

From: "Paul Little" <Paul@pasadena-chamber.org>
Date: October 25, 2008 6:58:09 PM PDT
To: <city_council@cityofpasadena.net>
Cc: <mbeck@cityofpasadena.net>, <mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net>, <dabendschein@sgvn.com>
Subject: Annandale Canyon Estates assessments and acquisition

Good evening.

I read the staff report regarding the acquisition of the Annandale Canyon Estates and imposition of an assessment district to tax the nearby property owners to pay for approximately 25% of the proposed open space. We at the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce note that the acquisition of the property is anticipated to cost \$7 million and that grants and the assessment only fund 60% of that. We also note that the staff report says the City of Pasadena has committed \$1.5 million to purchase the property, without any reference to what fund would be tapped to pay that significant expense.

Further, your staff assessment of the property makes it very clear that there are limited opportunities to access the property, so the assertions that the property would somehow become publicly available are unable to be realized. Your staff assessment says there is no opportunity to build parking, and no trails are in place or planned for the area. It is also inaccessible from west due to property ownership by other utility companies.

We have to note that, despite neighborhood assertions, we seriously doubt there would be anything but opposition from the neighbors should the City of Pasadena decide to build parking areas and provide public access to the land. (I would remind those who were on the Council at the time of the assertions of Madia Street residents and the Linda Vista Annandale Association regarding vacation of that street and how those promises were forgotten when the association and the neighbors were asked to honor their commitment to the agreed-upon compromise.)

While we do appreciate the neighbors considering a property assessment to help purchase the property, it is not appropriate that the citizens and businesses of Pasadena as a whole be asked to fund any of the costs. Previously, we noted that the expectation was that the \$1.5 million would be a General Fund expense, essentially a cost to the entire city, which had no chance to vote on their participation. If the Council feels bound to honor its commitment of \$1.5 million, we would urge that it come from fund dedicated to projects that do not impact the City as a whole but are instead intended for the area that will be the sole beneficiary of the acquisition of this property. Further, we would ask that the City's participation in the acquisition be limited to that initial commitment.

Finally, if the City of Pasadena has such a healthy General Fund reserve that it can buy inaccessible acreage for the benefit of one neighborhood, we would ask the Council to examine your reserves to see what funds may be available to help support local businesses that are feeling the severe impacts of the current financial crisis. Our restaurants, shops, entertainment venues, service providers and every other business that pays into Pasadena's economy could use some help from the General Fund, as well.

Thank you for your consideration,

Paul Little
CEO and President
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

10/27/2008
6.A. 7:30 P.M.