that nothing can be done."

~ Fred Allen ~

- The End -