District 5

August Newsletter from Councilmember Jess Rivas

Hey Neighbor,

I hope you are doing well and staying safe. As always, I am honored to represent you and be a progressive voice on the Council during these challenging times. Even though the Council did not meet for the final two Mondays of the month, August was still quite busy. Here are some highlights of what I've been up to:

- **Voted against Unlimited Campaign Contributions** – A state law recently established a $4,900 campaign contributions limit for local elections, but allowed cities to opt out. The Council voted to direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance setting *no limits* on campaign contributions. I was the only dissenting vote. I voted against it because we need to do all we can to keep big money out of politics, especially small, local elections. Unlimited contributions will allow wealthy individuals and organizations to have an outsized impact on our races.

- **Extended the Pasadena Job Center Lease** – We approved extending the lease for the Job Center at 500 North Lake Avenue for another five years. The Job Center is operated by the National Day Laborer Organizing Network under a contract with the City and provides employment opportunities and job training for day laborers. It has served as a lifeline for day laborers throughout the pandemic by continuing to offer services as well as assisting with the roll out of the vaccine, COVID testing, and running a food bank.

- **Secured 105 Units of Affordable Housing for Middle-Income Renters at Theo Apartments** - The City is a new member of a joint-powers authority that acquires buildings to maintain affordable rental rates for middle income renters. These folks are sometimes called the "missing middle" as few government-subsidized housing initiatives target the middle-income workforce (i.e. nurses, teachers, construction tradespeople, and young professionals) who earn too much to qualify for traditional "low income" housing, but cannot afford market-rate rents.

- **Passed a "Keep the Stuff" Ordinance** – This ordinance will reduce waste by requiring restaurants and other food services providers to provide disposable accessory foodware items only upon request by the customer, and to require third-party app-based delivery platforms to include an option for customers to affirmatively request disposable accessory foodware items with their orders. Note that food service providers *can* continue to provide self-serve foodware dispensers and stations.

- **Approved the Arroyo Seco Canyon Project** – This project seeks to repair damage to our diversion and intake structures in the Arroyo Seco caused by the Station Fire in 2009 and convert a dirt parking lot into spreading basins that will capture more rainwater. We unanimously approved it, but also directed staff to take additional steps to make sure that the natural resources of the Arroyo and Raymond Basin are

protected.

- **Submitted our Draft Housing Element** – To demonstrate that a local jurisdiction can accommodate its share of regional housing needs, state law requires cities to update their local Housing Element. Housing Elements allow each city to prepare a community-specific approach to "how" and "where" housing will be addressed to meet the needs of the community. We recently submitted a draft to the state with the final draft being due early next year. Acknowledging that there is still much work to be done, we directed staff to submit our draft in order to keep the process moving, but also ensure that our final draft focuses on maximizing production of affordable housing and improving tenant protections, with specific and measurable goals and policies.

- **Amended Cannabis Ordinances** – Following the passage of Measures CC and DD in 2018, the City adopted ordinances that allowed a maximum of six cannabis retailers to open Citywide, but no more than one per Council district, and imposed extensive distance requirements. Subsequently, even though applicants applied for and received permits to open retail locations, they could not all find locations that met the one-per-Council district limit and distance requirements. The Council recently approved two amendments to our ordinances that should open up enough space to allow the remaining approved applicants to find retail locations. Once this permit process is complete, I am interested in exploring a separate social equity permit program.

- **Allocated First Half of Our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds** – Since the beginning of the pandemic the City has suffered a total economic loss of $96 million and expended $39.6 million in our response. Our current financial forecast indicates General Fund operating losses for the next five years and depletion of the General Fund reserve by 2028, which jeopardizes the City's ability to maintain existing services to residents. Thankfully, we have received $26 million as part of the federal economic stimulus bill and will receive a second $26 million next year. In light of the economic realities of the pandemic, we have allocated much of the first $26 million to offset losses we incurred over the past two FYs to put us on a better financial footing moving forward. We are also funding a number of capital improvement projects that were previously approved, but postponed during the pandemic. Finally, we are also funding a number of important programs including bridge housing for PCC students, our HOPE and PORT teams, eviction prevention legal services, the Public Health Department's Health Equity Program, and programs to reduce community violence.

Please don't hesitate to share your thoughts on the above or any other issues by reaching out to me directly at **jerivas@cityofpasadena.net.** I truly value your opinion and look forward to hearing from you.

-Jess

Resident Spotlight Zack Moldof

When Zach Moldof first came to Pasadena, he knew he wanted to get involved in the community. He saw that the city skate park at La Pintoresca Park was closed and realized he could combine his passion for skateboarding and his desire to get involved to help people of all ages.

Zack wanted to "create an environment that allowed people from different walks of life to come together as equals." Some see a skate park as an avenue for entertainment, but Zach understood the possibilities it holds. He envisioned a place to stimulate interaction

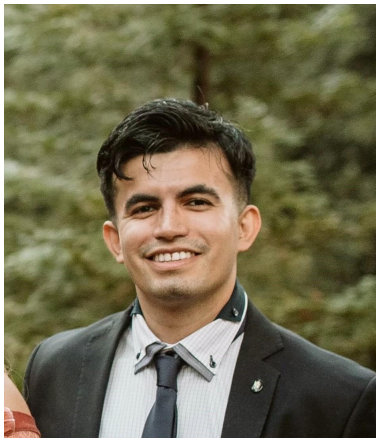
and dialogue among community members, a place to provide mentorship for youth, and most importantly, a place where everyone is welcome. Since beginning his work on the La Pintoresca skate park, the positive reactions and support from the community have encouraged Zack to keep working to see it to fruition.

However, Zack is not new to community engagement. He previously partnered with skaters to provide mentorship and products at no cost for youth through a City of Los Angeles program called Skate Jam. He attributes his ability to work well with children and young adults to being a father. He believes in finding a healthy balance between work and parenting, emphasizing that the latter greatly impacts the former. Zach says that raising his son has made him more compassionate and able to relate to children.

Zack and with his wife Tiffany, own a skateboarding company and have published books and a magazine with hopes of bringing a new journalistic voice to skateboarding. They even launched a free game, **Skate Bud**. It was created "by skaters for skaters and also for everyone else." Zach says, “skateboarding is who I am,” and he has found a way to not only create a career around it, but also to use it to make positive change in our community."

If you would like to be featured in a future Resident Spotlight, please **let us know**.

Commissioner Spotlight
Raúl Ibáñez



Raúl, who serves on the newly formed Community Police Oversight Commission, grew up in Mexico and has lived in Pasadena for over 15 years. He witnessed the hardships that his mother experienced as a single parent while immigrating to the United States. After joining the Upward Bound program at Marshall Fundamental, Raúl went on to attend and receive his undergraduate degree at UC Berkeley. Upon returning to Pasadena, he began working at Pasadena City College as an educational advisor for Upward Bound where he mentors students at different stages in their academic careers. Raúl aims to “show them how to advocate for themselves,” and find resources that will lead to new opportunities.

Working with students has given Raúl a lens into how students interact with and navigate the policing system. His experiences are even more personal as he has felt the impact of law enforcement from a young age, noting that “it informs how I show up and what I do for work.” Raúl’s says his goal is to bridge the gap between our residents and “people from the city who have agency to make policy changes in Pasadena.”

During his time on the Commission thus far, Raúl has received training on various aspects of the Police Department, including its structure and organization, as well as applicable laws and policies.

If you are interested in possibly serving on one of Pasadena’s volunteer commissions, check out this list of **current vacancies** and apply today!

Pasadena City Council, District 5
100 N. Garfield Avenue, Room S228

Pasadena, CA 91109-7215
(626) 744-714715
@PasadenaD5