



From the City Manager's Desk

a weekly report from Scott Ochoa, City of Monrovia



February 22, 2008

Enough is Enough Strikes a Chord

Monday's Peace March from Duarte to Monrovia punctuated a month's worth of positive and meaningful community activism in the face of the unfortunate gang violence that impacted Monrovia, Duarte and the adjoining unincorporated areas.

The grassroots group Enough is Enough orchestrated the event on behalf of the community. This group is comprised of 12 men from the local church community and African-American community. Their message of hope and responsibility has been uplifting and motivational, and has resonated with members of the community from all walks of life.

The march itself was a great event, beginning at the northwest corner of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista in Duarte. The group embarked on the march after some opening comments from local civic and church leaders. Some 400 people then walked to the Albertson's parking lot at Shamrock and Huntington. As we walked, we received a great deal of support from motorists passing by.

Once we reached the parking lot, Enough is Enough provided hotdogs and refreshments for the marchers. There were speeches, prayers, poems and even a rap by a young artist. The event sponsors – especially Albertson's and Smart & Final – were also thanked for their support.

Enough is Enough has indicated that they are envisioning a number of future community events and activities. The City will continue to partner with them to help further their ability to benefit the community.

City Council Meeting Recap

For being such a light agenda, the February 19 City Council meeting lasted fairly long. The two items that took the longest were the two public hearings. PH-1 was the appeal of a Planning Commission decision to require a local business to screen its roof from public view if that business desired to install a cellular array on the roof; PH-2 was the continuation of a public hearing regarding the conversion of 32 apartment units into condominiums.

During PH-1, the representative for T-Mobile (whose cellular array is being proposed to be installed on the applicant's building), the applicant, her attorney and a host of friends and supporters all urged the City Council to overturn the Planning Commission's decision on arguments ranging from public safety to building safety to the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. This decision – to require the installation of a mansard roof design to screen the proposed cellular array from public view – was arrived at after this matter had already been considered by the Development Review Committee as well. It was determined by both the DRC and the Planning Commission that if the building was going to be allowed to house the cellular array, then it should be screened in a thoughtful way. And while the Telecommunications Act does remove a great deal of local government's discretion in matters related to the installation of telecommunications equipment, it does not entirely remove cities' ability to enforce certain design guidelines.

With respect to building safety, the applicant(s) stated that the mansard design was simply too heavy for the existing warehouse portion of the building structure (as opposed to the main office portion); thus, in approving the cellular array subject to this roof design, the City was essentially disapproving the project. However, since the initial DRC hearing, City staff had been requesting building/engineering information to help guide the discussion on roof design. Up until Tuesday night's meeting, nothing substantive has been submitted. Additionally, the comment had been made that the City was trying to make the building "something it was not" by virtue of requiring a substantial roof system. Quite the contrary, the building has been designed and constructed as a warehouse – not a telecommunication facility. The roofing system is quite adequate for the original intended use. It is the addition of this new use – the cellular array – that is triggering the requirement for the added investment. And, as it would seem from the public hearing testimony, neither T-Mobile nor the applicant wants to pay for this investment.

Still, at the end of the hearing, a gentleman identifying himself as a co-owner in the application offered up the opportunity for reasonable compromise. Mayor Hammond seized this opportunity to direct staff to work with the applicant in the coming weeks. The hearing was continued for 30 days, and I am confident that a mutually agreeable solution can be found.

PH-2 was also continued for 30 days. Mayor Hammond also sits on the Gold Line Construction Authority Board of Directors. As such, he has a great deal of firsthand experience in dealing with lawsuits from folks who live along the train route (mostly from South Pasadena) and who might be prone to litigation based on the sound of the trains. The need for an enhanced level of study was the reason for the continuation of this item previously. This time, however, the Mayor and Council felt that they did not have enough time to study the detailed report. The hearing was carried over to the second meeting in March.

Gold Line Moves Slowly (We Hope)

There has been much written in the last couple of weeks regarding the Gold Line's lack of progress with the decision-makers at the MTA. Without a doubt, the Gold Line will be built. The question is when. The project stands behind other LA-focused projects that are both more costly and less far along. However, an inescapable fact of the matter is that METRO is dominated by LA City interests. Additionally, with the State's budget seemingly growing worse and worse by the week, this could put a significant strain on METRO's already stretched resources. Still, I hope that simple common sense and an understanding that what is good for the San Gabriel Valley is good for LA wins out.

State Budget Looms Ominously

Speaking of the State's budget, reports now place the deficit at \$16 billion and all indications are that cities will indeed join schools, counties and state agencies in helping bail out Sacramento. We will be meeting with several sources in the coming weeks to better understand how deep the cuts may be, and maybe even for how long. Under Prop 1A that was passed a few years ago, local government resources are supposed to be protected from State takeaways; or at least the State's "borrowing" of local government revenues is supposed to be limited to twice in 10 years a second borrowing cannot occur until the first is repaid. Still, the State sometimes has a way of suspending certain requirements from time to time. We shall see, but I fear that the mid-year budget adjustments we made in December in anticipation of a State takeaway may need to be revisited come May. We'll keep you posted.

Sawpit Wash Updates

I wanted to provide an update regarding the disposition of the Sawpit Wash hiking trail situation. This month the City's attorney and the property owner's attorney met with a judge at a preliminary hearing on this matter. The judge agreed to continue the public's unabated access to the trail while this matter is under consideration and the case was continued until April.

An interesting situation has manifested in this case in that it appears that tempers between the property owner and folks using the trail are again flaring. While this may or may not ultimately impact the final disposition of this case, it certainly can make it drag out. Thus, my request to folks using the trail is simple – try not to engage the property owner in any way, shape or form, keep your dogs on their leashes, and try not to provide the basis for new complaints. I can appreciate that this matter has dragged on; however, it is important that we try not to let it drag on any further.

Also by way of Sawpit updates, please scroll down to the Public Works portion of this report for more information on the County Flood Control District's work in the debris basin at the top of the trail (as it comes into Canyon Park).

I have received several calls on this matter. Folks are not happy that the County is basically building up the earthen terrace along the east side of the wash. We are continuing our discussions with the County regarding their decision, and asking that at the very least they agree to landscape the terraces. We will keep you informed on this matter as more information comes out.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting: On February 27, an historic meeting of the Commission will take place as they will be considering the first historic district for the 300 block of Wildrose Avenue. Additionally, they will be considering the following:

- Review of a certificate of appropriateness for 252 Aspen to replace an existing flat roof on the garage with a pitched roof to match the house. The garage will also be sided to match the existing house.
- Review of an addition and façade remodel on the back of an existing building at 525 South Myrtle Avenue (Wells Fargo building).
- Review of a demolition of a pre-1940's house at 515 King Street.
- Conceptual review of a remodel for 419 South Myrtle

Development Review Committee Meeting: At its meeting of February 20, the Development Review Committee reviewed the following:

- An addition and extensive façade remodel was approved at 235 N. Encinitas Avenue with the condition that the final exterior materials will be approved by the Planning Division prior to installation.
- A tentative tract map and conditional use permit was forwarded on to the Planning Commission with a recommendation of approval for a new industrial condominium structure at 820 S. Magnolia Avenue.
- A wall sign was approved for "Coinmach" at 1617 S. California Avenue.

COMMUNITY SERVICES HAPPENINGS

RECREATION DIVISION

2008 Arbor Day Celebration: The Monrovia Youth Commission will host the 2008 Arbor Day celebration on March 5 from 4 p.m. to 5.p.m. at the Reads and Plays program location on Sherman Avenue (between Cherry and Cypress Avenues). The Youth Commission will plant a tree in recognition of the City's environmental accords. The event will also display environmentally friendly works of art created by the Reads and Plays program participants. For additional information please contact the Department of Community Services at 626.256.8246.

LIBRARY DIVISION

Literacy Tutor Training. Last Saturday, 20 people attended the Literacy Department's Tutor Training Workshop at the Monrovia Community Center. *Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles* collaborated with the Library to provide the training; their trainer covered topics such as tips for successful tutoring, ethics of working with an adult, and sample ideas on tutoring activities. Literacy Network invited all of their new tutors to the training, so about half of the attendees will become tutors in Monrovia and the rest will tutor at other libraries around Los Angeles County.

Semi-Annual Literacy Report: Literacy Coordinator Melanie Goodyear submitted the semi-annual report to California Library Literacy Network, the main funders of Monrovia's literacy services program. Adult literacy programs are evaluated by the real-world goals accomplished by students, rather than by reading level. Student accomplishments included: 18 adult students read a book for the first time, 12 got a job or promotion, five read a book to their children and four learned to use e-mail. These accomplishments are typical of the end goal of adult literacy services: to give opportunities for professional and academic success and personal fulfillment, all of which require reading and writing skills. Each of these accomplishments contributes to a prosperous future and an active citizenry for Monrovia.

FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Personnel responded to 64 emergency calls from 0800 hours February 13, to 0800 hours February 20.

TRAINING AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Paramedic units have been experiencing extended wait times at the emergency room when transferring care to emergency room staff. Fire Department personnel have had to stand by for as long as 2-3 hours when transporting patients to local hospitals. When people walk into the emergency room to see a doctor, they are experiencing wait times in excess of 4-5 hours. Part of this delay is attributed to a severe flu season.

Flu symptoms include fever, headache, cough, stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Most of these symptoms can be treated with rest and over-the-counter medicines. Other symptoms may include vomiting, dizziness, loss of appetite, and even periods of shortness of breath. If any of these symptoms persist one should consider making an appointment with their personal doctor, or go to an urgent care center.

There are many steps to take to protect against the flu. A flu vaccine is a good preventive measure, but does not always provide a cure all. Covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze

helps to prevent the spread of germs. Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs often spread this way. If possible, stay away from people who are sick. The single most effective way to prevent the spread of germs is to **wash your hands vigorously with soap and water for approximately 60 seconds after the possibility of an exposure.** If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

If you get the flu, stay home from work or school. Remember to drink plenty of clear fluids and get as much rest as possible.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

If a disaster should occur in the community, access to food, water and electricity may be limited or nonexistent. The effects of the disaster may be minimized if steps are taken now to store emergency food and water supplies, along with a disaster supplies kit. Each of these items will be covered in the ensuing weeks.

In an emergency, having a supply of clean water is a top priority, for drinking, food preparation and hygiene.

- Store at least one gallon per person and pet per day.
- Store at least a three-day supply of water for each member of your family.

In an emergency, drink at least two quarts of water a day, 3-4 quarts a day if you are in a hot climate, pregnant, sick or a child. If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today and look for more tomorrow.

How and Where to Store Water

- In a cool, dark place in your home, each vehicle and your workplace.
- Preferably, in store-bought, factory-sealed water containers.
- Alternately, in food-grade quality containers made for storing water and available from sporting goods and surplus stores and other retailers. These containers must be thoroughly washed, sanitized and rinsed, and the water you store in them, if it's from your tap, may need to be treated before being stored. Ask your public health service or water provider for information on whether and how to treat the water. Follow those instructions before storing any.

Avoid the use of:

- Store-bought water past the expiration or "use by" date on the container.
- Containers that can't be sealed tightly.
- Containers that can break, such as glass bottles.
- Containers that have ever held any toxic substance.
- Plastic milk bottles and cartons. They are difficult to clean and break down over time.

Do

- Change stored water every six months.

Alternate Emergency Water Sources Inside and Outside Your Home

Inside

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in—

- your hot-water tank.
- pipes and faucets.
- ice cubes.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off; then open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve at the tank and turning

on a hot-water faucet. Refill the tank before turning the gas or electricity back on. If the gas is turned off, only a professional can turn it back on.

To use the water in your pipes, identify and turn on the highest faucet in your home to let air into the plumbing. You then can get water from the lowest faucet.

Outside

If you need to find water outside your home, try—

- Rainwater.
- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water.
- Ponds and lakes.
- Natural springs.

Take steps to [make water from any of these sources safer before drinking it](#). You should not drink flood water. Avoid water with floating material, an odor or dark color. Saltwater should only be used if you distill it first.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Last night's Council meeting brought about some additions to the Fire Department as we were approved to replace two vehicles.

The first vehicle approved was a 2008 Chevrolet 2500 Heavy Duty 4-Wheel Drive Patrol Vehicle from Sierra Autocars which will replace the department's existing fire patrol. This emergency response vehicle is used primarily during the brush season to assist with brush inspections, fire patrols during "red flag warnings" and brush fire responses. The vehicle is also used for special responses, such as the recent rain storms in which sand bags were deployed to flooded areas of town. The new Fire Patrol will have emergency response capabilities and will have seating for four, in addition to a small water tank and pump for extinguishing small fires.

The second vehicle approved is a first for the City since the new green accords were approved. The Fire Department is replacing an existing fire inspector vehicle with a 2008 Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid vehicle from Sierra Autocars. This hybrid vehicle will meet the new green accords in providing fuel efficiency with low environmental impact. The car will not be used for emergency response; rather it will be driven by the fire inspector to meetings and various fire prevention related field assignments. The Fire Department is pleased to purchase both vehicles in town through competitive bid processes and look forward to introducing the new hybrid prevention car.

ON THE POLICE BLOTTER

During the last seven day period, the Police Department handled 536 calls for service resulting in 115 investigations. Following are this week's highlighted issues and events:

Child Abduction / Spousal Rape / Domestic Violence: On February 16 at 9:46 p.m., officers responded to the area of Myrtle and Olive regarding a 9-1-1 hang up. On arrival, the officer spoke to a female who had court papers giving her custody of three children. Her husband had shown up and took the children from her. Officers received information that the father had called a family member to pick up the children in El Monte. This was done and the children were returned to their mother. While speaking to the mother she informed the officers that her husband, whom she is in the process of divorcing, had raped her approximately two months ago, and that he had beaten her just last week. Hours later, the husband showed up at the police lobby and was interviewed. He was arrested and taken into custody.

Burglary Arrest: On February 19 at 7:53 p.m., officers responded to a business in the 700 block of East Huntington regarding a theft. Surveillance video showed a male and female committing theft from the business. At the same time, the suspects were being detained in relation to another theft which occurred in the 100 block E. Foothill. The male subject is on active parole. Both were arrested for the listed charge and a parole hold was obtained.

Outside Assist: On February 19 at 6:30 p.m., the watch commander received a call from a disturbed subject saying he needed help and wanted to kill himself. The subject was at times confused and did not make sense. After speaking with him for some time, the subject was convinced to give his name and address, which was in the City of Arcadia. While keeping the subject on the phone, Arcadia units responded to the location, found the subject and placed him on a 72 hour hold for a mental evaluation.

Grand Theft Auto / Hit and Run / Driving Under the Influence / Receiving Stolen Property: On February 20, officers were dispatched to the area of Duarte and California regarding a hit and run accident. A witness was able to get the vehicle license plate, which returned as a San Bernardino stolen. The vehicle was last seen traveling west on three wheels. While officers were enroute to the call, they noticed a vehicle stopped in the middle of the intersection of Myrtle and Chestnut, missing the front driver's side wheel. They also noticed a subject walking away from the vehicle carrying a 46" plasma television set. The suspect saw the officers and dropped the television set and ran west. Both officers gave chase and apprehended the suspect. Through their investigation, they learned that the television set was taken in a residential burglary in Glendora. Glendora Police were notified. The suspect was arrested, taken into custody and held for bail on our charges.



ADMINISTRATION:

Sawpit Debris Basin Clean-up Update. The County of Los Angeles Flood Control District continued with its process of removing the debris and sedimentation from behind the Sawpit Creek basins.

There have been several inquiries regarding the placement of the dirt from Sawpit Creek to the spreading ground just south of the retention basin. The County has been placing the removed sediment from Sawpit creek basin to the existing site since the early 1950s. The sediment / dirt removal from creek project will permanently add approximately 5-10 feet to the existing pad, terracing it back into the hillside. We have also received concerns regarding the bareness of the spreading ground. The County informed us that they have no intention of landscaping the terraced site and that over 200 letters were sent to our residents explaining what the project entailed. If you would like additional information regarding the County's sediment removal, log on to dpw.lacounty.gov/wrd/sediment/erosion_sedimentation.cfm

ENGINEERING:

Colorado Commons Street Improvements. The brick pavers were installed in the breezeway. Street lights are installed with scheduled turn on being coordinated with SCE. Asphalt pavement grinding was completed on February 18. Due to the rain, paving is rescheduled for February 27. After paving, manholes, valve covers will be raised to grade and striping will be completed. All work is being coordinated with the Colorado Commons construction.

Public Works Inspections:

- Colorado Commons Street Improvements; Curb, gutter, sidewalks, irrigation for street trees, street light locations, utility vault adjustments are continuing.
- Bus Shelter Construction, delayed due to rain
- 911 Royal Oaks, final inspection.
- California/Monrovia/Duarte, Framing completed, roof installed. Sidewalk removals marked for PW improvements
- 1419 S. Myrtle, all concrete walls are standing. Interior framing and roofing will begin
- 335 Genoa, Final punch list created

OPERATIONS – Environmental – Facilities – Parks:

Vermicomposting. In an effort to reduce the amount of food waste sent to local landfills, our Environmental Services section is raising red worms that eat about a pound of food scraps per day.

The worm bins are fun and available to Monrovia residents for \$55 and garden compost bins are \$30. Both bins may be purchased at the Public Works Yard located at 600 S. Mountain Ave. For more information contact Environmental Services at (626) 932-5553.

Street Lights. Facilities Staff continues to work with SCE and electrical vendors to determine the cause of power relay issue and street light failure at the blocks from Evergreen and California, east to Shamrock, and south to Duarte. The issue stems from the fact that the lights on Evergreen were installed in series, therefore, when one light goes out, all the lights go out. Additionally, the lights on California and Shamrock are tied into the lights on Evergreen, which draw excess power and can also cause the lights to fail.

Illegal Dumping. Parks Staff promptly cleaned up the area at the intersection of 5th and Chestnut where broken glass and a mattress were illegally dumped this week. Staff received a thank you by email from the resident that had reported the incident.

Graffiti. Five man hours were spent cleaning up graffiti at Recreation Park this week, where the Skate Park and Barney Glenn Field areas were hit the hardest.

Memorial Bench. A memorial bench, which was temporarily removed during the Colorado Commons construction, was re-installed on Myrtle Ave by Parks Staff this week.

STREETS:

Traffic Signs:

- Graffiti was removed from 60 traffic signs.
- Replaced and/or installed traffic signs and devices:
- Paint 28 feet of red curb at 419 W. Maple Ave.
- Re-install 90 minute parking signs on new light posts at 409, 418, 419 S. Myrtle Ave.
- Re-install loading zone sign at 408 and 412 S. Myrtle Ave.
- Re-install trolley stop at 404 S. Myrtle Ave.
- Re-install one-way arrow at 130 W. Lemon
- Straighten street name sign at 1600 block S. California

Miscellaneous:

- Patch potholes at Melrose and Hillcrest, 926 Highway Esplanade, alleyway behind 111 W. Lime Ave. and Mountain and Huntington Dr. southbound right turn lane on Mountain Ave.
- Remove illegally dumped furniture from the alleyway in the 600 block of S. Myrtle Ave.
- Repaired damaged sidewalk at the southeast corner of Walnut and Primrose

- Ramping of trip hazards at the following locations: 1611 Venice, 805 Naples, 401 Heliotrope, 417 Alta Vista, 600 and 7000 block of Genoa, and 900 block of Highway Esplanade

UTILITIES:

Customer Service

- 2,948 meters were read and recorded
- 42 utilities work orders were completed
- 1 service request was completed
- 6 water meters were replaced
- 22 water services were reactivated

Water Production

Water consumption is 35.9 millions gallons, an increase of approximately 6% compared to last week's reported water usage.

Department of Health Services Required Water Samples:

- 17 water system samplings
- 6 water treatment facility samplings

Staff recorded 0.3" of rain this week bringing the annual total to 14.87".

Utility Maintenance

- 1 - 1" water service was upgraded to copper line
- 1-1" water meter and box were installed
- 2 water service angle valves were replaced
- 5 underground service alert's utility location requests were completed
- 650 feet of sewer mains were cleaned
- 500 feet of sewer mains were video inspected

Have a great weekend!

FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

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| Tues., March 4, 7:30 p.m. | Regular Council Meeting |
| Thurs., March 6, 8:00 a.m. | Read Across Monrovia, Monrovia Schools |
| Tues., March 18, 7:30 p.m. | Regular Council Meeting |