



Nancy Gardner Councilwoman



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Newport Beach, California

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JANUARY 2007 – the inaugural issue of what I hope will be a useful communication tool for all of us. I'll put in information that I think will be of interest and also throw out some ideas to get feedback. This first edition is pretty short; however, a few things have come up:

1. Water in Buck Gully

Buck Gully has been a focus of a lot of interest, both for itself and because it is a harbinger of what can happen to other watersheds as they are built up. Originally a dry, cactus-studded arroyo, Buck Gully is now a stream of urban runoff which has created erosion issues, affected the use and aesthetics of Little Corona and Morning Canyon beaches, and impacted the health of the ASBS (Area of Special Biological Significance). Adding to those concerns, a recent study has found that the groundwater in the area is now being recharged at such a rate that it threatens to seep into garages and foundations, one more reason to focus on runoff reduction. Speaking of that, great strides are being made in the Newport Coast area. Speaking with a couple of people who have installed the "smart timer" irrigation systems, they are so enthusiastic about the system and the money they save they are working to get their neighbors and homeowner associations on board with the program.

2. Newport Ridge Park

The City is working on an agreement with Newport Ridge Community Association that will allow the City to manage one of the two practice fields at the park. The use will be primarily for organized youth sports for Sage Hill High School, Newport Beach Little League, AYSO and Orange County Lacrosse.

3. Corona del Mar Crosswalk

The blinking crosswalk at Orchid should be functional any time. Apparently there was a long wait for metal stanchions.

4. Landmark Restaurant

The restaurant has been generating some complaints from neighbors. I met with one of the owners and the general manager, and staff has had meetings as well, to try and resolve the issues.

5. Environmental Strategic Plan

The city has become a leader in water quality issues, but there are so many issues that I'm assembling an informal group to brainstorm ideas on how the city can become a leader in other areas. If you're interested in participating, let me know.

Now the good part . . . WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Having gone through an election campaign, I think there are some reforms that would be helpful, and I'd like to get your thoughts, not just on my suggestions but any ideas you may have.

I heard two major complaints about the last election—too much money, too many signs.

TOO MUCH MONEY: Record-setting amounts were raised in this last cycle, disquieting many who feel that it discourages qualified individuals from running and breeds cynicism about the motives of those who do run. A reduction of the maximum donation amount from \$500 to \$200 per entity could help address this issue. Candidates would have to have a much wider net of support and/or run a more modest campaign (would anyone actually object to fewer mailings?)

TOO MANY SIGNS: Campaign signs are not only a visual blight, they are an expense to the city. Over 300 hours of staff time were spent removing signs from public rights of way where they are prohibited. Unfortunately, it's become a game. Candidates place their signs in medians, city staff removes them to the General Services yard where the candidates pick them up and put them out again. My thoughts include charging a campaign-sign fee to cover basic staff costs; the establishment of a time frame when signs can be put out; a monetary fine for every sign found in a right of way; and the destruction of such signs.