

The Manhattan Beach Observer

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MBRA Sponsors Candidates Forum

Manhattan Beach Residents Association, through the generous assistance of City Manager Carmany and Staff, will sponsor a Manhattan Beach City Council Candidates Forum on Thursday, February 7, from 6:30-8:00 pm. This can be viewed on public access Cable TV; attendance at the live event, held in City Chambers, is invited. The telecast will be repeated on subsequent dates; Sandra Seville-Jones is Forum moderator

Looking Back at 2012

Michelle Murphy

Manhattan Beach's centennial year was the best of times and the worst of times like all years. Some of the planned Centennial celebrations were fraught with controversy and got canceled, but the Taste of Manhattan, the parade, the recent history/planning event and the double fireworks were successes that helped our city enthusiastically mark its' birthday. Party planning can be a tricky job but thanks especially to Jan Dennis and loads of volunteers, Manhattan Beach managed to remember and celebrate our past and our presence.

Other memorable events from the year include: the Open Government initiative that resulted in a new computer program for the city; Evelyn Fry's Walk to the Sea was approved but not yet built; Malibu didn't get to take our sand to prop up their beaches; there was ongoing (and annoying but necessary) sewer rehabilitation; the reservation solution to Sand Dune congestion was finalized; Heights and Joslyn Center were renovated in what was supposed to take 3 months and instead took 9 months; in April MBRA held a meeting to discuss alcohol in MB; our library was slated to close this year but now it looks like early 2013 for a planned two year building of a two story ocean view glass library; we'll get a bookmobile for 20 hours a week for the interim; and Manhattan Village Mall is planning a major remodel with multistory parking units and new traffic patterns.

Maybe I've missed listing some of your greatest hits of the past year but next year we will be here before we know it and 2013 civic events and issues will be up on our radar screen. There will be an election in March 5. Three seats on Council are open. 2013 could be a year of changes and real progress. Good government depends on you. That's how democracy works.

Meter Metrics

by Gary Osterhout

'Tis the season. The City Council again approved ' bagging' most parking meters throughout town, because "Tradition". This is in addition to the lost \$500,000. in parking fees of a few years pat when council unnecessarily reduced meter rates upon request by area businesses.

Although I certainly do not want to be viewed The Grinch, both our City Council and business community needs to be challenged in respect to this questionable practice with no apparent tangible benefits. What is lacking is an adult conversation about parking meters, why they are there, and the benefits to this town---as well as a demand that anyone who proposes to spend much of our money by foregoing revenues has to better justify that action. We certainly need better dialogue than "happy people buy more".

Parking meters and their associated revenues recognize the value of using city land to benefit parking, and regulates parking space demand so drivers have available parking. Both academically and statistically-supported pricing models agree that fees are optimally set to generate 20% available space during peak times. I have seen no study supporting benefits of not charging for parking.

In addition, most cities prudently leverage these revenues to provide valued city projects. While our city Hall artificially segregates parking costs and revenues into a separate fund, in reality the money is a General Fund revenue source spendable the same as property tax and general sales tax. In fact, Manhattan Beach already applies a very small—and arguably inadequate—amount of parking revenues to the general Capital Improvement Fund.

Thus, while a current council candidate referred to parking meters as a "necessary evil", there is no inherent evil in parking meters at all, and many attendant benefits. What seems to be missing in this statement is a simple understanding of basic civics and parking dynamics.

The current "bagging" authorization arrived through a November 7, 2012 agenda item inappropriately placed on the Consent Agenda (implying prior general council concurrence) where city Staff recommended a two-week meter moratorium. The Chamber of Commerce requested three weeks. Councilman Nick Tell pulled this item to gratuitously bump the bagging to FOUR weeks, with Council concurrence; Councilman David Lesser (who supported two weeks) dissenting.

The only argumentative support in Council's agenda materials was an attached Chamber of Commerce letter stating that the Chamber "feels it is a positive incentive to increase goodwill and promote shopping in Manhattan Beach".

In face of that reasoning, here are my ten best reasons this moratorium is bad policy for the residents of the City of Manhattan Beach:

1. There is much money lost and little recovery. Amy Howorth asserted that the city would benefit from the increase of sales in downtown businesses, and that "anything we can do to encourage more traffic and more people in and out of the stores downtown creates sales

Noise and the Manhattan Beach Ear

by Michelle Murphy

A concerned resident wrote MBRA a few weeks ago asking what could be done about excessive motorcycle engine noise in downtown Manhattan Beach. The next MBRA Board meeting addressed the issue and Gary Osterhaut remembered an interesting 2005 article from the LA Times called "Making Bikers Pipe Down." The article (which can be googled if you're interested) describes a Laguna Beach Police Officer who tickets motorcycles when they exceed the California decibel unit limit. He holds a decibel meter on their bikes and warns or tickets them for breaking the law. Before the meter was used, bikers sometimes successfully asserted in court that they had a free speech right to roar their engines and the sensation of loudness was subjective. The "rectal thermometer" as some grumpy bikers have named the decibel meter, takes the subjectivity out of the equation.

A few days later I sent the police chief a copy of that article. Chief Irvine referred the matter to Acting Captain Tim Hageman, who spoke with me and sympathized about the issue but offered no solution except alerting officers to the fact of the complaint. Hageman could not tell me how many or when noise violation citations for excessive motorcycle noise have been issued though he believes there have been some citations in the past. He did say that officers could issue citations without a decibel meter if drivers have made after market modification to their motor's exhausts to create more noise, but again he was not sure how many such citations have been issued. Hageman believes that the traffic section of the department has some kind of noise measuring device but he doesn't think it is properly calibrated and the police department has no current intention of purchasing a decibel meter.

Motorcycle noise can be a nuisance all over town. Other noise issues such as loud parties, amplified music (especially from bars near residential areas) and building construction noise are continuing problems. Having a decibel meter would allow the police to be accurate when they warn or cite folks for noise violations.

MBRA urges the Police Department and City Council to look into purchasing a decibel meter and using it to help us residents enjoy our practically perfect town in peace.



A CELEBRATION AND A NEEDED FOLLOW-UP

by Madonna Newburg, MBRA Senior Liaison

On October 25, 2012 an "Open House" was held in the Joslyn Community Center. It was a celebration for the seniors after ten months being without the facility. We were promised only three months of renovation but that didn't happen for various reasons; some delays explainable and some not known to this day.

The Joslyn Center is constantly used by seniors, mostly in the daytime hours. Seniors were delighted to be back in their old "digs" with a great fresh look and new improvements: a Health Department approved kitchen, handicapped accessible restrooms, performing stage and lobby expansions and many more innovative and needed upgrades.

After four weeks in the renovated Center, seniors compiled a list of recommendations that needed attention. The women's restroom was poorly designed and the kitchen needed work space for meal preparation. Probably due to the problem of adequate storage for equipment etc. that had to be moved out of the Center, many items were lost, not replaced or damaged.

At the November 20, 2012 meeting of the Senior Advisory Committee with the Parks and Recreation staff, a representative from the city's Public Works attended. The list of senior recommendations was given to Parks and Recreation staff and to the Public Works. After discussion of each item, the city representatives gave the Committee assurances that they will follow up on the recommendations.

A recommendation list was also provided regarding the Heights Community Center shortcomings.

Seniors are hoping that we won't have to wait months and months for some action. The delays in the \$3.6 million project for the renovations were a nightmare so let's hope the city improves on these follow-up items. Seniors thank the City for all the improvements and hope for a second celebration when all is in order.



Manhattan Village Mall Expansion

by Diane Wallace

Despite years of warnings about the proposed major expansion of the Manhattan Village Mall, many residents remain uninformed about the scope of the changes planned and the potential effect on traffic, noise, pollution and other worrisome issues. Early attempts at soliciting public input focused mainly on residents and owners in nearby Manhattan Village. Village residents were victorious in 2007 with their request to move a parking structure away from their homes and towards the center of the mall. The conversation about the remodel has now been expanded to the senior apartments behind the mall and the senior housing west of Sepulveda.

MBRA believes everyone living in Manhattan Beach or concerned about this town will want to learn about the planned expansion which includes changes in traffic patterns, higher building elevations, new multi-story parking structures with lighting on top, and expanded commercial space. The plans will add 194,644 square feet of new space for lease and reconfigure the area. Frys, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, See's Candies stores and the site of the former movie theater will all be demolished. There are no plans for a theater in the new mall.

Anyone who ever drives through the intersection at Sepulveda and Rosecrans should be concerned about the impact of the planned Manhattan Village expansion and the soon to be even larger Plaza El Segundo on traffic in the area.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report was released in July 2012 and a copy is on the City website. The Planning Commission has met and will meet again to listen to the public and the developer about mall issues. The Manhattan Beach Resident's Association will be sponsoring a community meeting sometime in early 2013 to learn more about and discuss the proposal. Details will be sent to MBRA members as soon as they are finalized. We hope you will attend.





Editor's Column

To the few Manhattan Beach residents still seated in City Council chambers, it was a "What happened!", jaw-dropping moment.

The December 4 council agenda item stated that "City Staff recommends that the City provide direction regarding a resolution of the support for the Freedom to Marry". This was placed in the agenda following a discussion during the November 6, 2012 meeting about a letter Mayor Powell had received. It was, he explained, "a request for me to sign a document in my official capacity as mayor to sign a Mayor's Freedom to Marry" pledge. The letter was sent by a lobbying organization and his signature would not be as an individual, but as mayor representing the city.

"I declined!" Powell said....it was not a matter of whether he agreed or disagreed with the issue, but the broader issue of whether Council should be considering something outside its subject jurisdiction. "It's a federal or state issue and we have no control over the matter; my concern is that we set a precedent". The discussion precipitated council direction that the matter be agendized for discussion, with a resolution regarding City support for Freedom to Marry.

Therefore the agendized item requesting discussion of Resolution 12-6420 involving Manhattan Beach in support of Freedom to Marry was on the December 4 Agenda. While Council members referred to the many related emails they received, residents who remained in chambers to address the issue were fewer in number.

Adding weight to all this is that the U.S. Supreme Court is in the very process of considering a hearing on two cases challenging state and federal laws that define marriage to include only unions of a man and a woman. On narrower grounds it could apply only to marriages in California. Additionally, there is a possible hearing which challenges a federal law that requires the federal government to deny benefits to gay and lesbian couples married in states that allow such unions.—All these are thought to be outside the purview of Manhattan Beach...but perhaps differ from Councilmembers' perspective.

...By the time this Observer issue is mailed, the matter may already have been discussed and heard by the U.S. Supreme

City Council Report Card					
	Howorth	Lesser	Montgomery	Powell	Tell
Approve "Light Gate" Public Art Piece					
Resolution in Support of staff Benefits, Freedom to Marry					
Vote: YES			Vote: NO		

Court. It may well be far-reaching in its application to Challenging the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA); this will become a landmark opinion on gay marriage and whether Proposition 8, which rejected same sex marriages in California, violates the federal constitution.

Disparate opinions were voiced by residents whose views reflected similarly conflicting views...Some pointed out that Proposition 8 was voted on by residents four years ago and the majority voted their opinion; they emphasized that they viewed Manhattan Beach as a "grounded family" city, and did not want to see the residents politicized. Conversely, others in the audience stated that "Marriage equality is a matter of human right..not politics," and even while affirming personal support to overturn Proposition 8, nevertheless did not waver from what was seen as the immediate purpose of the agendized item: they asked whether Mayor Powell, in signing the letter, was speaking on behalf of his role as mayor and member of council...and could he, legally, speak on behalf of all residents of Manhattan Beach...Also, significantly, could Resolution 12-6420 be passed and approved without full community outreach...they saw this as a questionable act. This, they repeated, was the only issue which should be addressed and discussed.

Somewhere in the prolonged discussion which followed, what was viewed by residents in the audience as simply an issue of whether the legal jurisdiction of the resolution then would be seen as representing all Manhattan Beach residents, instead morphed into something else. Councilmembers stated their philosophical and personal opinions, emphasizing the recognized difficulty in separating substance from process, yet expressing their opinions relating to the issues currently before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Taking a position which would set a standard for the community was a position council endorsed; by embracing this as a standard for others to follow was a direction

of paramount importance. "Discrimination is just bad" emphasized Councilman Tell, who also wanted city employment policy to assure it was non-discriminatory.

Residents who appreciated the direction council was taking, the reasons cited, and applauded the reasoning and the conviction, nevertheless felt it still left a wide gap in the WHY of what precipitated the initial discussion: Could Council pass the resolution as stated, and on whose behalf would they be voting? If on behalf of the residents, then a wider, broader, all encompassing discussion should first follow.

At the end of a prolonged meeting, when the discussion had diverged beyond the initial scope, and there was much talk about reviewing city employment policies to assure benefits giving same legal rights, a number of motions were proposed. What was thought to be the final motion was: Direction to the City Manager to review City policies, ordinances, personnel agreements granting the same legal rights and benefits to employees as if they were allowed to be married under state and federal rules.

What was finally voted on would be seen as commendable by some residents; perhaps less so, by others, but reflected the convictions of the councilmembers. Much of this was notable, even though the motion dealt with decisions which should have come back at another time, as another agenda item, and with resident participation. As for those in the audience that evening...they came, they spoke, they were overlooked. Again.

E.B.



MBRA extends special wishes for all that is the best to all Manhattan Beach residents and their families.

City Ponders Parks Plan Proposal

At the recent Dec. 4 City Council meeting, Parks and Recreation Director Gill was a study in perpetual motion as three different issues for which he is primarily responsible were on the agenda; they were reviewed, discussed, and determinations made.

Manhattan Beach's 48 acres of parks and open space have seen a substantial increase in population and density of use. Gill is acutely aware of the demand for recreational services within the City and how the parks and fields have outgrown their original design capacity. Currently, he is looking at the City's 2008 Strategic Plan to see what could be incorporated into a now developing Parks Master Plan.

"The Strategic Plan was such an expensive study..why not see if there is anything that has been done in that plan we can consider; it is a good resource you can look at," Gill said. His vision is one of 'where are we going to be in 10-15 years, with senior programs, Youth programs, Sports, play equipment'.... He is another Energizer bunny...always searching on behalf of residents...

...always looking where to put new park programs, perhaps a skateboard activity, and, a long time interest, a community garden.

Because this is an outdoor plan, landscaping will be looked at and where to place new park programs. The Parks Master Plan will develop long term goals and, Gill stated, "I am going to focus on areas where we can develop programs and activities. We will be hiring somebody to come in and look at all our open space and point out good locations where we can provide some of the planned activities....these would have to have minimal impact on neighbors and be easy to install".

A scheduled January, 2013 Strategic Plan meeting may have Richard Gill outlining the Parks Master Plan.....unless he is outdoors somewhere, seeking additional space to meet recreational requests.



For Brief Overview:

Paying close attention to resident Jerry O'Connor's expressed concerns about City labor negotiations and those issues he feels Council is not addressing, would serve primarily to alert residents to these specific items and to their lack of understanding of what the City is trying to achieve.

Some questions have been posed about compensation and pensions, and others have wondered why more information is not provided. It is understood that labor negotiations may not be discussed in specific public statements, but the importance of informing the Manhattan Beach public about the desired end game, of getting public opinion behind Council direction cannot be underestimated.

The Police and Fire and Teamsters contracts expire at the end of this year...and, in fact, a fourth labor organization has formed....but word of City negotiation has been virtually non existent.

Again, it is recognized that few residents have shown interest in labor negotiations, in salary or pensions, but an information process would get people involved and would add to the negotiating powers when Council does go into closed session. Asked whether he might be virtually alone in his understanding and grasp and perception of much of what concerns him, O'Connor, undeterred in his attempts to search for truth, replied, "I certainly always hope for that not to be true."

The purpose here is not to indulge in a litany of Things Undone; certainly the Council and City Staff have accomplished some commendable plans and their efforts are noted. However, when questions remain open-ended and clarification leads to better understanding, then some of the following need to be addressed in a mix of things We Don't Know Enough About or have Asked but Received no Response:

....The Open Government Initiatives had some good items amongst the 27 listed---but in presenting to Council by Staff rather than by the Sub-committee members, something was not fully conveyed: A number were approved but others have gone back to whenever Open Government meetings are placed on the Calendar—and to date, nothing has been scheduled.

Similarly, the Work Plan list---somehow the Work Plan has been wrapped in the Strategic Plan; whether completed or dismissed, a number do not exist. It was thought that these would be addressed, but nothing to date. And a firm understanding of the Strategic Plan and how it absorbed the Work Plan, would benefit the residents.

... The City Recovery Cost, a fee residents are paying as applied to the Waste statement is a long-standing request for agendizing this for a full resident discussion---Told to discuss this with Finance Director Moe limits the residents' participation and input.

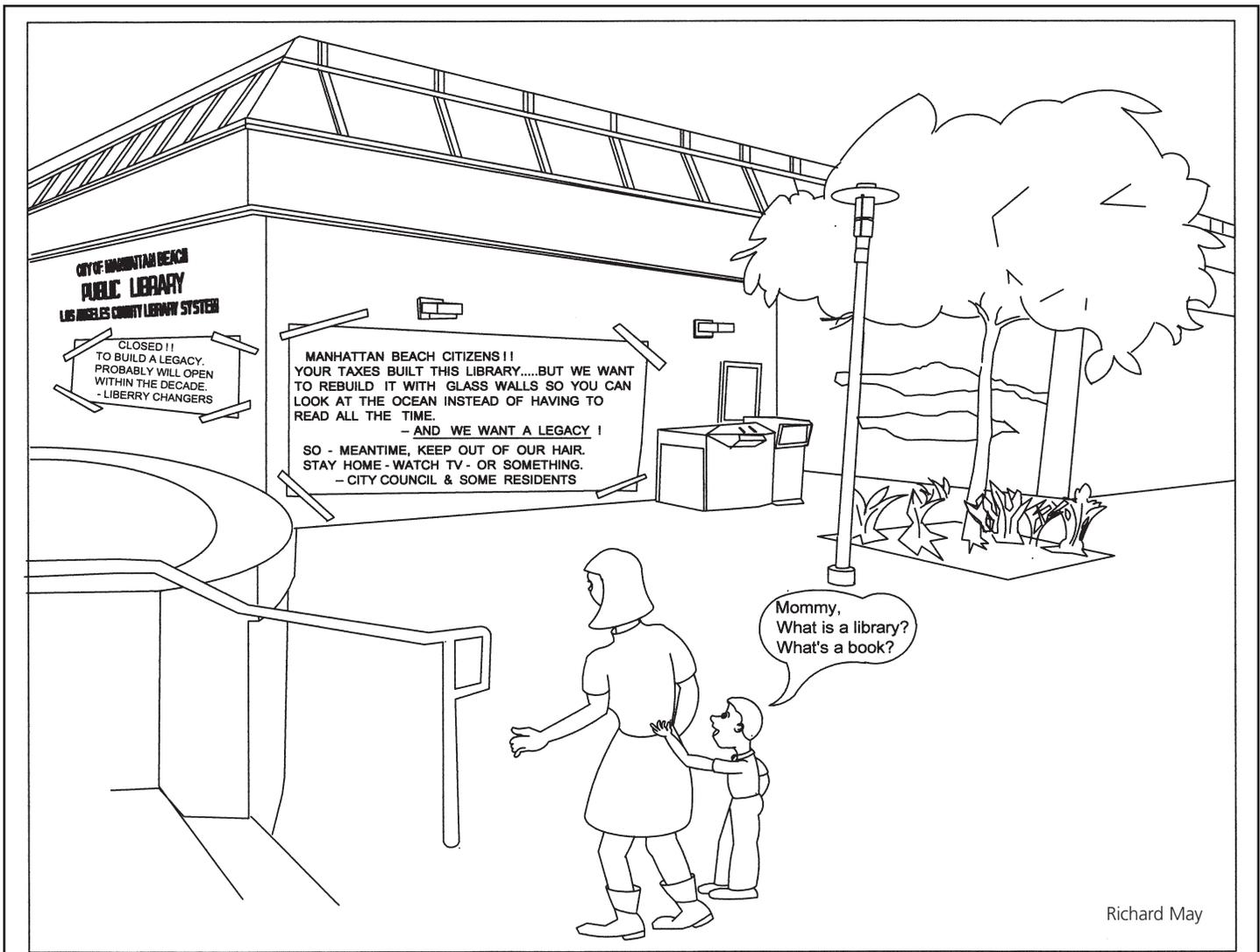
...Council's tolerance of other councilmembers' absence from meetings or labor discussions or performance evaluations needs to be viewed in terms of what is required of each Council member.

...A recent Council decision to grant an appeal of a Planning Commission denial to an applicant whose excess of height limit and reduction of open space in a resident's home, evoked a feeling that Council may not have given enough credence to the Planning Commission statements and perhaps name recognition entered into the decision process.

...Careful scrutiny of items posted in the Consent Calendar occasionally finds an item which should only have been entered as an Agenda item requiring public participation; failing this the item would have been voted on with one voice vote and no further discussion.

A Strategic Plan meeting has been scheduled for January, 2013. This is an opportunity for the public to define what it wants to see and know. Others which have been presented at various times, are issues with which the voice of residents becomes the most effective resource. Or, for the less diligent amongst us, listen to Jerry O'Connor for an Introduction to City Issues, 101.





Trolley Tournabout Triumphs

In a 2006 Observer issue, an article referenced several previous aborted attempts to initiate a Manhattan Beach Trolley service. All had failed.

And so again in 2008 and then 2010 and once more in 2012, this try-again approach continues...with the same concerns about costs, noise, need.

It is recognized that Manhattan Beach needs an improved transportation system. Council discussed this item during its Dec. 4, 2012 agenda item recommending an award for a contract for trolley consulting services. Three councilmembers' statements showed less enthusiasm and more concern for such a project. Among their questions were the following comments:

- ..We need a broader study for transportation
- ..Cost (scary, said one)
- ..We were taking important money from other important programs
- ..It is premature to decide a fixed route now
- ..Advanced technology would be an advantage in later planning
- ..A used hybrid vehicle is nonexistent at this time; it would be worth waiting for

Most critics of public transportation have two complaints: the noise and the smell. Finding a balance between these two objectives can be challenging.

The vehicles referred to in the study stated that efficient vehicles like Compressed Natural Gas and Clean Diesel are relatively noisy. Another vehicle considered had high mileage but a noisier operation, while yet another consideration cited had the primary advantage of a quieter operation but the trade off is a higher level of tailpipe emissions.

Within this is the proposed 30-minute round trips, 14 hours a day, 7 days a week, 360 days a year, with 18-23 pick-up points selected.

To much of this and more, three councilmembers indicated they were not in favor of approving the study. Councilmembers Tell and Montgomery were more favorably disposed and before a motion was made and vote taken, Tell effectively diverted the direction to a broader issue, which then led to another approach. He kept the political pulse beating and after discussion, council decided to attempt a broader view of transportation, to expand more, to be more viable, to see comprehensive needs, to avoid duplication of consultants and then come back with the report.

The motion passed with a 4-1 vote (Montgomery still not on board). Perhaps, when the trolley returns with a more acceptable feasibility study, some answers to the residents' questions will be included.

(ed. Note: A comment about the presentation of this item, how its process influences resident participation, will be found in this issue's City Hall Update.)

City Hall Update

Again...and still. The issue was the Trolley Feasibility Study. Prior to opening the discussion to audience input, council members made statements, asked questions of staff, introduced their thoughts and direction, participated in an exchange of ideas...By the time residents came up to speak, council listened politely, as always, but there was little, if any reference to resident input, to their expressed concerns, questions and comments. The discussion which followed was an extension of the initial approach prior to "opening this up to residents". There was little left, after their initial discussion, to have any bearing on what they heard when the residents spoke.

This approach to getting an understanding of what council members are thinking is not a resident's priority; a seemingly predetermined direction is counterproductive; hearing that a council person has already formed a pattern of reasoning, with a specific emphasis, serves only to validate a perception of pointless audience participation.

Residents would like to know that there is more value to their appearing before council, that it is more than a formality.

.....
City Clerk Liza Tamura wears many hats, each one expertly and always with grace. A more recent addition to the very special staff is Clay Curtin, Senior Management Analyst, whose patient humor and reliable information source earned him a Triple A designation: Always Available to Assist.—To them: a very special thanks for unprecedented accommodation.

.....
The enthusiastic response to the Symposium held recently at the Joslyn Center reflected the appreciation for the planning, research and organization expended by Mayor Pro Tem Lesser and Jan Dennis. Concerned that the Centennial events recognizing Manhattan Beach's 100th anniversary were lacking in the City's history, they devoted countless hours to their "Reflect on the Past, Give Meaning to the Future" day-long program. They wanted to 'engage the residents'—and they did.

Both Lesser and Dennis, while recognizing the efforts of the Centennial Committee, decided the occasion would be independent of any other group. With help from the City, they achieved their goal. And the City's residents were rewarded immeasurably.

.....
The significance of a date or a time, when an occasion is noted and recognized, and even becomes an historical reference with traditional celebration, the question of its authenticity can be troubling. Who wants to rethink a long-accepted historical fact.

It is now, as we near the close of Manhattan Beach's Centennial year, that a disquieting disclosure surfaces: Is, as many think, 12/12/12, the day and year the City officially reaches its 100th year. For some, 12/02/12 would be accurate. A search through Jan Dennis' book "AWalk Beside the Sea" revealed that:

Following the qualification of the petition to become a city, an election was held to determine whether the town should be incorporated. Returns were counted on December 2, 1902; the incorporation proposal was passed (95-32), under the name and style of "City of Manhattan Beach.". The mistake that the date was 12/12 evolved when the notation was written with a pencil, on an old envelope, and the 'dash' was mistaken for the numeral 'one'.

So...'02 or '12...the choice is yours. The wish remains: Happy Birthday, Manhattan Beach!

.....
While the closing date of the City's library remains uncertain, those who kept hoping for a temporary library site in Manhattan Beach can eliminate that from their Santa's wish-list. It is not available. A tentative date for closing is sometime in March, 2013, perhaps April, perhaps even later. When that is established, definite plans for ways residents can access other libraries will be determined. Time for construction is a wait-and-see.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY, NOV. 11, 2012

This is the 10th year that women veterans have been honored by the City at the Veterans Day ceremony. During these 10 years over 18 South Bay women veterans have taken part in the ceremony. Sadly to report we have lost 4 of them to deaths, some have moved out of our community and others are not able to come due to health reasons.

When WWII ended in 1945, service women were sent home as the government decided that women were no longer useful in the military. However, women began fighting for their rights and three years later the "Women's Armed Forces Act" was passed. Women could now serve with men in the US, overseas and on ships. In 1976 women were appointed to the Academies and since 1991 women pilots have flown combat missions and others have served in combat zones.

The last US census reported that there are over 2 million women veterans in our country nearly 170,000 in California, the most of any state.

Where are these women veterans today? Many choose to make a career in the military and retired after 20-35 years of service. You will find them in many civilian careers that they were trained to do in the service: doctors, nurses, firefighters, pilots, engineers, musicians and food service to name a few. Many of us became teachers, parents, caregivers, volunteers and leaders in business and government. In the November election a former Army woman, Tammy Duckworth, won a seat in the US House of Representatives. She lost two legs in the Iraq War, wears the Purple Heart medal and at 44 years of age we will hear more about her in the future.

Our women veterans are involved in many veterans groups watching out for women especially the ones injured in service and the growing number of homeless and unemployed. We work with the Veterans Administration to let them know that women are veterans too, and many improvements have been made.

Adapted from speech given at 11/11/12 Ceremony by Madonna Newburg, Korean War Veteran

tax, which comes back to us as well". Not only is this comment woefully lacking in terms of identifying amounts of sales tax, degrees of increase, analysis of cause and effect, or expected percentages, it just does not add up. This current bagging is projected to cost the City \$44,000 per week, or a total of \$176,000 of foregone meter revenue. To break even, there would need to be \$17,600,000 of TAXABLE sales DIRECTLY attributed to people buying solely due to the bagged meters. One does not need to be in business to know the impossibility of generating additional sales of this volume due solely to bagged meters. And many downtown sales are not taxable, so even more sales that \$17.6MM would need to be generated to yield measurable sales tax offsets. Yet we allow Howorth to get away with such statements on a regular basis.

2. No quid pro quo or accountability is being asked in return from those requesting the expenditure. The Chamber offered benefit to the City, that they would do "x" as an offset benefit. No businesses even stepped up to say they would increase operating hours to benefit shoppers. Frankly, I think the Chamber has a lot of gall making this request when they were just granted \$75,000 in direct subsidy earlier this year by the Council in exchange for relatively nothing accountable.

3. Businesses are not even asked to assess, determine, quantify, or otherwise make accountable their "feeling" that "this is a positive incentive to increase good will and promote shopping in Manhattan Beach". These are business people asking for an expenditure of \$176,000---something none of them would do without deep economic review---and the City does not even bother to ask them for a better analysis. The downtown businesses have been complaining of high meter pricing for years yet cannot fund or even produce any study that would suggest an objective analysis.

Besides the fact that downtown suffers little downside---beside unavailable parking---in respect to asking for a moratorium, I do not know why Downtown even supports this measure, or who dominates the Chamber to force this request. Perhaps bagging provides another potential advertising point, like a sidewalk sale. Perhaps, as sows up in articles about moratoriums in other cities, the businesses then do not have to reimburse street parking for their employees. Or maybe it's because just one more drink will be ordered if someone does not have to feed the meter with the same money.

(Note: During the Council discussion, Amy Howorth remarked that drivers nonetheless have to move their vehicle every two hours. The City Manager corrected to say that this rule was not actively enforced.)

4. Bagging meters promotes unfair competition among Manhattan Beach businesses, picking economic winners and losers. The Chamber letter says this action will "promote shopping in Manhattan Beach". If parking meters has that effect, I cannot see how that translates as a benefit to our malls or those businesses that invest in their own parking lots and have to finance those costs through their sales. Thus, it is not good for the City as a whole. And it's hard to believe that at our economic levels parking meter fees are a shopping deterrent.

5. Bagging meters actually reinforces the erroneous assumption that "paying meter fees is bad", and thus perpetuates the idea in shoppers' minds that they should not come downtown or wherever there are meters the remainder of the year. There is nothing wrong, and actually a preponderance of good, to have rationally priced parking meters.

6. Bagging meters generally end up with taxi cabs excessively dominating the available spaces downtown.

7. Bagging meters encourages people to drive downtown, instead of walking, biking, or taking public transportation. Bagging meters further stresses the environment by creating less availability of parking so shoppers need to continually drive around until a spot opens.

8. In El Porto (and likely other spots) people in adjacent apartments who use the spaces overnight do not remove their cars until late in the morning. That impacts, for instance, the early morning breakfast and haircutting business.

9. Contrary to past council assertions, this is not a "tax cut for residents", nor a "gift to residents". It is not even provable as an incentive. It is a "gift" to those who would use their car to drive to shop or work or recreate in the impacted areas, and would do so even without the moratorium. It does not benefit those who go shopping without vehicle, or even locals who rarely shop at all, so it is more a "gift" to non residents. Indirectly this is a tax increase for all residents who have to suffer the reduced service from the reduced revenue---or pay for it in other indirect ways such as the "City Recovery Fee" added to the trash bill, justified because "the City needs the revenue". When the only way AYSO---an organization that benefits the city as a whole as much as any---can see to get another decent soccer field surface is to raise the funds themselves instead of getting the City to fund this basic obligation---it is easy to ask the question why AYSO is funding the parking meter moratorium, as \$175K over 10 years equals the cost and amortization period of the artificial turf it needs.

10. The action obscures or ignores the City's focus of the basic City Hall interest, costs and obligations in supporting business. It is the City's responsibility to provide good roads, utilities, police and fire protection, ease of administration, and lessening of unreasonable barriers in order to further commerce. It is business's responsibility to promote business. If business can get the government to basically provide them a gift, that's considered all part of business. But it is not a government obligation to fund that. And, were City Council really interested in associating costs to programs similar to that asserted to the city recovery fee, then the City should transfer an equal amount of money from the General Fund to the parking fund, as a "business subsidy transfer".

Amy Howorth justified the moratorium, without further elaboration, because "our businesses need the help". Our businesses do not need such assistance. Not only are the businesses in economic areas like ours doing rather well, if a business cannot make it in downtown Manhattan Beach without a parking meter moratorium---in an area with great streets, public safety, and utilities; with no Utility Users Tax paid by businesses in adjacent cities; with a very minimal business tax; with comparatively small City/School bond indebtedness payments; with the downtown streetscape and lighting district costs and stormwater costs being subsidized by the City; with the City subsidizing the Chamber of Commerce unlike any other California city; having available parking (Metlox) made available by a \$5 million land purchase by the city; in an area specifically developed so to prevent competition by large retailers; in one of the wealthiest cities in the word per capita; adjacent an amenity like our beach, pier and Civic Center---then perhaps that business does not belong.

As Howorth said in August when the Chamber was granted a \$75,000 subsidy: "Do we have too many expensive women's clothing shops? Probably." Competition and free enterprise makes those decisions through market place dynamics. Government subsidies upset that balance. Above all, we need a more reasoned approach to making spending decisions. In a City where we have so much good we could leverage from our dollars, we cannot be making decisions with no apparent rational basis.



City Hall Calendar

January 2, 2013:
January 2013:

City Council: City Council meeting cancelled
Strategic Plan Meeting

MBRA BOARD MEMBERS

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Vehicles in Need of a Charge

It is doubtful that anyone can recall stores which sold feed for the horses which served early transportation needs...but who could have anticipated the need which City Council is now considering. In response to the rapid increase of plug-in electric vehicles entering the marketplace, City Council has included a discussion about electric vehicles and charging stations in the 2012-2013 Strategic Plan.

At a preliminary meeting, Public Works Director Jim Arndt directed staff to prepare a more in-depth plan. To be considered are: Locations and whether to designate electric vehicle only parking, or allow parking time extensions; Sites, and these could be any where from Civic Center to existing parking spaces; Costs, and these could range from fees to charge a vehicle, or parking meter rates; and specifically the funding mechanisms---

The City is eligible for a Clean Transportation grant from the Air Quality Management District to help offset the costs; required matching funds could help defer hardware costs and minimal installation costs.

Many policy issues remain for the City to consider and when Staff has explored these and discussed alternatives, this will all be brought back to City Council at a later date. Meanwhile, for those in immediate need, Hermosa Beach and Torrance may have publicly accessible electric vehicle charging capabilities.



Manhattan Beach Residents Association
P.O.Box 1149
Manhattan Beach, CA 90267-1149
(310) 379-3277 Email: yourmbra@gmail.com

() Enclosed is \$30.00 annual (2013-2014) Membership Fee.

() Yes, I (we) would like to assist.

- () City Hall Watch () Computer Assistance
- () Fund Raising () Membership
- () Communications () Telephoning

Name(s) _____

Address _____ (Zip) _____

City _____ Phone(H) _____ B) _____

E-mail _____ Fax _____