

WHY TOWN COUNCILS ARE NEEDED -- ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

Local government decisions help provide capabilities we need to prosper, and because of climate change, possibly, to survive. When we vote in state or national contests, we vote on conceptual ideas. Everything we do, however, is implemented through local action. In the best case, we would be deciding what we need to do locally to solve our problems and then telling Mr. Gloria, Mr. Peters, Mr. Brown and Mr. Trump what we need them to do to help us, not v.v. Many state and regional decisions often exacerbate rather than solve local problems.

What is the priority of a San Diego "climate action plan" that seeks to add 150,000 new resident sources of CO₂ in San Diego? Why are we planning increased demands for water when current needs for water threaten public safety? How does building homes and apartments for sale to offshore investors (and investment trusts) assist residents of San Diego communities? How can we pay the expanding pension liability, when a third of our labor force work for a federal, state or local government that pays no local taxes? Who pays the infrastructure burden for these tax-exempt employers and their employees? Why do we invest tax money in a tourist industry that avoids paying a living wage? Why are students in our schools less prepared in math and english now than they were in 2014? Why are many young people turning to opioid and nicotine addiction? How are S.D. wages affected by dual-citizenship employment? How will we respond when a major earthquake disrupts the airport, freeways, and sanitation?

Partisan politicians tell us essentially the same stories. Not surprisingly, they both draw campaign money from the same well: government employee associations, developers and corporate interests. When a candidate wants the support of a political party, they support that party's platform, which limits debate to issues acceptable to funding sources! In San Diego, our elected officials don't discuss rent control, land use planning, airport expansion or the Navy. Our security and the ability of families to succeed are swept aside. Instead of responding to traffic congestion, homelessness, unplanned and unmanageable urban development, growing street crime and dependency on fossil fuel that increases global warming and water imports that cause desertification, city officials talk to us about state or national policy. Being worried is justified.

Both Democrats and Republicans are networks of trusted associates and corporate affiliations. The San Diego Republican hierarchy is literally a private club, the Lincoln Club, which collects money from many of the same local and corporate sources that finance Democratic candidates. They will only listen to constituents that have organized to speak with a united voice.

Since, we must deal with concrete issues to survive and both Democratic and Republican office holders offer us insufficient or illusory choices, and since their caution about campaign financing makes it impossible for them to even discuss the priorities of constituents, communities like Point Loma need an inclusive political forum in which residents can discuss and reach consensus around issues we feel are important, and give Point Loma a unified and respected voice.

Democracy offers us this chance and it may be the only way we can address these issues. To use it requires organization and technology for easily informing and surveying residents about issues, like those mentioned above and others. How PLTC works will be discussed at 6 pm on October 24, in this room. I invite your participation.

Thank you, for the opportunity to speak tonight about Point Loma Town Council.

Putting Point Loma First

Rental housing shortage is possible only when the Point Loma market is viewed as something other than people who live here. When we define market as people in the community, market rent is what renters who live here can afford to pay.

“Market rent” is also a technical term used to project a future budget for a rental property. This number is based on comparisons with rents for similar apartments, taking vacancy into account and it also reflects qualities of the community that people who live in the community created over time. A community is more than topography, proximity and weather. It’s also the culture in the community. Not just schools, trees, churches, parks and libraries, but actual qualities of these things.

This is crucial about Famosa Open Space. Like this library, that open space exists because residents keep it the way it is. There are cheaper ways to store and circulate books but we wanted this library and that church, and not that recycle center. Open space is precious in all of San Diego’s established communities. These communities must be consulted and the city must consider destructive impacts of unnecessarily expanding the built environment anywhere.

Returning to the market rent conversation:

Since, the real market in an established community was created by its residents; literally its custodians, market rent should reflect what these residents can afford to pay, not the maximum an investor might get away with asking. Communities disintegrate when residents are made into commodities. Point Loma will be less livable if we abandon its values and qualities. Alienation follows, motivating addictions, criminal predation, vandalism and congestion.

Building Famosa won’t solve the affordability problem. For every apartment we build, a dozen current Point Loma residents would be evicted, because it doesn’t address the real problem. It’s not necessary to build apartments to solve the problem. We can use the same financial resources proposed for existing units, without replacing any qualified residents with others who don’t now live here. Mr. Lohla and Mr. Dick could help us set up a community housing organization.

This is nothing new.

Current owners of rental properties can charge the rent they need. Vouchers can be provided for existing tenants, with the amount based on the desired rent and the tenants’ income. A Point Loma housing organization can buy older units. Investors can still get superior returns. This way, every Point Loma renter, who needs more security around their housing costs, can be accommodated.