

**City Council Meeting, June 20, 2017
Public Comments, Agenda Item No. 1**

**Submitted by: Gary Osterhout
Position: Neutral
Received: 06-19-2017 01:43 PM**

Agenda Item:

**1. 17-0230 Proclamation Declaring the Month of July, 2017 as "Parks and Recreation Month".
PRESENT**

Comment:

Parks Make Life Better. Posted signs saying "Parks Make Life Better," do not.

**City Council Meeting, June 20, 2017
Public Comments, Agenda Item No. 3**

**Submitted by: Gary Osterhout
Position: Neutral
Received: 06-19-2017 01:25 PM**

Agenda Item:

3. 17-0233 City Council Minutes: This Item Contains Minutes of the following City Council Meeting: a) City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2017 b) City Council Special Meeting (Closed Session) Minutes of May 30, 2017 c) City Council Special Meeting (Closed Session) Minutes of June 5, 2017 (City Clerk Tamura). APPROVE

Comment:

Reference: "Gary Osterhout spoke about Veteran's Parkway and tree maintenance." Actually, I spoke about the (i) lack of maintenance of basic resources and (ii) development and/or adherence to city standard and city staff's struggles to provide basic information. Both topics were briefly written out on the request to comment form provided to the City Clerk; I don't know why such objective info was abbreviated in the minutes.

Also, in respect to Item 10, s/b "Par" course.

**City Council Meeting, June 20, 2017
Public Comments, Agenda Item No. 9**

**Submitted by: Gary Osterhout
Position: Oppose
Received: 06-19-2017 01:39 PM**

Agenda Item:

9. RES 17-0086 Conduct Public Hearing Regarding Resolution No. 17-0086 to Consider the Fiscal Years 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan (Public Works Katsouleas). CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING; ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 17-0086

Comment:

Residents were insufficiently engaged in this process in any meaningful way. Any residential involvement seemed to follow the pattern of "let's not, and say we did." Conformity to the General Plan was more a lick and a promise than a substantive integration. I profoundly disagree with using any transportation funds without a comprehensive review of all available transportation funds and needs.

City Council Meeting, June 20, 2017
Public Comments, Agenda Item No. 10

Submitted by: Gary Osterhout
Position: Oppose
Received: 06-19-2017 01:32 PM

Agenda Item:

10. 17-0237 Public Hearing and Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Operating Budget and Gann Appropriation Limit (Finance Director Moe). CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING; ADOPT RESOLUTION NOS. 17-0072 AND 17-0073; APPROPRIATE; AUTHORIZE CITY MANAGER TO APPROVE JOB SPECIFICATION AND SALARY

Comment:

Totally opposed to a budget that adds 4 FTE positions without any staff reductions elsewhere--especially in a year that was supposed to focus only on CIP (regardless of whether such work on CIP--this wasn't as advertised). And, frankly, the support for the positions seemed to be based on an Excel spreadsheet that took about 20 minutes to prepare. So much for the candidate that spoke to the "unnecessary hiring of nonessential staff" in favor of public safety personnel.

**City Council Meeting, June 20, 2017
Public Comments, Agenda Item No. 13**

**Submitted by: Gary Osterhout
Position: Oppose
Received: 06-19-2017 01:16 PM**

Agenda Item:

13. 17-0255 Discussion of Historic Preservation Commission and Ordinance; Parking and Public Improvements Commission - Possible Name Change and Duties; Board of Building Appeals - Number of Members and Required Qualifications (Community Development Director McIntosh). DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

Comment:

I am opposed to the PPIC name change, as such ignores and depletes its mission, disempowers the commission, misses an opportunity to further government transparency and accountability, and limits fruitful community interaction. Please see discussion attached.

(See attachment)

Against PPIC Name Change
Gary Osterhout
Manhattan Beach
Former PPIC Member

I am opposed to the PPIC name change, as such depletes its mission, disempowers the commission, and misses an opportunity to further government transparency and accountability, and community interaction.

First, I suggest that you disaggregate this multiple-topic agenda item, agendaized each separately, and defer the consideration to another meeting—especially with one without such a full agenda. This doesn't have any urgency to it.

I further suggest that if you are going to limit discussion to one minute per item (or even three minutes per item) for the sake of engagement you should not jam multi-topic items into one agenda item). This suggests you do not value considered input.

Next, contrary to the Staff Report, the “primary activity of the PPIC” is not “to review traffic and parking requests and consider recommendations by the Traffic Engineer for better parking and circulation solutions.” And occasional encroachment permits.

Unfortunately, though, that is all the PPIC has been used for in recent times. But the brief of the PPIC is much larger, but it seems the commission is accessed only when the City needs legal cover, and is not used to its better extent.

Per the City's website:

“Established by resolution, the Parking and Public Improvements Commission is responsible for public parking issues, capital improvement projects, traffic management, activities within the public right-of-way including encroachment permits, undergrounding of utilities, and environmental enhancement.”

One would have thought that an objective Staff Report would have cited to the resolution (but as I've pointed out to the Council many times, Council and Staff seem uninterested in getting full facts).

One would have thought the history of the PPIC would be represented, especially to the fact that this commission was once named not long ago as the “Public Works Commission.” But then again this proposal is being advanced by people that have hardly spent any time in Manhattan Beach.

Shrinking the PPIC down to “Traffic and Parking” diminishes its potential for accountability, transparency and oversight. I suggest that instead the PPIC be put under Public Works and not Community Development, especially since Community Development has shrunk their own brief to building permit review.

As much as any of their duties, I see the group being the chief protector of our city right-of-way (beyond encroachment permits), which includes all environmental aspects including views and open space, light pollution, sight and sign pollution, noise pollution, etc. There will be numerous requests to monetize our right-of-way, and I want to know there is a group that is the jealously guarding our community interests against special interests.

I see the current proposal as again reducing citizen input into decisions, centralizing too much power and basic knowledge of how the city functions in the City Council and Staff. And because Council then becomes overburdened with additional oversight, that oversight gets lost and falls to city staff. Then city staff becomes the agency that really runs the city in respect to both policy and governance.

The existence of our commissions ensure that laws and objectives are reviewed in plain sight. That we are a city of laws and not men.

You can use the PPIC (and other commissions) to make sure that standards are being followed and if standards do not exist, then such standards are being developed. If standards are not actionable or accountable, or additional ordinances need developed or amended to ensure understanding, the commissions can flag those for council attention. And because the commissions are somewhat outside the election cycle and have a long tenure, the commissions can provide programmatic continuity and historical knowledge staff or council are sometimes unaware. Commissions can monitor progress on programs that council does not have the time to do. The commissions can also nudge the council when they see things are not being attended to.

As examples, here are some of the things I have recently been involved that I think the PPIC could have assisted:

- Pretty much everything on your current CIP list, more that just giving the Public Works list their pro forma blessing, but actually helping in developing and prioritizing the list. In fact, you could review agenda items year-upon-year where there were matters that came under PPIC jurisdiction where PPIC was totally ignored in the process.
- In November 17, 2015, you were provided a Staff Report that included information on how to “Decrease Energy Demand through Reducing Urban Heat Island Effect.” One of the objectives was to “Promote Tree Planting for Shading,” with one of the actions to “Work with community to develop tree-planting groups” The report said this action was “Ongoing, tree committee since 2008.” The tree committee had long before this report been folded into the Environmental Action Committee, and that committee disbanded long before this report was written. Point being that the PPIC could have both identified that error, reviewed this report, and acted to ensure accountability in the future.
- The above report also reflected that: “The City is not currently planting trees due to the drought,” although a November 2016 e-mail from the city also said they have planted 50 trees in the last year. The PPIC would be a great venue to inquire about such representations. Clearly the Council has no time for this as no one bothered to follow-up on this point that I mentioned repeatedly to the Mayor and again to the Council on May 16, 2017. Again, the PPIC could be used for environmental program accountability in absence of a tree or environmental committee, although I could see why staff would prefer to avoid scrutiny.
- I asked about standards for periodic chip trail jogging path maintenance and was told none existed nor would any councilmember deign review the current conditions. The PPIC could serve such functions.
- Last year there was group of residents complaining about street maintenance. That could be served by the PPIC reflecting the complaints against standards, and recommending different schedules and standards if legitimate needs were not met.

- A couple years back Council was asked to approve a private tent event on the Civic Center plaza. That should have gone to PPIC, who would recommend whether such usage was approved by policy.
- There should be more resident/city interaction in public in respect to even the mundane fence height, right-of-way encroachments, front-yard trees, etc. Unfortunately, the amount of money it takes to appeal to the PPIC is cost-prohibitive, which not only deprives of due-process but no doubt engenders some animus against the city. Frankly, I do not see the Planning Commission giving the due attention to such matters, as that group seems to focus more on individual properties and not the City right-of-way policies as a whole.
- I have pointed out that our tree-trimming objectives are not be served by Public Works (e.g., over 25% trimmed in one year; no annual maintenance; hat-racking; no written plan). See also street trees at corner of 33rd and Blanche; eucalyptus at bottom of 9th street at Ardmore). As part of the 2013 Strategic Plan, Public Works was tasked with conducting an inventory of all City maintained trees. The inventory was to include all street trees within the public right-of-way, including those currently maintained by adjacent property owners. Davey Engineering was given the contract, to include GIS mapping. I have been told recently none of this has happened and that the inventory does exist.
- Which brings me to a more global point: No one is monitoring progress against our strategic plans, except to the extent that Council accepts any Staff attestation presented, without critical examination or review. The PPIC could provide this function.

A few other items:

- What gets measured gets done.
- To change the PPIC's name because it only does "traffic and parking" would suggest that you should also change "Park and Recreation" to "Salute the Troops Committee" and Cultural Arts to "Art Wall Committee." Point being that you should be empowering all your commissions to do more, and give you more information, than you are now.
- When you shrink the purview and power of a commission, you reduce the "bench-strength" of future city leaders. I view PPIC just below Planning Commission in respect to their expertise, brief and authority.
- What I propose provides 5 more people (not counting past commissioners) that are that much more invested in Manhattan Beach and can act as the emissaries of the mission, so increasing the knowledge of the community as to "what the city is doing." Remember, the category where most people say they get their city information is from "other people" (as opposed to, for instance, "Manhappenings"—after, of course, the LA Times).
- Perhaps this limits staff's "flexibility," but unless I can see where such "flexibility" is working to our benefit (and I don't), I think this is a good thing.

- What I am proposing certainly will take a bit of management to be sure everyone understands their roles and limits. But the ultimate result will be an open, resident-driven community, as opposed to an authoritarian, faceless entity.
- Ask yourself, is this proposed action better for Staff, or the residents of the City of M.B.?

**City Council Meeting, June 20, 2017
Public Comments, Agenda Item No. 15**

**Submitted by: Gary Osterhout
Position: Support
Received: 06-19-2017 01:35 PM**

Agenda Item:

15. 17-0273 Discussion of Potential Options City Council can Pursue Regarding the Paris Climate Accord (Mayor Lesser). DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

Comment:

The staff report might also include "Established by resolution, the Parking and Public Improvements Commission is responsible for . . . environmental enhancement."