



COUNCILMEMBER JESS RIVAS

D I S T R I C T 5 N E W S L E T T E R

Hey Neighbor,

It's me again, providing an update on the items that have come before the Council over the past month. 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. Here are some highlights of what I've been up to:

- **Opposed Unlimited Campaign Contributions Again** – A state law that went into effect on January 1, 2021 set a \$4,900 campaign contribution limit for local elections, but allowed cities to opt out. Back in August, the Council voted 6-1 to direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance setting no limits on campaign contributions; I was the only dissenting vote. This month, the draft ordinance returned for our review, but it was not adopted after an outpouring of public comment against it. Instead, it was referred to our Legislative Policy Committee, where it will be studied further. I continue to oppose unlimited contributions because we need to do all we can to keep big money out of politics. I look forward to seeing what additional work the Legislative Policy Committee undertakes on this issue.
- **Secured an Additional 480 Units of Affordable Housing for Middle-Income Renters at Westgate Apartments** – Earlier this year the City became a 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. Over the past several months we have acquired several hundred units through this process. This addition brings the total to just over a thousand and also ensures that all of the Westgate Apartments are included.
- **Appointed Cynthia Kurtz as Interim City Manager** – Cynthia Kurtz, a Pasadena resident, returns to City government after serving as the City Manager from 1998 to 2008. Since completing her tenure in Pasadena, Kurtz has worked as the Interim City Manager in both Covina and Santa Ana, as well as the Chief Operating Officer of River LA. She also served as the President of the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership. She currently is the Vice Chair of the Metropolitan Water District. We are excited to welcome her back and grateful that she is stepping up to serve the City yet again!
- **Approved ShotSpotter Contract with One Year Review** – ShotSpotter is a technology that uses sensors strategically placed around a geographic area to detect, locate, and analyze gunshots, and notify law enforcement. I am always wary of increasing government surveillance, so I am grateful that there was robust public comment and discussion at the council meeting on this item. I ultimately voted to approve the contract based on the strong interest from District 5 residents, where there have been numerous shootings over the past year. I am hopeful that it will provide more accurate and timely information to our first responders. We will review the efficacy and impact of the technology in one year to determine if we should continue to use it.
- **Rejected Grade Separation of Gold Line at California Blvd** – In 2018, Metro allocated \$230 million to the City for this project. However, after extensively studying the cost and benefits, our Department of Transportation recommend that we not pursue it and the Council agreed. Instead, we will develop an alternative list of projects and seek approval from Metro to use the funding for them. This is an exciting opportunity to fund other projects that are more urgently needed.
- **Approved Contract for Security Cameras for Villa Parke** – This project is part of a larger effort to increase security at 13 facilities across the City. In light of the number of shootings and other incidents in and around the park, the project includes cameras for both the Community Center and park grounds. There was extensive community outreach to neighbors around Villa Parke who overwhelmingly supported the addition of security cameras.

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



Commissioner Spotlight Tim Wendler

Tim Wendler and his wife Joanne moved to Pasadena's Washington Square neighborhood in 1995 after falling in love with what he describes as their "forever house," a 1909 craftsman. Since moving here, Tim has worked to better Pasadena. Early on and encouraged by a neighbor, Tim got involved with his neighborhood association and eventually became the president. He helped lead the neighborhood's successful effort to become a landmark district.

It wasn't long before Tim widened his scope to better the community by becoming a Code Enforcement Commissioner. He saw how important that commission could be for quality of life issues in neighborhoods. After completing his term, Tim went on to serve on the Recreation & Parks Commission, the 2001 Redistricting Task Force, and most recently, the Planning Commission.

Tim's favorite part about living in Pasadena is the community feel - knowing your neighbors, running into them at the grocery store, and seeing them at community meetings. He feels it shows a passion for our City.

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

Pasadena City Council, District 5

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