



From the City Manager's Desk

a weekly report from Scott Ochoa, City of Monrovia



January 19, 2007

Marathon Council Meeting Ends in Reasonable Compromise

I think the January 16 Council Meeting was longest meeting we've had in my 14 years with Monrovia. The appeal of the single family residential project at 314 El Nido Avenue stretched the evening into the wee hours of the morning; but rather than continue the public hearing to another time, the Council decided to march on through the process while all the parties were present and engaged in the debate. The meeting ended at 2:20 AM.

Ultimately, though, the Council was certain that this issue – convoluted by issues related to conflicting geological studies and longstanding hillside development controversies – was, at its heart, a neighbor dispute. The compromise delivered at the end of the evening, and agreed to by both the appellants and the applicant, was testament to the Council's ability to sift through emotion and rhetoric and identify key tangible issues.

Essentially, the applicant agreed to move his proposed house three feet to the west and notch a proposed block wall that would run along the common property line shared by the applicant and the appellant. This would allow the appellant enough room to move around the exterior of his house. The appellant's house is an existing non-conforming structure in that it sits only two feet from the common property line. Thus, by the applicant's agreeing to move his proposed house the additional three feet, the applicant was allowing a separation of **10** feet between the two structures (the appellant's home is two feet from the property line plus the Code-required five-foot setback for the new house plus the additional three feet); and by notching the proposed block wall to the contour of the appellant's house, the applicant is essentially granting use of this portion of his private property to the appellant. In the end, I believe neither side was happy but both were satisfied – the definition of a good compromise.

As for the rest of the discussion regarding the development of infill hillside lots, I believe that the Council did an outstanding job of outlining the delicate balance between neighbors' rights and individual property rights. There were many eloquent speakers on both sides of the issue. And the salient point here is that this matter has been distilled down to a truly philosophical argument where no one is wholly wrong or right – it is simply a matter of what you believe. As the saying goes, where you stand depends on where you sit. That being said, I believe the Mayor hit the nail on the head when he commented that whatever you believe about the delicate balance between property rights versus neighborhood rights, the process envisioned by the City in 2001 to handle infill hillside lots is working effectively.

As always, if you have any questions about the meeting please feel free to contact me directly.

Old Town Construction Now in Final Phase

We are now officially in the home stretch. As anticipated, as of this week our crews have completed all of the major construction south of Lemon Avenue, north of Palm Avenue, and along the west side of the 400 block of South Myrtle Avenue. Additionally, the demolition crews should be finished with

their work on the eastside of the 300 & 400 blocks of South Myrtle by this Saturday. Crews picked up a couple of days on the schedule this week; and by this time next week, we should be pouring sidewalks in this final phase.

Crews are also continuing to plant landscaping materials, install new street lights and electrical infrastructure throughout the project area. If the weather holds out, we will spend most of February on these and other lower-impact activities.

Also this week, Colorado Commons poured much of the concrete foundations for the underground portion of the parking structure and the job site is a beehive of well-coordinated activity. Please refer to the attached news article for more information on this exciting project. As always, if you have any questions about this work, please feel free to contact me directly.

Articles Attached

- **Monrovia Condo Project Boasts East Coast Feel.** A very good article on this outstanding public-private investment in Monrovia.
- **Public Pension Bill Grows.** Unfortunately, too many government agencies over-promised to employee bargaining groups what they could not deliver – and it comes at the credibility of all agencies, even those like Monrovia that exercise fiscal responsibility.
- **City to Consider New RV Rules.** This item is sure to come up during the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Council to examine parking issues in Monrovia neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Filming

- Fire Fly Creative will be filming a promo for a new CBS reality series “The Riches 2” on Saturday, January 20, at a private home at 550 N. Alta Vista Avenue and at the Presbyterian Church at 101 E. Foothill Blvd. They will be filming between the hours of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- NBC Studios is scheduled to film scenes from the popular TV series “Heroes” on Monday, January 22, from 4 a.m. to midnight and Tuesday, January 23, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. They will be filming at G & L Automotive, 438 E. Duarte Road, and the Oak Park Motel, 925 E. Huntington Drive. Police personnel will be on-site for any traffic safety concerns.

Special Event

Comp USA, 745 W. Huntington Drive, will be holding a parking lot event on Thursday, January 25, from noon to 6 p.m. The event will utilize approximately 16 parking spaces and will include a 20' x 20' inflatable dome and an 18' x 10' product trailer. The purpose of the event is to educate consumers on technology and the Sony products that are offered at Comp USA.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

The Commission will consider the following items at its January 24 meeting:

- A Historic Landmark/Mills Act Contract will be considered for 136 North Ivy Avenue for a beautiful Craftsman house that was converted from a Victorian House in the early 1900s.
- Two Certificates of Appropriateness for work to historic landmarks at 163 Melrose Avenue and 313 Wildrose Avenue.
- Three special reviews:
 - New concrete steps and stuccoing a chimney on an historic landmark at 163 Melrose,

- Determination of the historic significance for the house at 115 South Madison, and
- Replacement of windows, rear door and siding on a rear unit and restoration of stone pillars at 311 Wildrose.

COMMUNITY SERVICES HAPPENINGS

Community Services Commission Meeting: The following items are on the Jan. 23, 2007 Community Services Commission agenda for the meeting;

Youth Commission Request for Service Application and Staff Recovery Fee. Review staff's recommendation to implement a Request for Service application for use of the Youth Commission as volunteer support for community events. Review an event staff recovery fee to recoup Recreation staff costs for supervision of the Youth Commission while volunteering their services.

Recommendation: For Community Services Commission to approve the implementation of the Youth Commission Request for Service Application and a staff recovery fee of \$12.50 per hour, per Recreation staff person.

Urban Park Annual Revenue and Fee Survey. Review the urban park rental fee structure for Library Park, Recreation Park and Julian Fisher Park. Review staff's recommendation to increase the rental fees for the bandshell in Library Park and use of the volleyball courts and gazebo in Recreation Park.

Recommendation: For Community Services Commission to recommend City Council approve the following fee increases:

- Library Park bandshell from \$75 per use to \$80 per use.
- Recreation Park volleyball courts from \$20/per use to \$35 per use.
- Recreation Park gazebo from \$50/per use to \$65/per use.

Monrovia Youth Baseball League (MYBL) Annual Memorandum of Understanding. Review staff's recommendation to renew the Annual Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Community Services and the Monrovia Youth Baseball League for use of City facilities to conduct youth baseball programs.

Recommendation: For Community Services Commission to approve the renewal of the Annual Memorandum of Understanding between the Monrovia Youth Baseball League and the Department of Community Services from January, 2007 to July, 2007 and be automatically renewed from January, 2008 through July, 2008 unless the MOU is breached or violated by MYBL.

2006 Holiday Special Events Evaluation. Evaluate the 2006 Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony, Santa Visits, Santa Letters and Holiday Home Happenings special events.

Recommendation: For Community Services Commission to approve increasing the Santa Visit fees for from \$25 resident and \$35 non-resident to \$35 resident and \$55 non-resident.

Library Board Meeting: The following items are on the Jan. 25, 2007 Library Board agenda;

Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement Report: Staff is recommending a revised "Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement" form. The current agreement was written in 2000. The revision is recommended to make it clear to patrons how the computers can and cannot be used and what materials are inappropriate to access with public use computers.

Recommendation: For the Library Board to approve the revised Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement.

Literacy Services Update. To update the Library Board on the Literacy Coordinator position and the grant funds available to expand the Literacy Coordinator position. One of the major recommendations of the Strategic Plan is to expand the Literacy Coordinator job position from 20 hours per week to 40 hours per week based on bridging the gap between the literate and non-literate worlds. This will be accomplished by allocating the grant funds to make the position full-time.

Recommendation: For the Library Board to receive and file Administrative Report AR-2, Literacy Services Update Report.

FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Personnel responded to **68** emergency calls from 0800 hours January 10 to 0800 hours January 17. Significant incidents include:

Smoke in a Structure. On Wednesday evening, firefighters responded to a report of smoke inside of a home in the 800 block of east Palm Avenue. The resident at the location left food cooking on the stove causing a small fire. The fire was quickly extinguished and damage confined to the stove.

Grass Fire. On Friday evening, firefighters responded to a report of grass and brush burning along the east bound 210 Freeway at Mountain. Firefighters attacked the fire from the freeway and below on Evergreen. The fire was quickly extinguished and confined to a small landscaped area along the roadside.

OPERATIONS

Moving day has finely arrived. Firefighters will be very busy over the next few days moving furniture and other items to the temporary Fire Station site. On Thursday, telephone and dispatch services were switched over and personnel responded to all calls for service from the new site.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Monrovia Fire Department Provides an Additional Paramedic Unit in Town. The Monrovia Fire Department is pleased to announce that the request to convert Engine 101 to a Paramedic Assessment Unit (AU) has been approved by the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency. This change in status is a true benefit to the citizens of Monrovia, in that it now increases the number of Paramedic resources in the City from two to three. Assessment Unit (AU) 101 will now be stocked with paramedic supplies and have a State Certified Paramedic assigned to the apparatus, thereby allowing for quicker patient assessments and treatment modalities. We will be utilizing existing staff with Paramedic certification, so there will be no need to hire additional paramedics for this enhancement of service.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

This week, the Monrovia Fire Department hosted a special meeting with representatives from the Los Angeles County Fire Department to maintain positive relations with our fellow neighboring firefighters. Each year, the Monrovia Fire Department responds to over 200 calls for service under existing automatic aid and mutual aid agreements. We here in Monrovia are always looking to assure the best possible service delivery to our residents and business owners, as well as those in surrounding jurisdictions, and these agreements are one of the best tools in our arsenal. They allow for seamless dispatch and response, common radio communication capabilities, enhanced resource sharing and

on scene agency cooperation. It is vital that these agreements remain current, coordinated and effective in order to guarantee substantial benefit to both agencies.

The highlight of the meeting was substantive discussion related to enhancing an already effective automatic aid agreement where the Monrovia Fire Department Water Tender would be available for response to a wider area of coverage within Los Angeles County Fire jurisdiction and the Monrovia Fire Department Truck Company would be included in the existing automatic aid agreement. In return, Monrovia would receive an Engine Company from LA County on all first alarm structure and brush fires. Details of these enhancements are pending, but the discussion was fruitful and positive.

ON THE POLICE BLOTTER

During the last seven day period, the Police Department handled 513 calls for service resulting in 130 investigations. Following are this week's highlighted issues and events:

Outside Assist – Arcadia Police Department. On January 12 at 9:30 p.m., Arcadia Police Department requested assistance on a containment of two armed robbery suspects. The suspects had robbed a business at Longden and Myrtle and fled into Arcadia. The suspects led Arcadia officers on a short pursuit and then fled on foot after they crashed their vehicle. Monrovia's canine officer and two other officers assisted. The suspects were not located.

Welfare Check. On January 13 at 4:07 p.m., officers responded to the call of an elderly woman who appeared lost in the 400 block of W. Scenic. The woman was 72 years old and said she lives in the City of Glendale. She was on foot and did not know how she came to be in Monrovia. She was very disoriented and confused, but did not look as if she had walked from Glendale. Monrovia dispatch called area convalescent homes, but no one reported anyone missing from their facility. The reporting party said she heard on a radio broadcast that an elderly woman was missing from the City of Glendale. Glendale Police Department was called and they confirmed the missing adult lives in their city. Glendale Police Department responded and took the woman back to her home.

Warrant Arrest / Vehicle Storage. On January 15 at 11:56 p.m., an officer was patrolling the area of Patrician Way and Alta Vista when he came across an illegally parked vehicle in the posted No Parking Zone. The vehicle was running and was occupied by a 19 year-old male driver and a 17-year-old female passenger. A computer check revealed the driver had a warrant for Possession of Marijuana, so he was arrested and his vehicle towed. The juvenile was released to her parents.

DUI Hit & Run Traffic Collision / Resisting Arrest. On January 16 at 2:40 a.m., a vehicle crashed into another vehicle, a fire hydrant, and a shopping center's sign at Huntington and the 210 Freeway, then the driver fled the scene. Officers located the suspect a couple blocks from the scene with obvious collision damage to his vehicle. The suspect was still attempting to flee; however, his vehicle was not drivable. While the officer was attempting to handcuff the suspect after placing him under arrest, the suspect resisted and struggled free from the officer's control hold and began running. Two officers chased the suspect and caught him. He attempted to bite one of the officers to get away. The officers gained control of the suspect and he was taken into custody without further incident. The suspect is a known gang member and was found to be driving under the influence.

Residential Burglary Arrest. On January 17 at 10:36 a.m., officers responded to an apartment complex in the 300 block of West Lemon. A caller reported a male subject looking into windows of different apartments. The officers arrived and discovered an open door to one of the apartments. An officer noticed a duffel bag near the front door. The duffel bag had items inside it and it appeared suspicious. The officers established a perimeter around the apartment and flushed out the suspect. The suspect was a male juvenile who had been arrested approximately two months ago for attempted burglary. The duffel bag contained items from inside the apartment, along with others that did not

belong to the apartment. The suspect was arrested and transported to the Eastlake Juvenile Detention Center.

Residential Burglary. On January 17 at 3:21 p.m., a resident in the 300 block of West Palm returned home and discovered their home had been broken into. The resident called the police. Officers responded and set up a containment. The officers searched the interior of the house, but the suspect had already fled. Items taken from this burglary were found inside a duffel bag located at the scene of the above listed burglary incident. In fact, the duffel bag itself was taken from the Palm burglary. The suspect from the Lemon burglary was charged with this burglary, as well.



ENGINEERING:

Myrtle Avenue Streetscape Project Update: The rainstorm on Wednesday did not restrict the pouring of the decorative crosswalks at Colorado and Myrtle and the south leg of Lemon and Myrtle, which opened to full traffic late Thursday. Sidewalks, curb and gutter, and existing pavement will be removed from the 300 and 400 blocks on the east side of Myrtle at the end of this week, and the installation of the underground conduits will follow for the electrical and irrigation systems. Wiring and installation of the new street lights is currently taking place and will be completed in a few days; at that time, all street lights in the downtown area will be operational.

Colorado Commons Update: The excavation for the foundation is complete and the concrete is being filled. Minor grading operations will continue as footing material is removed and placed on the stock pile. This material will be re-used for backfill against the soon to be completed retaining walls. There will be additional concrete trucks in and out of the site as the project begins to come out of the ground.

Wildrose Street Improvements: The road closure on Wildrose is still in affect to through traffic with the detour on Parkrose and Oakleaf. Affected residents will be allowed access. The street work is progressing on schedule; concrete curbs and gutter are being poured on Thursday with paving being installed next week.

OPERATIONS – Environmental Services – Facilities – Parks:

Monrovia Office Recycling Effort Program (M.O.R.E): After a long hiatus, the M.O.R.E program will be returning for 2007 and is scheduled to start Tuesday, February 6. The program's goal is to promote more recycling, reuse and recycled content product procurement among City employees at the office and at home. The program will consist of three different contests that revolve around recycling and recycling education.

Barney Glenn Ball Field: The Barney Glenn Ball Field Restrooms and Announcer's Booth Renovation and Upgrade Project is 95% complete. The exterior received its final coat of stucco and the new steel staircase should be completed this week. Interior walls should be complete within another week and we look forward to having this building ready for use about mid February.

Corporate Yard PW Administrative Office Project. Pre-construction meetings have been held with the General Contractor (H.C. Olsen, a Monrovia company) and a start date of Monday, January 22 has been established. This project is anticipated to take eight months for completion and will provide new office space for the Public Works Administrative Group, which will move from City Hall to the new offices at the Corporate Yard.

Fire Station #1 Renovation Project: Pre-construction meetings were held with G.B. Construction, the General Contractor for this project. The project's start date is Monday, January 29, leaving one more week for Fire Department staff to complete the relocation to their temporary quarters at the corner of Olive and Ivy Avenues. Facilities staff has been working closely with Fire staff to assist them in setting up their temporary quarters. This renovation project should take approximately six months to complete.

UTILITIES

Customer Service:

- Staff read and recorded 2,477 water meters.
- Completed 47 work orders.
- Delivered 140 shut-off notices.
- Replaced 26 water meters.
- Reactivated 16 water services.

Water Production: Water consumption is 43.5 millions gallons which is the average water usage at this time of the year.

Utility Maintenance:

- Fifty-eight water main system valves were inspected and operated.
- 13,500 feet of sewer mains were cleaned.
- Eighteen underground service alert's utility location requests were completed.
- The fire hydrant at 951 W. Huntington Drive was damaged by a hit and run motorist and was replaced with a new hydrant and returned to service on the same day.

Have a great weekend!

FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

Fri., Jan 19, 5:30 p.m.	Chamber Installation, Iris Award Dinner, Four Points Hotel
Fri., Feb., 3, 5:30 p.m.	Boys & Girls Club Annual for Love of Youth Dinner, Monrovia Historical Museum
Tues., Feb 6, 7:30 p.m.	Regular Council Meeting
<i>Monday, February 19</i>	<i>President's Day, City Hall Closed</i>
Tues., Feb 20, 7:30 p.m.	Regular Council Meeting

CMO ATTACHMENTS:

Monrovia condo project boasts East Coast feel

By Emanuel Parker Staff Writer

Pasadena Star-News

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- Video: [Colorado Commons construction](#)

MONROVIA - Developers of the Colorado Commons project near Old Town Monrovia said their aim was to bring a bit of the East Coast to the West Coast.

Each of the 72 units will have its own entrance, "as opposed to coming into an apartment-style condominium project," said Michael D. Barker, managing director of Barker Pacific Group, the developer.

"Which is significantly different \ is more in keeping with what one would find in some of the East Coast cities," he said.

On Colorado Boulevard just west of Myrtle Avenue, the project sits on 2.11 acres. It will have 68 residential units and four commercial units between 690 and 2,000 square feet, up to three bedrooms and 2.5 baths.

Reed Garwood, a Barker Pacific Group project manager, said unit pricing will start in the high \$300,000 range.

Construction began in October and is scheduled for completion in January 2008. The project's total cost is about \$40 million, Barker said.

He said the 68 residential units are "a mix of sizes, but with some orientation towards more family-type units with some two and three bedrooms.

"The four commercial units can be utilized by people who want to use it as a workspace or combination live-work space," he said.

Brent Funston, Barker Pacific Group executive vice president, said Monrovia has the amenities, shops, restaurants and boutiques that make for a vibrant urban environment.

"Which is an advantage for us over, let's say, some folks who are developing in downtown L.A., and they sort of have to sell the dream of a vibrant urban lifestyle, nightlife, retail, that is not there yet.

"It's all here and it's all in place, and we're just providing the homes for people to enjoy the community that's here," Funston said.

"The project mirrors much of the theme and historic flavor of downtown Monrovia," said Greg Sadick, project executive for SL Residential, the general contractor.

"It will blend very nicely while being a very new urban community for people to experience the lifestyle that seems to be a real trend today," he said.

Barker added: "This project is a prime example of the kind of work- live environment that people are looking for where you have close proximity to Myrtle Avenue, a very hometown kind of feel, where you can walk to many of the services you would want to be close to as a resident."

For more information on the Colorado Commons, visit the Web site at:

www.livecoloradocommons.com.

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Public pension bill grows

By Troy Anderson Staff Writer
Whittier Daily News

California taxpayers forked out \$10.2 billion for public employee pensions in 2003-04 and are likely to face even greater liability in future years, according to a study released Monday.

The study prepared for the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association by the Center for Government Analysis at Newport Beach analyzed 130 public pension systems statewide and found taxpayer outlays doubled from 1997-98 to 2003-04.

"State and local governments are going to have to put more money into these systems and that means less money for police, less money for teachers, less money for schools, less money for roads, less money for parks and less money for libraries," said Steve Frates, president of the center.

"The total payout to retirees up and down the state was \$20 billion in [the 2003-04 fiscal year]. That's twice the amount of money we spend on police services."

The 159-page study also found Californians paid \$37.7 billion in state income taxes and \$13.5 billion in police and fire services in 2003-04.

Government offices were closed Monday for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, and officials could not be reached for comment.

But Keith Brainard, research director for the National Association of State Retirement Administrators, said the study conducted on behalf of the taxpayer advocate group relied on "highly selective use of statistics to make its case."

He noted that taxpayer contributions to pension systems soared because of stock-market declines earlier this decade. And since 2003, Brainard said, public pension systems have gained about 50 percent in value while he expects that taxpayer contributions have hit their peak and will now begin to decline.

"I think their use of a particular five-year period to measure taxpayer contributions by state and local governments is somewhat disingenuous," Brainard said. "They don't point out that taxpayer and employee contributions had declined steadily in the 1990s before beginning to rise again in the early part of the 2000s. So they are starting from a low point.

"They also don't point out that employee contributions almost equaled or came close to employer contributions. So public employees in California are contributing to their own pension funds."

In many systems, public safety employees can retire at age 50 after working 14 years and receive a pension equivalent to more than 40 percent of their salaries.

"There are plenty of them that make more than 100 percent of their salaries in retirement," Frates said. "If they are in a system that awards [high percentages of salaries] or grants them rights of selling back vacation time and things like that, by the time they finish their calculations, it will be more than 100 percent of their salary."

In the private sector, employees in many systems can retire at age 55 after 16 years of service and receive 40 percent, Frates said.

In 1998-99, the average annual retirement benefit for a member of the California Teachers Retirement System was \$32,472. By 2003-04, it had increased 41 percent to \$45,804. In the same period, the average per-capita income in the state increased 18 percent to \$35,219.

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City to consider new RV rules

By Alison Hewitt Staff Writer
Pasadena Star-News

GLENDORA - A small but active group of RV owners is gearing up for an expected clash with the city over where they can park recreational vehicles.

The problem is, even months after recommendations were sent to the City Council, officials have yet to take up the issue. Tonight's Planning Commission agenda includes proposing new RV parking rules. But the commission is unlikely to tackle the issue: City Manager Eric Ziegler said staff will recommend delaying the vote.

"The Planning Department is still studying several alternative parking systems," Ziegler said.

Front-yard RV parking and storage was banned in 1993. But uneven enforcement fueled mainly by neighbors' complaints led city officials to suspend the law more than a year ago and to appoint a committee to make new recommendations.

Now, residents with RVs are worrying about the result, a proposal by the city's Ad Hoc RV Parking and Storage Committee. Composed of three residents who wanted looser rules for RVs and three residents who wanted tighter rules, the panel ultimately recommended the city prohibit RV parking in front of houses. That means not on the curb, lawn or driveway, said committee chair and former councilman Michael Conway.

"When you buy an RV, the responsibilities go with it," Conway said. "It's up to you to decide how and where you're going to store it, and it is not the city's responsibility to worry about the convenience or cost."

Several residents called and e-mailed Conway while the committee was still meeting to encourage him to get massive RVs and boats out of view, he said. But other residents - and some members of the committee - believe this is the wrong tack.

RV owners wouldn't be the only ones affected by the proposal. The committee's definition of RVs included motor homes, campers, boats, trailers, planes and disabled vehicles.

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