

Comments at the PVE City Council Meeting 6/9/2015
Renata Harbison

My name is Renata Harbison and I live at 916 Via Panorama. Good evening City Council members – thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Two years ago I was an uninformed and inactive resident of our city. I took it and the governance of our city for granted. That changed when residents purchased parkland on Via Panorama and made an application to rezone it from OS to R-1. In the ensuing two years, John and I have made many public records requests, read and reviewed an ever growing stack of legal briefs, created an extensive web portal so anyone can access the records, attended court hearings and many planning and city council meetings. We are no longer uninformed or uninvolved – you probably wish we were.

As you know, our city was founded 75+ years ago to protect our extensive parklands from sale. The restrictions that were written into the 1940 deeds left no question – “parkland forever” and “in perpetuity” were dutifully spelled out – the restrictions were even tighter than those in the original 1923 deeds because there was a fear that the City would put parkland into play someday and they wanted to prevent that.

As you also know, in 2010, PVPUSD filed a suit to sell lots C & D in Lunada Bay. PVPUSD also filed an application to rezone these lots from OS to R-1 before the suit was even heard. Many residents objected to this precipitous action and the Planning Commission and City Council voted against rezoning at the time. Shame on the School District for opening Pandora’s Box.

On May 8, 2012, an MOU was presented to the City Council that involved 4 parties: the School District, the Homes Association, the City and the Lugianis at 900 Via Panorama. With all due respect to the City Attorney, the MOU was a carefully crafted document that involved a complex series of transactions, all dependent on each other. There were positive results – the School Board and the Homes Association dropped their lawsuits, the School Board agreed not to try to sell any school property (which is zoned as OS) in the future, the School Board received a sizable donation of \$1.5 million from the Lugianis, BUT the Lugianis were able to purchase 1.7 acres of parkland next to their home for \$500K.

I quote from the record (which John transcribed)

“...credit goes to one person, and that’s our City Attorney, who the public must know that she really spearheaded and brought together the parties after having talked to each of them and worked together to come up with a Win-Win-Win-Win situation.”

The City now contends in court filings that it did nothing wrong. I respectfully disagree. The MOU and resulting illegal sale of parkland was “spearheaded” by our City Attorney and hence the City is complicit in the transaction.

I urge all of you to read the transcript of the hearing on May 29th, to read the original court filings by all the parties rather than rely on A THIRD PARTY. I know that’s a burden, but I hope you will take the time to understand the positions of the City and Homes Association and come to your own conclusions.