



“Accountability”  
The Government Watchdog

*Learning from the past is our responsibility*

*Enhancing the present is our mission*

*Providing for a better future is our vision*

# Vanguard

News Service Vol V

Week of January 10, 2010

[www.vanguardians.org](http://www.vanguardians.org)

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## No P.E.G. AUDIT

**Vanguardians Purpose:** To Inform, Educate, & Motivate for Involvement, Engagement & Advocacy



### **ANOTHER COSTLY LAW SUIT COMES TO GLENDALE: Marcus Cable (Charter) vs. City of Glendale COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF**

Case 2:09-cv-09094

WHEREFORE, Charter requests that the Court enter judgment against the City of Glendale awarding the following relief:

1. On the first cause of action, a declaration that (1) the Transfer Agreement imposes no continuing obligations on Charter and vests Glendale with no ownership interest in any communications facilities provided by Charter, and (2) Glendale has no right to free cable modem services or free use of any of Charter's communications facilities, including the I-Net capacity;
2. On the second cause of action, a declaration that Glendale has unreasonably refused to grant Charter consent for its proposed educational and government access channel reassignment, and that Charter has the right to go forward with such reassignment;
3. Costs of suit incurred herein;
4. Reasonable attorneys' fees and costs according to proof; and
5. All such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

The Reader is encouraged to read the entire complaint along with the exhibits.

### **A QUOTE FROM A LETTER TO CITY MANAGER JIM STARBIRD FROM CHARTER ON JANUARY 9, 2009:**

“We are at a loss to understand why the City would be willing to reject a deal that would provide the City and its residents with substantial benefits, worth many millions dollars, on the sole grounds that Charter is unwilling to waive its right to challenge the City's expenditure of PEG Access fees to the extent such expenditure may be unlawful, Such a claim is entirely preventable by the City's compliance with the law - something that really should not even be in question.”

Charter responded to a Vanguard inquiry: – **“I can't answer your specific questions, since this matter is the subject of a pending lawsuit. However, I can tell you that we are confident that Charter is no longer obligated to provide the City's extensive communications network for free and we are defending our rights in court.**

**We are also asking the court to clarify that Charter may move forward with planned advancements and programming upgrades for our Glendale customers. We are committed to providing education and government (EG) programming for our customers to continue to enjoy and reassigning certain EG channels will help us to meet our customer's expectations for expanded high-definition and digital programming.”**

Glendale News Press missed the boat again regarding the \$1Million claim of Marcus vs. City of Glendale. The suit specified declaratory relief. You can find the documents at Vanguardians website.

**WEAVER SAYS HE DID NOTHING ILLEGAL...** even though he paid a financial penalty for money laundering. You will enjoy watching this clip from a Glendale City Council meeting.

Democratic Assemblyman **Paul Krekorian** is set to step down to take a job on the **Los Angeles City Council**. Krekorian [won that seat](#) in a Dec. 8 special election, but his resignation was postponed until the results were certified. The governor will have two weeks to call a special election to fill that seat in the 43rd Assembly District. Adrin Nazarian took his hat out of the ring to stay with Council member Krekorian as his Chief of Staff. That narrows the field to just two, Gatto and Westfall. So far no one else has officially filed a [notice of intention](#).



**DR. JOHN KRAFT, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE WHITEHOUSE ON THE ECONOMY AND THE JOB INITIATIVE AND HIS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS they begin the first session on job creation. Next week Vanguard will post the report.**

From the left Ruth Wilner, Sam Robles, Dr. Kraft, Barry Allen, and Francisco Alonso.

## FRIDAY BUSINESS BREAKFAST

Join us on January 15<sup>th</sup> at Foxy's

**We direct people to the appropriate resources, empower them to engage with their local government, and from those who have attended, given them hope and some good humor. It is an excellent way to start the weekend.**

**Vanguard is published independently by** *Vanguardians, Inc.* Advocating for Accountability— Our vision is to live in a community where all people can enjoy accountability, integrity, effectiveness and responsiveness from our government.

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# 1 COMMENTARY

*You may agree or disagree with the views below. Feel free to comment on them.*

## From the Publisher... ONCE A POL...FOREVER A POL



Participating in and watching Council meetings demonstrates to me the lightweights we elect. And the manipulators they hire. For instance in Glendale on Tuesday evening Council fawned over each other for what seemed to be interminable hours regarding the community gardens. They asked questions about numbers and thrived on the anecdotes that the head of what used to be Neighborhood Services provided. They were excited about the use of recycled water yet when Aram Kazazian asked to have recycled water for their subdivision he was told, "no way," even though Mountain was being rebuilt for the community college. There is just no vision.

When the bond issue findings came before the joint meeting the only intelligent questions came from Mr. Najarian. Under the concept that questions aren't good Mayor Drayman should be encouraging the voters to ax Najarian in 2013. Apparently Ara didn't call in staff for a personal explanation.

Herbert Molano spoke on some major issues involving quality of life indicators and the failure of the CAFR to present a good 10 year comparison perspective as does Burbank.

It is sad to see that this Council has little or no knowledge of City finances or budgets; borrowing or bill paying; lawsuits and claims as well as running a business with 2500 employees and growing.

Fortunately there are the Herbert Molanos who research and speak on the issues with facts instead of unsupported opinions, facts that show the real story.

Molano should be the one that Council goes to for information that is good for the public, not that only favors the City employee.

The public needs to ask the hard questions about candidates knowledge of finances. Anyone can put their finger in the air and get on the right side of cell phone towers, view or fence ordinances, pander to the voters, get elected and have a career forever. Weaver has been on the Council since 1997 and Quintero is next, joining in 2001 while he still had a contract with the Verdugo Job Training Authority. These people have not a clue as to how to rein in costs. Vanguardians invites those that are serious about fiscal reform to contact us and join an informative class. **BARRY ALLEN**

## COMMENTARY: CRYING ABOUT BUDGET DEFICIT SHEDS CROCODILE TEARS



The cries by city managers and city councilmen of "Budget Crisis!" Budget Crisis!" are often followed by "Budget Deficit! Budget Deficit". By now it has become a chorus of helplessness. When the public asks why, they blame proposition 13 as the source of their plight. Nothing could be as old and stale or further from the truth.

If you were to look carefully at the last ten years of the city's budget, the city management union and all the other Glendale city union members have done quite well for themselves. Staff increases in management are up nearly 40% according to the workforce demographics report and overall payroll expenses increased by 50% in the last ten years according to the city's financial reports. Not bad by any standard, but especially fruitful given the worst recession in 70 years.

Let's give them a big hanky to soak up those crocodile tears and let's take a closer look at their level of influence. For a long time the city has been increasing its payroll expenditures at a rate higher than the increases in property tax revenue. Proposition 13 did not shut the lid on the property tax revenue the city collects. The city's Comprehensive Annual Reports show that revenues from property taxes increased from 31 million in 2000 to 77 million in the fiscal year ended in June of 2009. That was a 148% increase despite the limits set by proposition 13 – a 2% cap annually.

In the last ten years, the city council has approved repeatedly major increases in the fees for enterprise services. The revenues from fees for city services other than utilities have doubled in that time. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association has been the main watchdog on the abuses by cities as taxpayers - ratepayers in this case - have been taking on the chin.

Glendale rate payers have seen their increases in the utility rates for electricity without a real public advocate to control fees. Only on very rare occasions has the GWP commission served the public as a watchdog like the PUC does for the private power monopolies. The Glendale city government has transferred larger and larger amounts from the utilities every year to cover their General Fund deficit. Virtually all cities do it. That's why in 1996 California voters approved proposition 218 to limit the way the cities try to increase their revenue (taxes) without voter approval by circumventing it with rate hikes.

Of all the cities in California that I've reviewed, Glendale stands alone as the most egregious abuser of rate increases and transfers to the general fund to cover deficits. Let's not forget that the cities' unions themselves had a big hand in creating the conditions of deficits by giving themselves (With city council approval) huge increases in salaries and huge increases in the retirement pension benefits (2001 and 2005) while lowering their retirement age. Those increases are now showing up in pension payments that on average are now 300% higher than they were ten years ago (Using five year rolling averages.)

Will it take a lawsuit to make the city of Glendale compliant to proposition 218? Will the city become financially prudent once again? My experience with the Glendale government is that they'll love to use the courts to prolong the status quo for a few more years. In 2007 the LAUSD was successful in their lawsuit against the LADWP where the courts declared that the utility could not charge more than the cost to generate electricity. The LADWP now has to return \$95 million in overcharges to the schools. Instead of appealing the decision, the LADWP settled.

Two days ago the Sacramento Bee reported that a Grand Jury investigation found the city of Sacramento had violated proposition 218 and declared that the city's misconduct causes a shift of the burden from taxpayers to rate payers and reduces the funds set aside to improve the utility's infrastructure.

From my preliminary investigation of electricity rates charged to the Glendale Unified School District, it looks as if the GWP is charging our schools rates that may be as high as 50% higher than those of Burbank, Pasadena or Los Angeles. That's an excess cost in the millions of dollars to which the city can be held liable. It is an undue burden on our schools and our school teachers at a time of enormous financial pressures to the school district.

But the higher rates are also impacting a large segment of the city's residents. The GWP December monthly newsletter indicated that 23,000 customers received payment extensions. Residents and business' in Glendale are very likely paying the highest utility rates in California while our city council demonstrates a callous disregard for the rate payers. It is clearly evident by their silence whenever I bring the issue up (Since March of 2009). How do the city unions control the city council? From my perspective, it takes more than just campaign contributions to wield that kind of influence.

The best answer to this dilemma, it seems to me, is through legislative action that will codify in state law a mandate that will compel government-owned utilities to charge the schools the average wholesale rate of electricity for their region. The justification is simple. There's been enough abuse taken by the School Districts of California for many years. Who will wield more influence? The California Public Utilities Association or the California School Boards Association? Maybe it is time for the Teachers Associations to take notice. After all, the jobs they save may be their own. **HERBERT MOLANO**

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## **COMMENTARY II: DAN KIMBER AND THE SHACKLES OF OUR MEMORIES**

For many years I've read Dan Kimber's essays and smiled privately at the common experiences we share. I too taught for many years and have fond memories of similar student experiences, but the story on the student who shackled himself to a desk and could not extricate himself was a dandy. It reminds me of the Glendale city council.

In my teaching experience I remember giving a short quiz to my accounting students prior to a discussion, when I found one student fast asleep on top of his test paper. I approached him quietly, while all the eyes of the class were upon him. I called his name very loudly, and he sat up surprised with his test paper firmly attached to his face. Apparently he had drooled all over his paper while in his deep sleep. That too reminds me of the

Glendale city council.

Like the kid with the shackles, the city council in 2001 shackled themselves and the city's finances to an increase of 25% in the pensions to the Police and the Fire Department. The only justification for the increase was to copy a California law signed by then Governor Gray Davis. All safety unions jumped on the bandwagon to force their city councils to follow the state of California into the pension precipice. In 2005 the city council repeated the mistake, but this time for the benefit of the city's Managers' Association. They shackled themselves in a way that they could not extricate themselves or the city without severing their political affiliations.

Like my student whose accounting test was firmly planted on his face after drooling fast asleep during his accounting class, a couple of the current council members have fallen asleep during the budget study sessions. In years past, we were lucky if some of them even showed up at all. Now with the budget problems on the front burner, the snoring has been replaced with the glassy-eye look. Still, the results on the final test results (The CAFR) show that they haven't learned much after all these years.

I guess that I'll continue to be a teacher to my dying days. But it will take the patience of Job to get these students on the dais to pay attention and not shackle the taxpayers with their imprudent ways. **HERBERT MOLANO**

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## NEW YEAR, SAME RULES?



Even though the holidays can be stressful, they are for many a much needed and highly anticipated break. In the final days of December we dig our heels in to get all the work done so we can glide through the air, coast down the highway or just remain still at home in peace, happy and fat. Hopefully, the last thing on our minds is the work we will return to, and until those last few hours of New Year's Day we compartmentalize beautifully. This year, we had New Year's plus a weekend to get ready to do it all over again, albeit, do it in a brand-spanking-new decade.

After a two week Holiday hiatus, the Glendale City Council was back in session.

Perhaps, at the first meeting of what some call "the tens", Council simply forgot that just because the 00's are out, they still have to carry the 1. It's 2010 and national unemployment hangs around the double digits while California deals with one of the greatest debts in its history. This forgetfulness was highlighted when the Council spent forty minutes of an hour and forty-minute fluff filled meeting congratulating each other on the opening of a community garden on 870 Monterey Road. While there was nothing wrong with celebrating the hard work of community activists who turned a vacant eyesore into a flourishing patch of sustainable and pesticide-free flora and fauna, the idea that the Council did not lay out some goals for the New Year seemed inappropriate.

The public however, did not share the same attitude. As though he had just watched "The Grinch" a younger resident reluctantly brought up the fact that, though recreational space was nice, a public pool built for six million dollars and maintained for half a million annually without any yearly profit, would ultimately cost the poorest people of Glendale the most. Neither a fiscally sound investment nor a proven necessity for the City, he argued for a private business to pick up the tab.

Next came a sixty-year resident of Glendale whose problem sounded nauseatingly familiar. As has been the case with many homeowners, he is in the middle of a paradox – He tries to maintain an aesthetic front-yard standard ordained by the City, yet, cannot do so because the very same city has set water laws and rates that won't allow any grass to grow. With a front yard that resembled the community garden *before* anyone touched it, his solution was to put down artificial turf. Like many, the City shut him down immediately.

When Oral Communications came to a close, Council only addressed the latter resident. Laura Friedman tersely stated that the artificial turf issue was a complicated one, and not something solved any time soon. The meeting ended without further comment and one couldn't help wonder if the first meeting of the new decade was simply just another day of "politics as usual". Sure, no one likes to break their New Year's resolutions, but couldn't the Council have at least pretended they were going to give up sweets and start exercising like the rest of us? Then again, maybe all they need is another week off. **LAUREL MILLER**

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## COMMENTARY: IS IT ART?



Councilmember Friedman wants Glendale to create an arts district on So. San Fernando Rd. Others in the City want to create an arts district on Maryland when Mann closes its screens there next year. Unfortunately, the available evidence suggests Glendale cannot create one arts district, let alone two.

First of all, there's competition. To the west, North Hollywood has a growing arts district. To the southwest, Silver lake and Echo Park have many galleries and many actual artists as well as a flourishing restaurant, coffee house and bar scene intended for artists and their admirers. To the immediate east, there is Pasadena, which has been promoting the arts almost from its beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Pasadena now has the Norton Simon and the Pacific Asia Museum within its borders and the Huntington just outside its borders. Pasadena has other museums as well. The city has a number of theatre companies, a large civic auditorium for its Symphony and other events, Cal Tech which sponsors a chamber music series and other events, private galleries, another flourishing restaurant scene and what many of us consider the best book store in the area, Vroman's.

What does Glendale have? There's the Autry, in LA just to the west of Glendale. This is an outstanding museum and is the first place I take out-of-town visitors to. There's nothing in Glendale itself that I take them to.

We have the Center Theatre, which does musicals to recorded music. This theatre group pleases large numbers of people with its pleasant productions but I keep wishing they would use live music, even if were only a piano, a bass and a drum. There is the Alex which is the venue for the LA Chamber Orchestra and the Gay Men's Choir among other things. The Alex does have poor sight lines from some seats but it is our best venue and we must treasure it. Finally, Glendale has A Noise Within, the best rep company in LA. Unfortunately, our City Council dropped the ball on this and next year ANW will be in Pasadena.

That's about it for the arts in Glendale. Although Glendale is a pleasant city to live in, for the arts Glendalians have to go outside our borders. But that doesn't have to be the case in the future. There is something Glendale can do with the cinemas on Maryland when they are empty next year. The Mann cinemas on Brand and the Pacific Theatres in the Americana show exactly the same movies. No cinema in Glendale shows the movies the Laemmle shows. So Glendale should consider turning a couple of the Mann screens into art houses showing independent American movies as well as movies from Britain and Western Europe. Glendale has a very diverse population. The presence of India Spices and Sweets indicates there is a South Asian population around here, and we have people from Latin America, Armenia, Iran, Lebanon and East Asia. The screens could show movies from Bollywood. Japan, So Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and the Philippines all have movie industries. While Mexico's Golden Age of Cinema is past, the country still turns out movies, as do Spain and Argentina. And the movies from Mexico's Golden Age are well worth reviving. There could be movies from Arabic-speaking countries and Iran, where so many Glendalians come from.

The shops on Maryland were built to be too small, a serious mistake by the Redevelopment Agency. Allowing businesses to sell goods on the sidewalk could help correct this problem, as could turning all the shops into a couple of big shops. And with foreign language movies, we could have these stores selling foreign-language books and DVDs, as well as English translations of the books and sub-titled DVDs. And those of us whose ancestors came from Europe may actually start enjoying the cultures of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Unfortunately, in terms of the arts, the City of Glendale so far has shown little imagination and vision and no ability to attract the arts. If we get a Museum of Neon it will be a sign this mind set can change. Otherwise, I see no evidence of change. Accordingly, in the foreseeable future, my wife and I will continue to drive to the Autry, Silver Lake and Pasadena for movies, theatre and galleries.

Before I conclude, here are some questions that need answers:

With regard to the development on Maryland:

Why does the City think it could be turned into an arts district when Mann theatres can't attract an audience?

Why does the City think it could attract anything when it drove away A Noise Within and a cartoon museum?

Why does the City think it can develop an arts district there and on San Fernando road as well?

Is the City aware that the stores on Maryland are all too small to support retail businesses?

Why do the Mann theatres on Brand and the Pacific Theatres show the exact same movies? Wouldn't it make sense to turn at least one screen into a Laemmle type screen? **STANTON J. PRICE**

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## Christian Arbid says: 876 Glendale foreclosures as of 1/8/10

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### TAKE ACTION – GET INVOLVED – BE INFORMED – SHARE VANGUARD – VOLUNTEER

## 2 Shout Box

ED – Letters published do not necessarily express the opinion of Vanguardians, this publication, the organization or Barry Allen. Names are used only when requested. Initials are used as there are people, believe it or not, who are concerned with retaliation or have issues before a legislative body. Letters will be published that are signed and are not hate oriented.



**QUESTIONS FOR SCOTT HOWARD:** There are several points that should be raised in Scott Howard's evaluation.

1. Why did he let the tree cutting ordinance go thru? It was unconstitutional on its face and any competent attorney would have realized that.
2. How much did it cost the city to back away from the ordinance?
3. On a case by case basis, how much did Glendale spend on outside counsel during the period Howard has held office?
4. Why was Howard's office unable to handle these cases in-house?
5. Who were outside counsel and how were they selected?

With respect to the water shortage, there are the following questions:

1. To what extent has the shortage been factored into the City's planning process?
2. Does the City make a determination as to how much any new development would use as compared to the water use of the site before development?
3. Is the City willing to limit new developments based on the water shortage?
4. Is the City revising its codes to permit the use of drought-resistant plants in place of lawns?
5. Is the City looking at using drought resistant plants on its own property?

6. Is there any way the City could capture water released from lawns into ground water?
7. Has the City looked at the environmental damage the use of Astro-Turf would cause? Elizabeth Kolbert wrote an excellent article on the problems posed by Astro-Turf. It appeared in the New Yorker.
8. Has the City looked at the amount of water lost by fountains of the type in the Americana? Caruso says the water is being recycled but a jet d'eau (water being thrust up into the air) results in a lot of water lost to evaporation. This is also true of standing pools of water. Ruth Galanter, a former LA City Councilmember, has looked into this issue.
9. We don't yet know who is going to end up paying for the water project that would bring water to So. CA. Has Glendale DWP thought about how this water would be paid for?

Contrary to myth, the Los Angeles basin was not a desert when the Spaniards first arrived. It was a marsh, fed by streams like the LA River which in turn were fed by water coming from the mountains. The streams meandered all over the basin. According to Mike Davis, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was estimated that the LA area had enough water for a little under a million people. Chandler and the other powers wanted LA to become much bigger and spread the myth that LA was a desert so they could bring in water from the Owens River. As a result of the Times' propaganda, people in LA believed that water was endless and developed a life style of big lawns, exotic plants and fountains. This is all based on Mike Davis' books which are excellent.

We now have to change our lifestyle. Is the City Council ready to seriously think about this?

Finally, I would like to know the following about the Americana.


1. Did it result in a loss of sales tax outside the Americana? If so, how much?
2. What is the current residential occupancy rate and is it high enough to enable Caruso to pay back the money he owes? Stan Price

**I READ THE RAH-RAH PUFF PIECE** in BusinessLife Magazine about Jim Starbird and how much Glendale has benefitted under his management. I do have these questions: Obviously, one hand of the city doesn't pay attention to the other or to what's going on outside the city. So apparently we are going to have two arts districts, one on San Fernando and one on Maryland. That's quite a lot for a city that has one theatre group and no galleries. Hotels all over southern CA have filed for bankruptcy and there's a great surplus of hotel space and elsewhere but we are going to get a new hotel and never mind how much water it will use. Has Starbird bothered to find out what the vacancy rate is at the existing hotels? RP

**FRANK QUINTERO CONTINUES TO BE AGAINST** any government accountability when, according to the Glendale News Press, he is against the need for voter approval when it comes to the local city owned utility wanting to expand to other areas. Thanks to Vanguard for showing those of us willing to eat our words that the decrease in the Utility Users Tax actually increased the amount of tax we pay on telecommunications. I also read the news Vanguard published last week on this voter imitative. How do you scoop the GNP? KG [ED – We look for the back story and don't just reword a press release. As we get no government funding we can be forthright.]

**IT SADDENED ME TO SEE THAT THE CITY** Council didn't respect Orthodox Christmas Eve Tuesday by respecting the religion of a large number of the Armenian population. I would have thought that especially Drayman and Friedman, whose extended families went through the Holocaust, would be more receptive to the needs of a pluralistic society. BG

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**Public Information**

"Just the facts"

[Home Page of Open Government \(???\) in Glendale California](#)


 Click to view the agenda [City Council](#) [Housing Authority](#) [Redevelopment Agency](#)  
**Meetings at City Hall (CH) are in the Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor at 613 E Broadway.**  
**Meetings at the Municipal Services Bldg. (MSB) are in room 105 at 633 E Broadway.**  
**Meetings at the Perkins Bldg (PB) are in the Conference Room at 141 N Glendale Ave.**  
**Phone numbers are in area code 818 unless noted otherwise**

**Monday, January 11**  
**Special Meeting --** Glendale Water & Power Commission – 4:00 pm, CH 548-2107  
 Commission on the Status of Women – 6:30 pm, CH 548-4844

**Tuesday, January 12**

2:30 PM CH Housing Authority – 548-2060; Redevelopment Agency -- 548-2005  
**Special Meeting** – City Council RE: Proposed Residential Window Replacement Draft Design Guidelines and Possible Enforcement Options for Properties with Replacement Windows Installed Without Permits  
6:00 pm City Council - 548-4844

**Wednesday, January 13**  
Zoning Officer Hearing – 9:30 am, MSB 548-2140

**Thursday, January 14**  
Design Review Board #2 --5:00 pm, MSB 548-2140

**Monday, January 18** City Offices Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday

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## 4 *Vanguardians*

- Issues regarding the Charter Cable lawsuit, Job Creation, Vanguard ‘Scoops’ and more were discussed. Each week we add a few new faces and have returning warriors. Become one. This is an excellent opportunity to share opinions about quality of life issues.
- Get breaking Glendale News by signing up for an RSS feed at [www.vanguardians.org](http://www.vanguardians.org)
- We need 2 working laptop computers with Windows XP. Letter for tax purposes.

### *VANGUARDIANS needs your Continuing Financial Support*

Please make checks payable to “*VANGUARDIANS*” Mail to: POB 11202 Glendale, CA 91226

Your contributions are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt for income tax purposes

You may donate online at [www.vanguardians.org](http://www.vanguardians.org)

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## 5



### *the Insider*

is a report from city employees that care about the way the City is run. As they are concerned about retaliation, their identities are secret. Vanguard provides them the opportunity to have this forum. The comments are their own.



Once again City employees are ahead of the nation in job satisfaction as it is lower than ever. We just can't speak up on any issues, even to improve service to the public, since the City policy is to just go along with the boss, not to improve. Our City leaders, council and executives, are quick to jump on any staff that even thinks outside the standard practices or political wishes. However, we have learned to just wait the situation out, since sooner or later good change will happen. But, just like homeowners are now stuck since they can't sell their houses, it will also happen in the future, that the young bright employees that are being wasted by the current City supervisors, will be free to leave when the economy turns around. By that point, the council won't be able to pay people enough to stay due to all of the bad feeling being built up right now. Maybe long term thinking now is what is needed. Too bad it is in short supply.

Looks like we will get to see the start of the promotions in planning at the 1/27 Civil Service Commission meeting. This will include what to do with the outdated Zoning Administrator position and a super position in Building and Safety created to throw current staff under the bus. Look for GMA support any proposal to get new members and the Commission to again rubber stamp whatever is requested.

Vacant, unbuildable lot owners that have applied for property tax assessments will find that the City will be protesting those reductions in order to create a taking of property. The property owners will be paying a higher tax and the City will offer to take it off their hands. Mr. Welch was laying the ground work last week when he spoke about taking those properties for parks and community gardens.

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## 6

### **THE ILLUSTRIOUS CITY COUNCIL MOVES IMPORTANT MEETING TO 2:30**

They will be looking at fines and fees for non-qualifiers. Like the fence ordinance there will be a tremendous number of pitfalls but rest assured that their decision will be costly for property owners.

[The Draft Guidelines](#) identify seven qualities of windows that help define their character and guide replacement decision-making:

- Window Placement (recessed or flush)
- Window Opening Configuration (individual or group)
- Window Material (wood, aluminum- and vinyl-clad wood, aluminum, fiberglass, vinyl)
- Window Grids (a/k/a muntins)
- Edge / Trim Detail (e.g. stucco bullnose, wood casings)
- Window Replacement Frame (for non-wood frames: block, nail-in, z-bar)

- Special Design Windows (stained or leaded glass, elaborate muntin grid patterns)
- After discussing these qualities, the Draft Guidelines present several examples covering the most common window replacement proposals that are reviewed by the Planning Department:
- New Window Installed in Existing Wood-Framed Opening
  - New Window Installed in Altered Opening
  - New Window Installed in Unaltered Flush-Mounted Opening
- New Window Installed To Replace., Steel Casement Windows
- 

## 7 NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

### [Sacramento County grand jury alleges city misconduct over utility funds](#)

By Robert Lewis [rlewis@sacbee.com](mailto:rlewis@sacbee.com) Published: Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010 - 4:11 pm

Top City of Sacramento officials failed to act on warnings that the city might be illegally diverting money from its utility funds to cover general government expenses.

That's according to a Sacramento County Grand Jury report released today. The grand jury investigated the city's compliance with Proposition 218, a 1996 voter-approved initiative that was supposed to ensure local governments didn't shift the burden of costs from the general fund to ratepayer-supported enterprise funds such as water, garbage and other utilities. Such funding shifts can cause ratepayers' bills to rise and reduce the money set aside to deal with aging infrastructure.

[Jarvis taxpayers group is suing Sacramento over utility fund uses](#) The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers' Association is suing the City of Sacramento, alleging it improperly used utility funds to cover general government expenses. [Read More](#)

[Alarmed over the spiraling cost of retirement benefits](#), Los Angeles' top budget officials have begun laying the groundwork for a June 8 city ballot measure that would dramatically scale back the pension benefits given to newly hired city employees.

The plan sets the stage for a showdown between the city's elected officials and the labor unions that, in many cases, helped put them in office.

[\\$47,140,000\\* LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY Proposition C Sales Tax Revenue Refunding Bonds Senior Bonds Series 2010-A](#)

### [OVERDEVELOPMENT AT SAN FERNANDO ROAD CORRIDOR CONTINUES; MITAA PLAZA PROJECT ADVANCES](#)



The proposed Mitaa Plaza Project is located within the San Fernando Road Corridor Redevelopment Project Area in the City of Glendale at 435 West Los Feliz Road. The rectangular 2.1-acre site is bounded by Fernando Court to the north, Gardena Avenue to the east, Los Feliz Road to the south, and the Costco Site in Atwater Village (Los Angeles) to the west.

The project includes a five-story commercial, mixed-use development, one level of which is subterranean. The project would include a 36,000 square-foot supermarket (possible Korean supermarket) on the basement level; 33,065 square feet of retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor; 5,025 square feet of retail space and a 25,000 square-foot health spa on the second floor; approximately 32,000 square feet of general office space located on the third floor; and 32,000 square feet of medical office space on the fourth floor. A nine-level parking garage, two levels of which would be subterranean, containing approximately 597 spaces, would be located on the western portion of the project site.

JUST IN: Firemen at Chevy Chase Fire Station #23 decide to pull out the fire engine to make room for their new Ping-Pong table. The firemen spend the remainder of their taxpayer paid evening breaking in their new toy and playing several rounds of Ping-Pong.

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