



COUNCILMEMBER JESS RIVAS

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

Dear Neighbor,

I hope you've been doing well. This edition will cover March, April, and May. But this is *amonthly* newsletter, not a quarterly one, so I promise to get back to our regular schedule next month. Please see below for highlights of what has come before the Council since March:

- **Adopted design standards in compliance with SB 9** – I support SB 9, which is a new state law that adds another tool to our toolbox for addressing the housing crisis by allowing duplexes and lot splits by right in single family zoned neighborhoods. However, it allows cities to adopt objective design standards for any new units (e.g. setbacks, height restrictions, landscaping, etc.) and exempts historic districts. However, there was a question of whether the exemption applied to both our historic districts and landmark districts in the city. Washington Square Landmark District and Orange Heights National Register Historic District are both in District 5– are they both exempt? Because our landmark districts *are* historic districts, we were able to work with the state to ensure that our design standards (which reference the exemption of both historic and landmark districts) complied with SB 9. Thank you to everyone in D5 landmark and historic districts who attended my virtual meeting on this topic in April. I was happy to provide an update on this situation and appreciated hearing your thoughts.
- **Opposed ending our eviction moratorium prematurely**– I did not believe it was appropriate to end the moratorium while our local and state emergency orders are still in place and while the Council continues to meet remotely. I would have preferred that we end our moratorium when the emergency orders are lifted or shortly thereafter. I will always be a strong advocate for tenants, who make up a majority of District 5 residents and the City as a whole.
- **Supported building electrification** – The Council voted to approve requiring electrification of buildings in lieu of natural gas in **certain specific categories** of new construction. This is in response to the role buildings play in local greenhouse gas emissions and the need to take decisive action to reduce current and future emissions. I strongly supported the measure and argued that it should apply to more types of buildings.
- **Approved water rate adjustments** – The Council approved water rate adjustments that will increase the system average rate by 7.1 percent to become effective on April 1, 2022, and adjustments that will collectively increase the system average rate by an additional 7.2 percent on January 1, 2023. The increases are primarily due to higher costs for operations and maintenance activities, water purchased from the Metropolitan Water District, and pumping and treatment of local groundwater, increased capital investment on infrastructure projects, and reduced sales due to the City's assertive conservation goals.
- **Approved construction contract for Washington Park Community House** – I was very excited to award the contract for the construction phase of this long awaited project! We should be breaking ground soon. The final design of the project includes a 1,627 square-foot community house building with a single occupancy restroom, storage room, staff office, multipurpose room and a separate 564 square-foot park restroom building with park storage. The design also includes a 1,000 square-foot outdoor learning space, patio space with seating, landscaped grounds and reconfigured parking lot.
- **Approved additional Villa Parke Community Center improvements** – The community center has been undergoing renovations for much of the past year. During this process, staff determined that additional work needed to be done: updating electrical and plumbing for the pool, re-tiling and re-plastering the pool, new condenser unit for weight room and boxing gym, repainting of interior of gym, new flooring and lighting in the locker room areas, and refinishing of auditorium stage and chairs. These additional items will now be included and the new target date for completion is August of this year.
- **Reviewed Police Department Policy re: Use of Military Equipment**– A new state law requires the Council to review and approve the Police Department's policy re: use military equipment and list of such equipment on an annual basis. This doesn't just mean equipment obtained directly from the military, but types of equipment that are commonly used by militaries (e.g. armored vehicles, unmanned aerial or ground vehicles, specialized firearms and ammunition, etc.). Based on feedback from the Community Police Oversight Commission (CPOC), the Council approved a policy that requires the Department to present any new equipment it would like to purchase to the CPOC and the

Council's Public Safety Committee; then it must get final approval from the Council during an annual review.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly at jerivas@cityofpasadena.net. I truly value your opinion and look forward to hearing from you.

-Jess

Commissioner Spotlight

Mari Berkemeier

Mari Berkemeier and her husband Sven moved to Pasadena after raising their family in Lake Arrowhead. Pasadena had been their go to place for shopping and entertainment when their kids were young and they grew to know and love the local architecture, green spaces, historic neighborhoods, and the variety of arts and entertainment available here. When they decided to move to the flat lands, Pasadena was their choice. They settled into the Orange Heights neighborhood seven years ago.

Appointed to the Senior Commission in January of this year, Mari has several neighbors who serve on commissions. Through them she learned that volunteering on a commission helps Pasadena maintain a high quality of life for residents. Mari enjoys her role on the commission because it gives her the opportunity to meet and work with older Americans while helping support their needs in our community.

On any given day, you can find Mari enjoying one of her favorite spots in Pasadena, the Rose Bowl Aquatic Center. Offering everything from swimming, diving, physical therapy, recreation and competitive sports, Mari swims and attends water fitness classes there regularly.

If you are interested in serving on one of Pasadena's volunteer commissions, now is the time to find out more. Check out the list of [current vacancies](#) and apply today!



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