

COASTAL SAN PEDRO NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

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Community Advisory Committee

Governing Board Meetings

The Governing Board meets on the third Monday of each month (March through December) at 6:30 p.m. at the Cabrillo Marina Community Center, Berth 28, San Pedro. The Board meets on the fourth Monday during the months of January and February.



City Government, Neighborhood Councils, Coastal Currents: Are We All in Jeopardy?

By Bob Gelfand

Los Angeles city government is about to see its own version of the financial meltdown. The currently projected 2009-10 budget deficit is on the order of half a billion dollars—\$550 million or so in round numbers. Since L.A. isn't allowed to print money, that deficit has to be eliminated somehow.

It's the kind of money that can't be made up by any amount of small manipulation. Those increased parking meter fees we're so riled up about? They are small change, generating perhaps a couple of dozen of those hundreds of millions.

How about cutting a couple of hours off part-time workers' pay as they are already doing? You know, the people who are allowed a maximum of 20 hours a week and make \$15 an hour? Saving 30 bucks a week from each of them isn't going to go very far either.

If every single resident of the city was a city employee and we cut every one of you by that \$30, it wouldn't even cover a fourth of the shortfall. And obviously you don't all work for the city, and the small number that do aren't going to yield up much in the way of savings, no matter how hard the city council tries to squeeze them.

These are the sorts of cuts that desperate governments start with. Only when things get really ugly do they begin to think about reality. How about cutting the salaries of the highest paid city employees? Cutting 10,000 people by \$10,000 apiece would yield up savings of a \$100 million. If we were to make it a straight 10 percent cut on everybody making more than \$100,000, then the top level would be yielding more than \$30,000 apiece and the savings would be even higher.

Deferred maintenance on roads and buildings is another item that will come up, but we are already about as deferred as we can get. When city department managers stand up in front of public meetings and explain that it would take 400 years to repave all our streets at the current yearly rate, people just scratch their heads and wonder what planet they think we live on.

No matter how our esteemed leaders slice and dice, the budget fight is going to start getting intense within a few weeks. Even the sacred budget line items for the police and fire fighters are on the table. But even those won't be enough.

As usual in budget battles, we should expect to see demands for decreased employee benefits, perhaps in the form of higher co-pays and deductibles on medical insurance. Perhaps the city will try to cut back on payments to pension plans. Undoubtedly there will be a hiring freeze, but this shouldn't be taken seriously by the voting public because the city has been in a hiring freeze a large fraction of the time for many years.

The city council will try to take away with one hand, but it has been giving with the other. Just a couple of years ago, the city went through a routine round of contract negotiations and gave salary increases to a substantial part of the workforce. At the time, your neighborhood councils brought up the fact that those raises might not be sustainable in a weak economy.

Feedback: Some History About 22nd Street Park

The council received the following email from Crescent Area Residents Association founder Ray Van Dinther:

It is great that you have started this information paper and to see how far the CSPNC has advanced since the early years.

However, I was just a little disappointed that more accurate historical reference was not made to the park at 22nd street site and that the people, including myself, were given no recognition for the years of effort that was put into changing the area.

I founded CARA, the Crescent Avenue Residents Association, in 1996 with the main criteria being to beautify the surrounding area for the use of residents. I started monthly meetings which were heavily attended and as a consequence was invited to join PCAC at its inception. I also attended the beginning meetings of the CSPNC.

One of the first things that I did, with much energy and voice was to convince the then head of the Port, Larry Keller that the chainlink fence should be removed. Subsequent to that I was involved with the Port in the plans for the Crescent Avenue walking path and

beautification around the 22nd street site which is now in place and was invited to attend the opening of the walking path by the former mayor, Richard Riordan, where I was recognized for the years of effort I had put into forming CARA and working on the beautification plans for the area.

I was also responsible for the new park at the entrance to Crescent Avenue from Harbor Boulevard. The Port were going to make this a DOG PARK and I fought that proposal (with meetings with Larry Keller) saying that we needed open space for everyone to use and suggested that they use Knoll Hill for the dog park, which subsequently the Port agreed to and built.

I also provided studies of the traffic along Crescent and fought with other residents for years for stop signs to be installed on Crescent to slow the traffic. As you know, two stop signs are now installed.

Along with other CARA Association residents we designed and submitted many plans to Janice Hahn and PCAC and the Port and displayed and spoke at many public meetings advocating the acreage below should be used as a public

park area and not be designated to any one purpose.

I don't need to tell you the energy and the years that was put into this because you know yourself what you have done to make the CSPNC what it is. It is only that a little recognition for our efforts would be greatly appreciated.

So, I applaud you for what you and the San Pedro Council have achieved but suggest that our efforts that forced (and I mean force) the initial change in the area might be recognized. Seven years of relentless work involving meetings, designs, plans and effects was put into achieving the removal of the chainlink fence, the installation of the walking path, the first residents group in the area (CARA), the dog park at Knoll Hill (and not at Crescent), and the traffic control.

I do so wish your articles had mentioned some of this. We are not a strong advocacy group any longer because our initial changes were completed by 2002 after we had achieved substantial change in the area and other more powerful groups like the CSPNC and PCAC were formed taking over the cause and challenges.

Ray Madeline Van Dinther



One Call to City Hall!