

We Get Letters

- Apr 6, 2006

Week of April 6

Enforce lot merger ordinance

We have a parking problem in Hermosa Beach. You can't park at the Post Office, the schools or the library. You certainly can't park at the beach in the summer. I've tried to go out at night during the summer weekends down at the pier only to turn around and go home because there was no parking. So what do we do? We build more parking structures, add more street signs and lights to control the traffic spilling through residential streets. Give handicapped people their own parking spaces out on the street in front of their homes. I thought most homes had garages and driveways?

Our city had a wonderful vision in the mid-1980s when it merged multiple lots in order to preserve the character of the existing neighborhoods. What's happened to that vision? The parking problems all over our city, the overcrowding at our schools, these problems will never get better if the Planning Commission doesn't enforce the lot merger ordinance.

Big business will almost always make decisions based on profit, not what is good for the employees, the customer or the environment. I expect our City Council to make decisions on what is good for our neighborhoods, our beaches and surrounding communities. This increased density benefits no one but the builders. The problems associated with increased density are costing all of us residents and taxpayers. Please attend the City Council meeting April 11 and say no to increased density.

Catherine Landis, Hermosa Beach

Still in favor of Pier Avenue School

In Lance Widman's response to the option of reopening Pier Avenue Middle School, he describes "numerous discussions" and extensive community meetings and workshops that were conducted to determine the feasibility of reopening the middle school. After reviewing hundreds of pages of School Board minutes dating back to 1999, in only one instance was the Community Center discussed, prompted by Chris Miller.

According to city officials and the contract, the Community Center can be returned to the district at any time at the request of the School Board. Sharing the facility with the district would be a generous idea for Hermosa residents to consider. Keep the Playhouse, Historical Society and some classrooms for meetings while the school uses the rest of the campus.

Regarding state standards and requirements, those have already been ignored at Valley School. The state recommends no more than 600 students per school. There are 664-plus at Valley School. The

state recommends 263 square feet of outdoor open space per student. There will be 168 square feet of open space per student at Valley School.

The state pays \$5,000 per student; all we need are 20 students to pay the salary of added administration. The \$10.8 million saved in building a new gym can pay for extensive facility improvement, elevator and gym upgrades.

The cost of new construction has skyrocketed. Our students do deserve the best; renovating Pier Avenue Middle School, an art deco landmark, is a much better investment in our children's education and our community.

Miyo Prassas, Hermosa Beach

Caught in a time warp

To her credit, Jackie Tagliaferro has a long record as a concerned parent and education advocate in Hermosa's schools. However, it is apparent from her letter March 30 that she is caught in a time warp and a captive of her very selective memory.

The passage of Measure "J" allowed for the improvement of existing facilities as well as the construction of new ones to benefit our students. The modernization was successfully completed under budget. The May 2005 construction bids included a new library/media center, two science labs, a multipurpose gymnasium facility and two additional classrooms, with funding available to complete the entire project. Unfortunately, a neighbor group, CRSE, sued the district, forcing a six-month delay. This caused construction costs to increase more than \$100,000 for each month it was delayed. The two additional classrooms were eliminated as a result. It is disingenuous in the extreme for Tagliaferro and other CRSE participants to now disavow any responsibility for the downsizing of the new construction project and blame the gym for the consequences of their actions.

Measure "A" provides \$13.1 million to finish Measure "J" projects. It also makes significant additional improvements in our schools. It does this by extending the current bond for four years but without increasing the Measure "J" tax rate that 65 percent of the voters supported in 2002. Its passage will enhance the quality of our children's education, add to the value of our homes and continue Hermosa's distinguished reputation of excellence in education.

Lance Widman, Hermosa Beach School Board