Leland Park Recreation Center Improvements Under Way

The Leland Park Recreation Center is getting a makeover thanks to Debbie Rouser and other nearby residents who formed the Leland Park Advisory Committee and advocated for the renovations.

Recreation and Parks is installing new outdoor fitness equipment (as shown on the concept plan), upgrading the basketball and volleyball courts with new paving and striping and equipment, and upgrading the baseball field with a new backstop, dugouts, infield and outfield and solar scoreboard. They are also installing fencing and gates around the park, a new smart controller irrigation system, security lighting along walking paths, buildings and the parking lot, and ADA compliant concrete paving and ramps from the parking lot down to the ball field.

They also cleared, graded, and compacted the slopes and walking paths along the North Gaffey Street portion. Completion is expected by the end of October.

Ponte Vista Update

As you are probably aware, the road through Ponte Vista to Mary Star High School has been closed and all access is now via Taper Avenue. The developer (IStar) is paying for a traffic officer at Taper and Westmont Drive during dropoff and pick up times. They anticipate that the new road to Mary Star should be completed in about one year. (Hopefully before school opens in 2015.)

All of the structures have been demolished. They are now demolishing the existing roads and infrastructure, as well as completing geological survey work, which must be finished before grading begins. They anticipate that grading will commence in the first quarter of 2015. This is to be accomplished without bringing in or taking any dirt off of the site and the concrete and grading will commence in the first quarter of 2015. This is to be accomplished without bringing in or taking any dirt off of the site and the concrete and asphalt will be reused on-site.

Depending on the amount and duration of rain this winter, installation of new asphalt will be reused on-site.

The result will focus on increasing access to transit, pedestrian and bicycle safety, with specific emphasis on strategies that promote revitalization efforts to support the area’s numerous small businesses and celebrate its diverse cultural heritage.

At the culmination of the planning process, a comprehensive conceptual plan document will be developed that will provide:

- in-depth descriptions of the improvements agreed upon by the community including detailed drawings,
- cost estimates (with unit costs for project elements),
- strategies aimed at formation and implementation of a business retention and improvement plan, including the feasibility of a Business Improvement District,
- project phasing, and
- maintenance plans.

To date, LANI has held a number of community stakeholder meetings to develop priorities for residents, businesses, and civic groups. In late June, LANI held the first of three community workshops at the San Pedro Regional Library to present information about the project, discuss initial ideas for transforming Gaffey Street, and gather feedback and concerns from stakeholders.

Community members who would like to get involved or learn more about the project should attend the second workshop, to be held at the San Pedro Library on October 25. LANI is a nonprofit organization dedicated to catalytic neighborhood revitalization through public improvement projects and community-driven planning. LANI strives to restore a sense of community ownership and identity to economically challenged and underserved communities by implementing projects that enhance the public environment, spur economic development and foster local pride.

For more information, please contact Kate Mayerson, program manager, at kate@lani.org or (213) 627-1822, ext. 18.

‘Great Streets’ Gaffey Workshop October 25 at San Pedro Library

In close partnership with the Office of Joe Buscaino, Los Angeles City Council District 15 (CD15), and the Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) and RRM Design Group are engaging community stakeholders in the process of developing a comprehensive plan for a series of transformative streetscape improvements to the main thoroughfare of Gaffey Street, from the 110 Freeway to 13th Street, in San Pedro.

Gaffey Street was recently named one of the first 15 Great Streets transformative streetscape improvement projects to the main thoroughfare of the City of Los Angeles in channeling resources and services to transportation projects.

The resulting plan will focus on increasing access to transit, pedestrian and bicycle safety, with specific emphasis on strategies that promote revitalization efforts to support the area’s numerous small businesses and celebrate its diverse cultural heritage.

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Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council and Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks Present Walt Disney Pictures’ HOCUS POCUS PECK PARK Saturday, October 25, 6:00 p.m.

Movie starts at dark!

Round up the family, grab your blanket, beach chair, pack a picnic and come join in the fun!

Door prizes, entertainment and a great movie under the stars!

Let’s get in the Halloween mood together.

Costumes optional.

FREE EVENT!
President’s Corner

Rancho’s Holdings Community Forum: What Did It Accomplish?

By Ray Regalado, President

In the late afternoon of September 10, residents from across the harbor area gathered at Peck Recreation Center to participate in a community forum regarding Rancho Holdings LLC. The gathering was organized by Congressman Waxman’s district office staff with panelist consisting of representatives from Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), federal departments. The audience consisted of any of these committees, please e-mail your representatives from Congresswoman Hahn’s office, Rancho Palos Verdes, Coastal San Pedro, Central San Pedro, Councilman Joe Buscaino’s office and Mayor Garcetti’s office were in attendance. Concerns from the community were not covered by specific committees. The information the community wanted was not going to be coming from the people on the panel. Homeland Security spoke as to how they make sure the threat of a terrorist act is minimized, but they could not give specifics. And the EPA discussed how they make sure Rancho Holdings complies with federal guidelines. As many concerns were not addressed.

The Community Vision

The Community Vision deals with traffic and transportation, parks, community beautification, and other issues not covered by specific committees. As more detailed questions were asked by the audience regarding specific threat scenarios, Homeland Security Director Wolfe stated, “the tanks are attractive targets for terrorists.” However, they could not answer many questions for fear of giving potential terrorists ideas.

When specific questions were asked regarding potential explosive blast zones or insurance coverage for damaged homeowner property, the EPA were not able to answer these questions and stated those questions should be directed to local and state officials. Frustration and anger developed in the room as many concerns were not addressed.

It must be stated appreciation should be expressed at the attempt of bringing a level of understanding to a very complicated and divisive issue, however, more thought should have been given as to the potential issues needed to be covered in a public forum of this proportion. One could say 2020 vision isakin in hindsight, but the Rancho Holdings issue has been of concern for many years and the community’s specific concerns are no secret.

In planning an event such as this, the question is not who do we want to be at the table, but who should be at the table. We needed representatives from appropriate state regulatory agencies and local governmental departments including public safety and zoning and planning. This forum should not have been planned in a vacuum, but with input from the community.

It is my opinion that this would have been more effective if the meeting had taken place over three different sessions. The first would be a listening session. Here, representatives from all appropriate governmental agencies and Rancho Holdings listen to the concerns of the community. There would be no expectation of answers or justification of actions at this time. All concerns stated would be recorded and documented.

The second meeting brings all the representatives back and allows them the answer the concerns stated in the first meeting. Brief dialogue can take place during this session; however, differences are not expected to be solved at this time. A third meeting would take place where action items are defined and working groups are formed to address specific concerns such as zoning, disaster planning, and awareness, and possibly forming ongoing community dialogue groups with Rancho Holdings and others to address long term problem resolution.

Preliminary conversation has occurred with other neighborhood council representatives and there is a concurrence that more needs to be done in addressing the issues regarding Rancho Holdings. The lack of communication between community and regulators needs to begin sooner rather than later.

Our Community Belongs to You, Me, Us

A Message About Civic Engagement and the Meaning of Grassroots from Our Vice President, Laurie A Jacobs

To me, “civic engagement” means making a positive difference through connecting or engaging with my neighbors, identifying concerns and initiating informed actions that promote the best quality of life. It is about the right of the local people to define public good, determine the policies by which they will seek the good, and then making it happen.

To me “grassroots” means the most basic level of being responsive to the needs of the community, defined in the dirt with the roots of an idea, making changes from the ground up. It is the collective work done not only for our local community, but by our local community with a clear sense that the group can improve our community. Grassroots groups are often made up of ordinary people with common goals. Sometimes you do in the protection of our community needs and desire. Our community needs you, me, us! I am just an ordinary person who wants our local community to be as safe and prosperous as possible. If I don’t get involved, others in government will make decisions for my community without knowing or understanding my unique and special concerns that affect my specific neighborhood. This is where our Neighborhood Council can provide early community input into many important issues. We can serve as an important part of the broad cross section representing our community as a whole. We can help your voice be heard, no matter how small or large the issue may be. We are ordinary people who are highly motivated with an interest in participation, preservation and fulfillment.

We must teach and set an example to the next generation that “civic engagement” and “grassroots” efforts are essential to our future, that ordinary people can get involved and make a difference. I invite you to attend one of our Neighborhood Council meetings which meet the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Peck Park auditorium. Engage with us; together our voices can be heard.
Neighborhood Justice Program Seeks Volunteers

Do you care about your neighborhood? Would you like to create positive change in your neighborhood, while having a meaningful impact on someone’s life who may be facing criminal charges? Can you spare four hours per month? If so, the Neighborhood Justice Program (NJP) may be for you.

NJP is an opportunity for community members to take an active role in how the justice system responds to the commission of minor crimes, such as vandalism and petty theft.

It is a pre-filing diversion program. This means it is a way for people who commit minor crimes to avoid going to court. Instead they appear before a panel of community members who discuss the crime, the reasons why it was committed, and the negative impacts it caused.

This allows businesses and homeowners to have a voice in a process that respects their role as victims of property crime while at the same time coping with no prior criminal record to take responsibility for their part in a minor crime.

Community Panel members receive one day of hands-on training and commit to participating four hours a month for one year right here in San Pedro. If you are interested, contact Peter Borenstein at (213) 978-8735 or peter.borenstein@lacity.org.

L.A. City Ordinance Regulates Skateboarders

In an effort to improve safety for both skateboarders and non-skateboarders, the city also adopted an ordinance enforceable by LAPD. Please share these rules, which apply to persons riding on skateboards on public roadways, public sidewalks, public parking lots and other public property, with skateboarders:

1. Skateboarders must stand upright. Using, pushing, propelling or riding on a skateboard in a sitting, prone, kneeling or lying position is not allowed.
2. Persons riding on skateboards shall obey all speed limits, stop signs, signal lights, and other traffic controls that govern right-of-way.
3. Persons riding on skateboards on public roadways shall ride close to the far-right edge of the roadway, and shall yield to vehicles approaching from the rear by moving to the right curb or shoulder of the roadway.
4. When approaching an uncontrolled intersection, persons riding on skateboards on public roadways or public sidewalks shall yield to vehicles that are so near as to present a hazard and shall not cross the intersection at a speed in excess of ten (10) miles per hour.
5. No person shall operate a skateboard recklessly or in such a manner as to cause or threaten to cause injury to himself or herself or to others, to create an obstruction or to present a hazard to the free use of public property by other pedestrians or motorists.
6. A person operating a skateboard shall not attach the same or himself or herself to any motor vehicle on the roadway. In addition, a person shall not knowingly drive a motor vehicle that is towing a person riding on a skateboard.

What’s Coming Up at Peck Park

THEATER ACADEMY – We are looking for fourth grade through college students who want to learn acting, singing and dancing while performing in two original productions. Rehearsals begin on October 22. Cost is $75 and includes soundtrack CDs and show fees. Sign-up deadline: December 2.

WINTER BASKETBALL – Cool league for ages 5-15. Practices begin in December, league games in January-March. Cost is $125 and includes jersey, 10-game season, practices, trophy and staff fees. Sign-up deadline: December 2. VOLUNTEER COACHES NEEDED.

GHOSTBUSTERS HALLOWEEN GALA CARNIVAL – Friday, October 31, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Carnival games, costume contest, prizes, candy, crafts and lots of fun! 25-cent carnival games. FREE tote bag for first 250 kids. Concessions available for purchase. Limited space available.

HARVEST FUN DAYS – November 24, 25, 26 from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., ages 5-12 years. Games, arts and crafts, sports tournaments and movies. Cost: $120 for all three days or $45 per day. Sack lunch required. Advanced registration required, no day of registration accepted.

For more information on any of these activities, contact Peck Park at (310) 548-7580.

Rebuilding the San Pedro Elks Lodge

As everybody knows, The San Pedro Elks Lodge was destroyed by an arson fire on April 15. The pool and tennis courts were the only parts of the lodge that survived the fire. The lodge members are shocked by the devastation of their beloved lodge. The leaders of the lodge immediately responded to the cries by seeking assistance from other local facilities to relocate scheduled events. After a vote by the lodge members, the architectural firm SRK, who remodeled the Bel-Air Hotel, was hired during the first week of August to design the new lodge. The main goal of the design is to have more usable space and utilize solar energy. The estimated opening of the lodge is planned for early 2016.

Currently the pool and tennis courts are open and two successful events were held there. There is an office trailer placed in the parking lot of the lodge so business is being done out of it.

During the rebuilding period, as Elks members, we need to remember the lodge is only a building. But the members are the driving force of the organization which has been built on the principles of kindness, service and charity. As a member, I want to take this time to thank those who stopped out unselfishly to help the organization in its time of need. Also, I want to thank those who have become new members during a time when there is no lodge.

For more information about the rebuilding status or joining the Elks, please go to www.sanpedroelks.com.

Greater Downtown San Pedro Urban Greening Project

A Greater Downtown San Pedro Greening Implementation Plan is being developed and your input is important. The community-based planning process, funded in part by a grant administered by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, provides opportunities for community members to give direct input to the project.

Project Manager Larry Smith, community development director for the LA Corps, is working with representatives from a number of local organizations, including NWSNPC, to craft and implement the community outreach process that is critical to ensure that the final implementation plan truly represents input from the diverse array of San Pedro community stakeholders. Thus far, these opportunities have included an open house, design workshop, and presentations to various local organizations.

In addition, public opinion surveys were collected, the results of which are being used to develop an array of green improvements that will be shared with the community on Thursday October 2, at the Warmer Grand Theater from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m. The open house format will allow community members to walk through several displays and provide comments on the overall draft plan as well as over 20 specific urban greening typology concepts.

Each “typology” is a kind of prototypical concept design that can be applied to sections of proposed green streets that exhibit similar combinations of existing land use and physical land use conditions.

For example, a very wide, higher speed, commercial retail corridor with buildings located behind street level parking lots has a very different character than a narrow, slower speed, entertainment district with buildings located immediately behind the sidewalk.

The planning project will culminate with the San Pedro Urban Greening Implementation Plan, that will provide graphic and narrative descriptions of the urban greenening improvement framework and its individual components and a “road map” for how this framework and the individual components can actually become reality.

Towards that end, the plan will develop funding opportunities for individual greening projects and operations and maintenance protocols, the environmental approval protocols, and any programming protocols that will need to be put in place as the projects come on line.

Their website is still under development, but some information is available at www.witzel- sucht.org/index.html.

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Many Harbor Area residents were thrilled by the sight of the 60-foot high duck leading the parade at the recent Tall Ships Festival.

Gene Seroka is New Port of LA General Manager

Nominated by Mayor Eric Garcetti in May 2014, Gene Seroka was confirmed by the L.A. City Council on June 11 as executive director of the Port of Los Angeles. Seroka is responsible for managing a $939 million budget, advancing major capital projects, growing trade volumes and promoting innovative, sustainable practices that strengthen the region's economy. The Port of Los Angeles is the business container port in North America.

Seroka says he is “dedicated to making this powerful engine the most competitive, efficient and sustainable source of prosperity for the benefit of both our region and U.S. international trade.”

His duties involve interacting with a wide range of stakeholders, including Port customers around the globe, industry partners, elected and appointed officials at all levels, harbor area residents and business leaders.

Seroka, 49, brings more than 25 years of experience in shipping, global logistics and executive management to the Port. Most recently, he was Head of Commercial in the Americas Region for American President Lines (APL) Limited. After several key overseas postings for APL, he returned to the U.S. in 2010 to become President – Americas for APL Limited in Phoenix where he managed APL’s Liner Shipping business, including 1,000 employees, and was responsible for all commercial, port terminal, intermodal, land transportation and labor activities throughout the region.

Seroka joined APL, a wholly owned subsidiary of Singapore-based Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) and the world’s seventh largest ocean carrier, in 1988 as a sales support representative in the company’s Cincinnati office after earning an MBA and bachelor of science in marketing from the University of Cincinnati.

Over the years, he played a key role in global marketing and corporate strategies for APL, holding various positions in sales and management with increasing responsibility and high-level assignments all over the world.

Seroka’s first overseas posting was in Shanghai where he served as Director of Sales and Marketing for North and Central China from 1999 to 2003. He then moved to Jakarta, where he was President Director of PT APL and APL Logistics Indonesia for two years. He relocated to Singapore in 2005 to become vice president of APL Logistics’ business units in 22 countries in the company’s Asia/Middle East and South Asia regions. From 2008 to 2010, he served as Vice President for APL and APL Logistics Emirates LLC in Dubai where he managed APL’s business in the Middle East and East Africa regions.

“Mr. Seroka’s impeccable credentials and extensive knowledge of the maritime and goods movement industries make him the perfect fit to run our Port,” said Ambassador Vilma Martinez, president of the Los Angeles Harbor Commission.

“He has worked closely with every link in the global supply chain, with much of his career focused on Asia and the Americas, and that experience, coupled with his strategic vision and collaborative leadership style, will take our Port to new heights.”

Earthquake Preparedness for People With Disabilities

In the event of a large earthquake or disaster, rescuers may not be in a position to provide immediate help to all individuals. It is important for neighbors to establish plans for those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Specific planning should be made for individuals with the following needs:

- Blind or visual disability:
  - Install automatic security lights in every room that activate during power disruptions
  - Have extra flashlights or lanterns with batteries

- Hearing impairment:
  - Be able to recognize your service animal’s signals
  - Be able to respond to the signals

- Physical Disabilities or Limitations:
  - Keep a supply of disposable facemasks and gloves for extra protection when needed

- Preparing your Service Animal for Disasters

- Keep in mind the needs of your service animal:
  - If your service animal has been injured, contact the appropriate veterinary professional
  - Keep a supply of medications for your service animal
  - Keep a supply of disposable bandages, first aid kit, and food for your service animal
  - Keep a supply of disposable masks and gloves for extra protection when needed

- Flooding?

The Flood Plain Map is currently being updated. NWSAPC has been asked to help identify any locations where flooding occurs. While this is something that may be difficult to think about during a drought, if you can remember any prior flooded intersections or other locations, please send them to board@nwsanpedro.org.