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Fwd: Public Comment: Letters to the Editor - BCHD Financial Failure

1 message

Office of the City Clerk <cityclerk@lacity.org>

Tue, Nov 12, 2024 at 12:27 PM

To: City Clerk Council and Public Services <clerk.cps@lacity.org>

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From: **Stop BCHD** <stop.bchd@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 12, 2024 at 12:15 PM

Subject: Public Comment: Letters to the Editor - BCHD Financial Failure

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From the Easy Reader News (11-14-24)

Mission shrink

Dear ER:

Five bond measures were on Beach Cities ballots during the recent election. All but one won. School bonds in the three Beach Cities, which required 55 percent approval, won handily. A bond to support the building of new police and fire facilities in Redondo Beach, which required a two-thirds vote, surpassed that mark easily.

The only bond that lost was the smallest one. It was for the Beach Cities Health District's. It also required a two-thirds vote, but did not even achieve a majority vote. On the most recent voter update, it had only a 47 percent approval.

Why would the voters say yes to much larger bonds and reject just one? As H. L. Mencken is quoted, "every complex problem has an answer that is clear, simple and wrong."

For most of its existence, BCHD has toiled in obscurity. Established in the middle of the last century, and provided a constantly increasing stream of taxpayer dollars which don't appear itemized on our property tax bills, no one should be surprised if much of the populace of the three beach cities didn't even know it existed.

Scrutiny arrived when a grandiose scheme to expand the District's services into residential care for the elderly came into existence. This irked the people who live near the District's property, some of whom live in Torrance just down the hill, because of the impact that development would have on their quality of life.

That scrutiny expanded past the project itself to the unsettling management of the District, including its squandering of a nest egg left to them by the last tenant of the old hospital that was its genesis. Those millions of dollars have disappeared, through a variety of means, to leave BCHD in financial jeopardy should no new source of revenue arrive.

For years, some have warned the District of its tendency to "mission creep," the expanding of services provided beyond not only its financial means, but also to areas that are only peripherally associated with serving the residents of our three cities. Those warnings provided the core resonance to the defeat of the bond issue.

It is time for dramatic introspection by the elected BCHD Board. This loss was not just about providing a relatively small amount of money to the District. It was a referendum on the District itself. The public is telling them to get their act together before they have the audacity to attempt to expand their services beyond their core mission. It is also a warning to never again ask for additional revenue until that retrenchment is done.

Bob Pinzler

Redondo Beach

60-year quake

Dear ER:

The failure of Beach City Health District's proposed Measure BC was definitely not a matter of its cost to voters. Larger measures were on the ballot and all received more support than Measure BC. The rejection of Measure BC by the electorate was a clear vote of no confidence in the current BCHD Board and Executive management. Voters have been left with no other means to influence the outcomes at BCHD except by cutting off the funding. As we just witnessed, no one will run for the Board. The general consensus amongst those qualified to run for the Board is that the mismanagement and financial problems at the District run too deep to repair. BCHD squandered \$14 million of taxpayer funds on pre-development activity for the proposed 100% commercially owned assisted living. Tenants in the 514 building have had little choice but to leave or plan to leave as BCHD panics about the ability of the building to withstand an earthquake. After 60-plus years of earthquakes, the Hospital building has sustained zero damage and zero injuries. Industry best practice gives it up to 25 years more useful life.

Voters specifically rejected funding for the allcove building that comes with a 30-year obligation for LA County SPA8-wide allcove service at the financial liability of District taxpayers. Did voters reject allcove? No. Did they reject serving SPA8 (1.4 million population) with District resources and taxes? Yes. Did they reject \$9 million to correct BCHD's blunder on cost-estimation of an allcove building? Yes.

Voters also rejected preparing the campus for commercial development. BCHD proposed demolishing the Hospital, filling the resulting hole and putting sod over it, and adding more parking at a cost of \$21 million. Did voters reject demolition of the Hospital on seismic grounds? Yes. Did voters reject spending \$21 million on work that the developer was obligated for? Yes. Did voters reject BCHD's Board plans for privatization of 3-acres of the campus? Probably.

BCHD has driven away nearly all public input by ignoring it. In a typical BCHD Board meeting there are anywhere from 2 to 15 attendees from the public. At the high end, that's one of every 5,000 adults in the district. Taxpayers have the opportunity now to force BCHD to put a stop to the allcove building, and the 30-year liability to SPA8. Instead, BCHD can simply use existing space and limit participation to District residents. Taxpayers also have the opportunity to stop BCHD from spending program funds on commercial real estate development on the campus. The Hospital can be selectively mothballed for cost savings, and resident-only programs can be housed in the former hospital or in rental space. Last, the \$2.4 million annually in executive pay can be cut in half by forcing each executive to have a normal span of control instead of just five employees.

This is an opportunity for positive change at BCHD. The Board and Executives have been operating from a place of fear, and they need to get on board with the recent rejection of their plans by voters. If they don't, then the next step might be to let the cities take over the District.

Mark Nelson

Redondo Beach

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StopBCHD.com (StopBCHD@gmail.com) is a Neighborhood Quality-of-Life Community concerned about the quality-of-life, health, and economic damages that BCHDs 110-foot above the street, 800,000 sqft commercial development will inflict for the next 50-100 years. Our neighborhoods have been burdened since 1960 by the failed South Bay Hospital project and have not received the benefit of the voter-approved acute care public hospital since 1984. Yet we still suffer 100% of the damages and we will suffer 100% of the damages of BCHDs proposal.