Tough Budget Times for the City of Los Angeles

Several months ago, the city council worked with our city employees to negotiate a way to avoid layoffs through an Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP). Unfortunately, today, we once again find ourselves facing a huge budget gap due to declining tax revenues.

Currently, the city faces a more than $212 million shortfall for this budget year. Even worse, we are anticipating a $484 million shortfall next year. As a result, the city’s bond ratings have been downgraded, anticipating a $484 million shortfall next year. As a result, the city’s bond ratings have been downgraded, affecting the services we provide to our residents.

To help close the budget gap, we will have to make tough decisions. We will have to consider layoffs of city employees who would otherwise be let go. This will allow us to remove employees from the general fund without laying them off. It’s my hope that we can transfer as many of these employees as possible, which will help balance our budget while keeping as many people as possible working.

I also want to avoid layoffs by looking hard at citywide salary cuts—perhaps in the form of furloughs. I would much rather see all of our employees get a small cut in wages than 4,000 of them.

I also want to avoid layoffs by taking these funds to pay for increased graffiti removal, paving alleys and fixing sidewalks, funding street lighting improvements, and helping nonprofits, like the Boys & Girls Club. While it’s unfortunate that some of these programs will suffer and projects won’t get done, I hope that transferring these funds will save jobs.

As I am sure most of you know, the mayor has just proposed consolidating the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) with the Community Development Department (CDD). Meanwhile, the Mayor has also eliminated the Environmental Affairs and Human Services departments. Through all this, it is my hope that we will preserve the services that our neighborhood councils have come to rely on.

Neighborhood councils are more important than ever. You have always had the power and the will to accomplish things for your neighborhood that government simply lacks the resources to do.

And now, even if your funding is reduced, your strength lies in your ability to organize, inform, and mobilize your neighborhood to influence decisions at City Hall.

That kind of strength, and your determination to improve the quality of life for yourselves and your neighbors, can never be cut out of any budget.

By Councilwoman Janice Hahn

Run for the Neighborhood Council Governing Board

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council (NWSPNC) is looking for your leadership! Our annual election for the governing board is June 8 and the search is on for dedicated neighborhood leaders to make a positive difference in our community.

The board is composed of 17 members. Eight of these seats will be on the ballot. If you are eligible to be a candidate for the board if you are at least 16 years of age and live, work, or own property or a business in the NWSPNC area. You also qualify if you teach at a public or private school serving the area or are a member of any religious, community, business, or non-governmental organization active within the boundaries of the NWSPNC. (Please see the map at right. The area marked in yellow is NWSPNC territory.)

What is required of a board member?

• A commitment to attend and participate at board, committee, and community meetings (approximately 10-15 hours per month).
• The responsibility to oversee public funds allocated to the NWSPNC to support projects that serve the community.
• The initiative to look for ways to improve our community.
• The ability to work with a diverse group of people, presenting your own ideas, as well as listening to the viewpoints of others.

To run in the June 8 election, complete and submit the candidate form. In order to have your name on the ballot, you must submit your form no later than Friday, April 9. Write-in candidates can file from April 12 through May 10. Votes for write-in candidate who have not filed will not be counted.

For more information, see the election procedures that were created by the NWSPNC and the city clerk’s office. More information is also available at http://cityclerk.lacity.org (click on the icon, on the left side that says “Neighborhood Council Elections”). You can contact the city clerk’s neighborhood council election unit at (213) 978-0444 and e-mail them at Clerk.Election@LACity.org.

Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council
638 South Beacon Street, Box 688
San Pedro, CA 90731

Run for the Neighborhood Council Governing Board

Wanted: Neighborhood Leaders

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I have advocated strongly for identifying open positions in other, specially funded departments such as the port, the airport and sanitation, and transferring city employees who would otherwise be let go. This will allow us to remove employees from the general fund without laying them off. It’s my hope that we can transfer as many of these employees as possible, which will help balance our budget while keeping as many people as possible working.

I also want to avoid layoffs by looking hard at citywide salary cuts—perhaps in the form of furloughs. I would much rather see all of our employees get a small cut in wages than 4,000 of them being completely without work. I also want us to look at terminating some of our contracted workers and providing our city employees with a chance to fill those positions.

To help close the budget gap, we also need to increase revenue, starting with collecting the $400 million we are owed in outstanding debt. I’ve also proposed an oil extraction fee—which would charge oil companies for the oil they take from our ground.

Furthermore, we should look at ways to make tax revenue from the medical marijuana dispensaries in the city. They’re here. Let’s figure out how to make them pay their fair share of taxes.

I also plan to move money from my special accounts into the general fund. In the past, we have used these funds to pay for increased graffiti removal, paving alleys and fixing sidewalks, funding street lighting improvements, and helping nonprofits, like the Boys & Girls Club. While it’s unfortunate that some of these programs will suffer and projects won’t get done, I hope that transferring these funds will save jobs.

As I am sure most of you know, the mayor has just proposed consolidating the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) with the Community Development Department (CDD). Meanwhile, the Mayor has also eliminated the Environmental Affairs and Human Services departments. Through all this, it is my hope that we will preserve the services that our neighborhood councils have come to rely on.

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**President’s Corner**

*Your Chance to Vote Twice on June 8!*

By Dan Dixon, President

It’s almost spring, and time once again for neighborhood council elections. NC elections used to be an annual affair—in the case of Northwest San Pedro, half of the 16 contested governing board seats were voted on each year. Two years ago the spendthrift geniuses on Spring Street decided NCs were not capable of handling their own elections and turned the task over to the city clerk. In 2010 there were 19 election districts, all but NOT MANY millions, but some millions. In those days, who was counting?

One of the city’s clerk’s requirements, in return for receiving a half-dozen full-time employees added to its cast list, was that NC elections would only be held every two years, in so-called “off-years”. Not exactly a victory for true grassroots representation and a slap in the face at the vast majority of NCs that had run clean, inexpensive, trouble-free elections.

2010 is an “on-year” for neighborhood councils. This year, the NC elections in our southern area will be held on June 8. At this point of the year, it is unlikely that June 8 rings a bell, but this is not a test, so I’ll simply tell you that our neighborhood council elections will be on the SAME DAY as the CALIFORNIA STATE PRIMARY.

When the fact that our fragile elections would be held on the same day as that for the mighty offices and issues of state politics brought about the attention of the folks downtown, the reaction was, well, let’s just say, “Tough. We’re not changing it, even though we’re supposed to be the people who know when elections are held around here.” O.K., they didn’t say the second sentence, but the one-word sentence preceding it was the gist of the reaction. So, we need to work exceptionally hard this year to persuade our neighbors to vote twice on the same day, in separate locations.

While I hope everyone makes the effort to vote twice on June 8, if you only have the time or energy to vote once, I hope you’ll make it to our Northwest Neighborhood Council polling place at Peck Park, from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. Think of it a little like a lottery (or gift award, for non-gamblers). Your chances of winning a prize are far greater in a raffle at your local school, church, synagogue, union hall or office pool than it is in the California Lottery.

In VOTING in the neighborhood council election, you get to vote for neighbors who have come forward, willing to do the work of studying, discussing, and voting on issues large and small, ultimately influencing how this city is run.

In RUNNING for the neighborhood council, you get to be one of those who come forward to study, discuss and vote on issues large and small. Ultimately, YOU get to influence how this city is run. What could be more rewarding than to be part of the solution as this city cares into an uncertainty? It should be clear that the good ideas for reform and for the redemption of the city are not coming from Spring Street. As so often is the case, the good ideas incubate down here in the neighborhoods. Neighborhood councils give you a voice at the table.

It is unclear what will happen to our NC operating budget in the new fiscal year. But the fact is that money doesn’t give us credibility or power. It is a convenience, but what gives us real influence is the harnessing of the efforts of good concerned citizens who are simply sickened by the state to which our city has sunk in recent years. I am optimistic, citizens who are determined that the current path will not continue to be followed. We as neighborhood councils are looking for people who truly believe in the promise of this city, and who will not be bullied by politicians, consultants and special interests into turning away or sitting idly by while our great city founders.

Please consider running for your elected neighborhood council governing board. Please see the story on page one for more information. You have until April 9 to sign up to be on the ballot.

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**NWSPNC BOARD MEMBERS**

- **DAN DIXON,** President
- **JOHN MAVAR,** Vice President
- **Chair, Issues and Quality of Life Committee**
- **Co-chair, Outreach/Communications Committee**
- **DIANA NAVE,** Secretary
- **Chair, Planning and Land Use Committee**
- **CRAIG GOLDFARB,** Treasurer
- **Chair, Budget and Finance Committee**
- **DAVID ARVONIO**
- **ROBERT J. BRYANT**
- **Co-chair, Outreach/Communications Committee**
- **PETER BURMEISTER**
- **JOHN GREENWOOD**
- **Chair, Planning and Land Use Committee**
- **MARY HAMLIN**
- **PAULA MAZZARINO**
- **MERYL MOILOV**
- **PHILIP NICOLAY**
- **Chair, Port Committee**
- **RAY H. PATRICIO**
- **SABRiEL RIVAS**
- **BARBARA SCHACH**
- **Chair, Youth and Education Committee**
- **CAPT. GEORGE THOMPSON**
- **Chair, Elections and Bylaws Committee**
- **LAUREN VIVIAN**

**NWSPNC Committees**

- **Budget and Finance Committee**
  - Recommends budget, reviews funding requests.
- **Communication and Outreach Committee**
  - Communicates with our stakeholders via quarterly newsletter, speaking engagements, and personal contact with various target groups and gathers community concerns and feedback.
- **Elections and Bylaws Committee**
  - Deals with elections and bylaws matters.
- **Issues and Quality of Life Committee**
  - Deals with traffic and transportation, parks, community beautification, and other issues not covered by specific committees.
- **Planning and Land Use Committee**
  - Deals with planning and land use issues.
- **Port Committee**
  - Deals with port-related issues and advises our representatives on Port Community Advisory Committee.
- **Youth and Education Committee**
  - Focuses on meeting the needs of young people in our community, including education, recreation, and crime prevention.

**NWSAN PEDRO NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

638 S. Beacon Street, Box 688
San Pedro, CA 90731
(310) 732-4522
board@nwsanpedro.org

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**NWSPNC Governing Board**

meets on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
in the Peck Park Auditorium,
560 North Western Avenue

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**Introducing Your Newest NWSPNC Board Member:**

**Robert Jay Bryant**

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council welcomes its newest board member, Robert Jay Bryant, appointed in January to fill the vacancy for non-governmental organizations. Robert was a manager with the Prudential Insurance Company and trained financial planners and retired in 2006 and then became a conductor/operator on our Red Car in San Pedro. He has served on the council’s port and youth committees for two years. I was born in San Pedro 63 years ago and have lived here ever since.

I served as regional commissioner in A.Y.S.O. for 12 years, I am a Mason, a member of the Elks, and I was one of the founders of the San Pedro Youth Coalition. I was on the school board of Saint Peter’s Episcopal school for 15 years and served as chairman for three years. I think San Pedro is the best-kept secret. But I want to make it an even better town.

I have three children Robert, Ellen, Charles and two grandchildren Kacy, Lucas. I have been married for 40 years to my wife, Ellen.

I have agreed to co-chair our outreach committee. This board has been a great addition in helping make San Pedro an even better place to live and I am honored to be able to be part of such a fine program.

Robert will serve out the unexpired term until June, 2010 when we hope he will seek a full term.

Welcome, Robert Jay Bryant!

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**Your YMCA: Building Strong Families and Strong Communities**

Now programs enhance lives of those recovering from stroke, cancer and chronic disease such as arthritis and diabetes.

Adults—In conjunction with Little Company of Mary Hospital, Kaiser Permanente and the Arthritis Association, your YMCA has begun programs to help address the special needs of participants overcoming challenges. Get the support, guidance and friendship you want and need. Come to the YMCA and try out the program. Therapists are welcome to join you. Call Liz or Martha at 832-4211.

Families—Don’t miss the fun! Spanish lessons, Cooking classes, sports skills, singing classes, art workshops are all part of the fun we provide everyday for school age kids. It’s not too early to get the kids ready for the water. Swim lessons are starting. Junior Lifeguard prep classes also available.

Supporting the community—We provide short term and longer term assistance to families in need. Our process is simple and private. Call 832-4211 ext. 8. Our assistance is finance through the generous donations of citizens in our community who want to provide all families a chance to thrive.

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**Storm Water Management Program**

Do you know that Los Angeles has an aggressive storm water management program? They are harvesting rainwater, creating green streets, and restoring streams and wetlands. For more information go to http://www.LAStrormwater.org. There is a place at the top of the page to sign up for their newsletter.
Crime Comes Home to San Pedro
Northwest Resident Finds Thieves in the Living Room

By Dan Dixon

On a cool, sunny weekday morning recently, a North San Pedro woman drove up to her home and discovered three teenage boys in her drive- way. Asking what they wanted, they gave her the name of someone they claimed to be looking for. Telling them no one with that name lived in the neighborhood, she thought she had sent them on their way and pulled into her garage.

Entering her home through the garage, she found two teenage girls in her living neatly pil- ing up valuables from throughout the house. The woman shouted at them and they fled through a sliding glass door at the rear of the house.

All that was physically lost were a few pieces of jewelry that the burglars had pocketed. The “suspects fled the scene” on foot. The resident was left shaking, but feeling fortunate.

The incident disturbed the peace of the neigh- borhood for more than just the obvious reason. (1) The miscreants had apparently walked down the street knocking on the doors of homes which they felt were unoccupied. In this age when few people use their garages to actually park cars, an empty driveway was an apparent criterion somehow connected.

(2) The street seems an unlikely target as it is in one of those San Pedro neighborhoods where people often live at home, and at different times of the day. Longshore workers, police, doctors, retired people, the self-employed (and self-unemployed), homemakers and caregivers all live or work on the street and are out and about ALL the time, in unpredictable patterns. A dozen or more folks announce the arrival of strangers (and even neighbors) as they walk up front doors or walk by on the sidewalk.

(3) Perhaps most unsettling to the residents, the street is a cul-de-sac, with a large hill behind it. While there have been a few opportunistic thefts at the open end of the street, it has seemed un- thinkable that a burglary would be attempted in the last house at the dead end—but that is the target the teenagers chose.

The fact that those young people were bold enough to continue working a street after two of them had been identified, that they did such a lousy job of choosing a street to target, and that they chose a physical location that no self-respect- ing repeat criminal would touch with a 10-foot pole unnerved the neighborhood, even as people uneasily chuckled at the dumbass nature of the criminals’ decision making, or lack thereof.

An LAPD officer told some residents that it sounded like this group of kids had done this before, and that, given the state of the economy, they should prepare themselves for more such incidents, if not on their street, then elsewhere in the near vicinity.

At a recent neighborhood council monthly meeting, the senior lead officer for the area had warned the community about a spike in opportunistic daytime thefts from homes and cars. He cautioned everyone about securing doors and windows, keeping garage doors down, and always locking parked vehicles.

The resident who found intruders in her home realized that she had probably left one window at the back of the house closed, but not locked. So, one more “minor” entry for the police log.

The reactions varied.

First, the neighbors found in the cul-de-sac and talked. They talked about things they would rather not. They realized that even the most quiet streets and most unlikely targets are subject to sudden intrusions and emergencies. They vowed to dust off the Neighborhood Watch protocol, to exchange phone numbers, to start a phone tree, to physically look out for each other.

Second, the neighbors began to speak about actively working together to plan for one of the many major emergencies that we are promised can and will occur in our community sometime in the future. This unpredictable town we all love is filled with potential epidemics for any number of calamities, both natural and man-made.

None of this is new, but this small wake-up call is a reminder to this and to all of our quiet little neighborhoods that the future is now, and that the time is coming when we will wish our biggest problem is a bunch of truant, oblivious, poorly-raised children looking for the chance to grab a pocketful of jewelry and a sack of electronic components.

These young fools may have done us all a life-changing favor. It is up to us to prove that we are smarter than they are—and that we have longer attention spans.

Watch for a major focus on community preparedness to occur next fall.

Wireless/Cellular Tower Siting: What is the Law?
What are the Federal, State and Local Responsibilities?

• Under both Federal law and California law, local governments have primary authority to ap- prove tower sites. The CPUC has delegated this primary authority to local jurisdictions.

The CPUC handles disputes between local government agencies and wireless service provi- ders, but does not handle tower siting complaints of private citizens.

• Private citizens wishing to contest a tower sit- ing should appeal to their local government agen- cies, which have processes in place to handle such inquiries either within their planning or building department, or some other department.

Federal statute also provides that any person adversely affected by any final action or failure to act by a state or local government or any in- strumentality thereof that is inconsistent with the federal law may, within 30 days after such action or failure to act, commence an action in any court of competent jurisdiction.

The court is required to hear and decide such action on an expedited basis.

• Federal judicial decisions uphold local juris- diction in tower siting decisions.

Please visit the Northwest council website at www.nwsandpedro.org for more information.

NWSPNC Announces Service Award for 2010

This year, the Youth and Education Committee announces its service award for a college student or high school senior who has demonstrated hours of community service within San Pedro. The award will be presented at the July NWSPNC meeting.

The deadline to submit your application is June 14, 2010. Applications will be available at the Boys and Girls Club of San Pedro, Cabrillo Sail- ing Club, and Taper Avenue Elementary School and online at www.nwsandpedro.org. The winner will be contacted. Good luck to you all!

Peck Park Canyon Enhancement Project Groundbreaking March 22

Join Councilwoman Janice Hahn and the de- partments of Public Works and Recreation and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power in marking the start of construction of another Prop. O Clean Water Bond project that will help protect our oceans and promote public health and safety. The ceremony will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 22, at Peck Park, 560 North Western Avenue, in the parking lot behind the recreation center.
Be a Part of the Community Emergency Response Team!

Free Training Classes at Peck Park Begin May 6

NWSPNC is sponsoring CERT emergency preparedness training to teach the basic skills to handle response to your family and community needs in the event of a disaster (earthquake, flood, “manmade” disaster). The free classes teach disaster preparedness, search and rescue, disaster fire suppression, disaster medical operator/assessment, and team organization. The goal is to help prepare your neighborhood to prepare to handle any form of an emergency. Anyone over 18 is invited to participate. Businesses are encouraged to send their employees. Retired seniors and physically challenged are especially invited. We need to help each other.

Where: Peck Park Auditorium, 360 North Western Avenue, San Pedro

When: Seven consecutive Thursdays, May 6 through June 17, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. If you attend all seven classes, you will become CERT certified and receive a CERT package. To register: Send your name, address, and telephone number to board@nwsanpedro.org or 638 South Beacon Street, Box 688, San Pedro, CA 90731.

For more information, visit our website www.nwsanpedro.org or contact Katy Carlson at girlscoutkaty@hotmail.com or (310) 320-3027.

“If you can’t predict, but YOU can prepare.”

Is Your Neighborhood Ready for an Emergency?

By Lonna Calhoun, President

COPE Preparedness

Statistics show that 90 percent of all survivors of disasters are rescued by other survivors. It may be up to you to save the life of another or you may depend on your neighbors to rescue you or your loved ones. The human psyche likes to delude itself by thinking “it can never happen to me” yet our community is vulnerable to a range of potential disasters and experts agree it’s not a question of “if” but “when.”

COPE can help you prepare your neighborhood. They are implementing the FEMA endorsed Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) program in the harbor area. This program provides a step-by-step process to prepare neighborhoods for disasters.

Neighborhood leaders complete a two-hour FREE training which gives them the materials and skills to reach out to their neighborhoods and implement the MYN program. The program teaches nine steps to take immediately following disaster.

After completing the two-hour training you will have all of the materials necessary to develop your neighborhood’s specific plan. The plan identifies skills and equipment each neighbor has that may be helpful in an emergency, creates a neighborhood map pinpointing the locations of all natural gas and power meters, and compiles a contact list that includes the names of neighborhood residents who may need extra help in a disaster such as the elderly, people with disabilities, or children who are home alone during certain times of the day.

Finally, neighbors pick locations for a Neighbor Gathering Site and Neighborhood Care Center and learn the steps to take to assist everyone in their neighborhood.

COPE Preparedness will host the next MYN “Train the Trainer” class in mid-May. To make sure you are notified, contact COPE Preparedness at Lonna@COPE-Preparedness.org, (310) 982-1180 or www.COPE-Preparedness.org with your contact information or visit www.nwsanpedro.org and sign up for our email list and you will automatically be notified.

What is Your Passion?

By John M. Mavar

Neighborhood council leaders and community volunteers, you often hear how to make real changes in our communities. From park improvements to advocating for smart development, community work is never finished. But we can’t do it all. We need volunteers to help improve our community. From issues affecting our waterfront development, cell towers to emergency preparedness, I know you have the passion about something and we wanna help you get involved.

Last year was packed with major changes for our community. With 2010 in full swing, I am looking forward to big changes and continued community improvements. We as a community expect safe streets and responsive city services. Instead of saying someone should do something, you now have the opportunity to learn how. Don’t you want to know what is happening before it happens?

We all work to improve our community services and events around the Harbor Area, it’s a labor of love that I cannot do alone. Community leaders and neighborhood council members have stepped one after the plate time and time again. New parks, waterfront redevelopment, fighting for better traffic safety and much more would not be possible without proactive leaders. That’s why we need you to join us.

San Pedro has always stood out when it comes to community pride. From diversity to deep family histories, our town’s charter is irreplaceable. Unfortu-nately, many community leaders are exhausted or ready to retire. As our older generation passes on, we need new voices to help make changes. If you want to be part of the change, what is your passion? A great way to play an active role in community projects is to get involved you’re your neighborhood council.

If you have questions or concerns, I can help you on your transition with neighborhood councils. I want you to make sure you understand and are comfortable with all that’s involved in the process. Whether your concern is to redo something, I look forward to hearing from you.

John M. Mavar writes for San Pedro Today and can be reached at johnmavarr@gmail.com.