

PEER INTO PIER SCHOOL'S FUTURE

Hermosa Beach owns an under-utilized former middle school comprising of 14 classrooms while students languish in overcrowded Valley and View schools. The 4.7-acre Community Center (formerly Pier Avenue School) is a tremendous community asset that should be used for the greatest good. Unfortunately, neither the city of Hermosa Beach nor the Hermosa Beach City School District are impartial purveyors of information regarding Pier's use as a district school. The city has an obvious conflict of interest in not wanting to give up control of the Community Center. District administration has a conflict of interest in that it would rather have taxpayers pay millions to build a brand new, 500-student campus at North School. It is in both the community that the only option is to rebuild North School. Just because the district and the city rattle off official-sounding documents as reasons why the Community Center can't be used as a school, doesn't mean that those documents actually contain information that would prohibit its use. The city and the district are counting on the fact that community members won't actually take the time to read the documents and will simply accept their smoke screen. Please investigate the actual documents yourself at RestoreHermosaSchools.com. -Myro Prassas, Hermosa Beach

STEP INTO THE ARENA

The negative campaign wage against Hermosa Beach schools has reached comical levels to those of us who take time to understand issues. It only takes a quick Internet search to see the extent school board-established committees went through to explore a variety of areas including budget, cost cutting, administrative restructuring, merging with other districts, and yes, facility needs and options. Having served on the board for four years, I can say firsthand that countless volunteers logged thousands of hours and left no rock unturned in the quest to solve a variety of issues that helped the district weather one of the most challenging economic periods in several generations. I believe the efforts were a success and Prassas' ongoing rock throwing

is an insult to their efforts. I agree that some solutions seem logical on the surface but must be dismissed because they are either against the education code, state law, or just not practical. Is Prassas implying our elected officials should break the law by pursuing illegal paths? It is also hard to follow the twisted logic that the district should utilize property it does not own and is not for sale rather than use owned property that is currently operating as a school site. I can only conclude it is not that there is insufficient data available, but simply an inability to comprehend the data. Prassas seems to have all the answers and I encourage her to run for school board next November. She can then be held accountable publicly for her options. I suspect she will choose to hide behind her never-ending letter-writing campaign and negatively, as is easier than being held accountable. -Jack Burns, Former Hermosa Beach School District Board Member

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

and gas drilling and pipeline project (ER letters, Oct. 16, 2014). But in his ongoing zeal for all things oil, he fails to acknowledge the true cost to Hermosa Beach property owners if they allow the oil and gas drilling. Maps and charts in the Final EIR depict health and safety impacts radiating from the drill site at 6th and Valley Drive for up to 1,000 feet. I asked a Realtor how many homes in Hermosa Beach were within a 1,000 foot radius of the drill site. Using title insurance, she informed me that just under 1,000 residences fall within 1,056 feet, or one fifth of a mile of the proposed site. Zillow.com says the median price of a home currently listed in Hermosa Beach is \$1.8 million. Multiplying \$1.8 million X 1,000, you come up with a total value of \$1.8 billion for the properties in question. According to the consultants who developed the Cost Benefit Analysis report, property values in the proximate area of the drill site may be reduced by as much as 10 percent if the oil and gas drilling project becomes a reality. ... Hermosa Beach property owners stand to lose a ton of money if this project goes forward.

OILONOMICS

John Szot offers a simplistic way of looking at the cost to Hermosa Beach property owners if they reject E&B's proposed 34-well oil

That's the real cost. Not only will the homeowners pay that cost, the Realtor who sells a piece of property will see his or her income reduced. So, too, will the broker and the lending institutions and ultimately over time, the city will lose in the form of reduced property tax revenues. Of course, losses won't be confined to 1,056 feet. And all bets are off with even a minor spill, explosion or fire. ... If we're going to look at the costs associated with this unhealthy and unsafe project, let's look at all of the costs and then let's reject this project on March 8. -George Schnelzer, Hermosa Beach

SCHOOLED IN DISTRICT

I do not support the current bond measure because the school district has failed to demonstrate that it can manage its resources in a prudent and responsible manner. In 1984, voters approved a bond to address overcrowded classrooms and outdated campuses. The funds were used to provide five elementary campuses and a junior high school. When enrollment decreased, the school district sold three properties for "decommissioned" one

In 2002, voters approved Measure J, believing the money would be used to upgrade the school sites and provide additional classrooms. The funds were used primarily to build a gym with two annexed classrooms. Many of the slated improvements were left undone. We are now being asked to approve a \$34 million bond (the maximum allowable amount) to address "the needs of the local student population" and "issues of overcrowding." ... The district has failed to prioritize how the funds will be used, provide an itemized budget for the recommended repairs and upgrades, or identify how each school site (including North School) will be utilized. It is indisputable that additional classrooms and campus space are needed to accommodate current enrollment. However, history has shown that our student population will continue to fluctuate. Consequently, before approving funds to "improve the quality of educational facilities," I want some assurance that the district has taken a significant amount when planning for our community's future. -Lael Stubbler, Hermosa Beach

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