

City Clerk's office: Please add this Written Communication specifically to the July 27, 2021 regular Hermosa Beach City Council Agenda under Oral/Written Communications. Thank You.

To: Hermosa Beach City Council (Mary Campbell-Collins, Justin Massey, Raymond Jackson, Michael Detoy, Stacey Armato), City Clerk Eduardo Sarmiento, City Manager Suja Lowenthal, and Contract City Attorney Michael Jenkins.

From: Howard Longacre, Hermosa Beach Resident

Re: 1) Defective City Council decisions, ordinances, contract amendments, etc., re: so-called California State-Mandated Organics vis-à-vis Hermosa Beach residential trash-hauling and billing.

Re: 2) Prospect Avenue "A Safer Prospect" dangerous fiasco.

July 20, 2021

Councilmembers and Others:

The comments made herein by me are offered freely, and they are entirely my views and opinions on all that I've stated.

At the time of this writing I and others no doubt have significant concerns re: the hasty and clearly sloppy manner in which the "Mandated Organics" stuff was essentially thrown together and railroaded through the city by the City Manager's 'environmental' staff with little to no concern of the residents and especially seniors to be paying the bill, now with evidently some 75% of the residents to be seeing a 55 to 65% increase in their trash bills for the same amount of trash being picked up next January. A hideous and obscene no-bid windfall for Athens Services!

Also, I have concerns re: how, evidently, non-professional individuals/consultants who likely were not street or highway transportation state licensed engineers, implemented the temporary so-called "A Safer Prospect Avenue" dangerous fiasco in the Hermosa Hills, again under the direction of the City Manager's 'environment' staff, i.e. Suja Lowenthal's own department, and not, i.e., the Public Works department itself.

The sooner the city removes all of the tacky blue-and-white graffiti paint that the out-of-state consultants so gratuitously painted on Prospect Avenue without any public review, in this high-end Hermosa Hills residential neighborhood, along with the stupidly and dangerously placed white plastic sticks on the roadway, and restores the roadway to its original condition, the better for all.

A net total \$280 thousand grant was obtained by the city prior I believe to the arrival of City Manager Suja Lowenthal, then also by a city 'environmental' analyst who herself evidently in the last 6 months simply got fed up with City Manager Suja Lowenthal's take-over of the city given Lowenthal's apparently subtle, dictatorial ways. The analyst departed quickly much as

other qualified and long-familiar-with-the-city employees and even a city director did due clearly to Lowenthal's ways and utter incompetence.

Additional monies were matched by the city for this Prospect Avenue "temporary" fiasco. During the workup to receiving the grant and since then over the last three or so years there's perhaps been a total \$340,000 wasted to date of taxpayer money on this token feel-good, but utterly useless, idiotic, and downright stupid implementation on Prospect Avenue, and in fact it's implementation has already resulted in at least one de facto verified traffic accident.

It's time to accept that this was a monumental mistake before a serious injury to a pedestrian(s), or a vehicle and/or its passengers occurs.

The project has accomplished nothing but to make the City Manager's 'environmental' minions in her department and the City Council itself look utterly foolish. It's time to restore the roadway to its original condition and end this nonsense, and also free these environmental employees to work on other more-meaningful fluff items or to release them if they are being paid as "temps", as apparently so many are in the city's staff, no matter their position. I will have more to say on this, the longer this Prospect Avenue fiasco drags on.

With respect to the above, following is a recent email thread that I initiated and which still may need to continue until I receive answers, however while verbose on my part I wanted to make all aware of the difficulties in obtaining information from the city since City Manager Suja Lowenthal has been permitted by the City Council to systematically destroy the city staff and isolate those remaining from the city's residents and business people.

With each and every employee Lowenthal has driven out, she's been evidently systematically replacing them with puppets, those to be directly under her control in the City Manager's office, i.e., those evidently also willing to ingratiate her. How sad and despicable is that? She's operating as like a queen bee. What a disgrace to the city and its former staff that this is permitted and implicitly tolerated by the Council.

Matters raised in this email thread commenced long before its contents here. I call on the City Council to, as soon as possible, fire politician-Lowenthal, pay her the 6-months' salary if necessary to get rid of her, per her excessive contract, and get a firm engaged to find a qualified, well-experienced real City Manager who also will live near or in this city. Malibu Suja, as she's now being referred to by others in city has shown blatantly that she has little use for Hermosa Beach other than a fat pay check, the gratuitous benefits, and the building of her own resume on the backs of Hermosa's residents and businesses. If those of you on council cannot see this then it's time for you to wake up and smell the coffee.

It's time also that Councilmembers Massey and Armato stop with their arrogance in being themselves, the self-anointed de facto dictators of Hermosa Beach. You two are absolutely out of control in my view.

Armato should have resigned months ago, and Massey, you should consider resigning today. You two have shown yourselves repeatedly to be sneaks of the worst kind. Never has Hermosa's council had two more-slippery individuals. You two are a sorry lot at such young ages, I believe still under 50. And when the two of you are gone from the council, if necessary

the three remaining on council should solicit from the many former councilmembers willing to step in for the remainder of their terms. Enough with amateur council members!.

And again what Massey and Armato did to the Council's former colleague, former two-term Hermosa Beach Councilman Hany Fangary, a duly elected officer of this city and the only one on council at the time (you pulled such a slimy trick) to be asking the significant questions, was reckless. What is it in your psyche that has turned you this way? You will live with what you did to your colleague the rest of your lives and you will find that you will turn 60, 70, and older, quicker than you realize. You will be remembered for what you did to your colleague and little if anything else if you are even remembered once you are off the council, and the sooner the better for Hermosa Beach.

Email thread follows. (thread is in reverse order)

To: Doug Krauss (Environmental Programs Manager, of Hermosa Beach City Manager's office)

Thanks Doug for this bit of information in your reply (immediately following), re: the outrageous latest sloppy-blundering by the city of Hermosa Beach, i.e., re: "Mandatory Organics" and the number of residential properties this is to effect cost wise.

Your information indicates that about 75% of the city's residential accounts are going to thusly be mandated to pay upwards of 65% more for their trash service, while placing out for pickup the same amount of trash. Athen's Services truly must be laughing their rears off at how they pulled this off so easily under this present City Council / City Manager Suja Lowenthal goofball leadership, or lack of leadership, and the lack of real analysis. Another railroad job with a nice windfall for Athens Services placed on the backs of the residents of Hermosa Beach and especially seniors.

If customers are to now be required to transfer their trash, bit by bit, some or all, from their black barrels to green barrels (at additional cost and storage space for more barrels), **the net overall cost should have remained the same to the residents**, i.e. the black barrels should have been reduced in cost and the green barrels should also have been reduced in cost, or provided at no additional cost if the black barrels were to remain at the same cost.

Why didn't you or anyone care? Why didn't you make this clear to the City Council? This, I have to say is extremely sloppy work, and the Council should redo the entire matter pronto given these changes don't commence until January, 2022. Clearly information was overlooked or not presented correctly to the Council.

It should not be me who has to drag this out of the city staff. The Suja Lowenthal City

Manager operation has failed the residents and the City Council once again! **The May 25, 2021 City Council Public Hearing was defective. The contract amendments are defective. Your work was obviously defective due to its lack of the true costs to be dumped onto the residents.** This is not what the state organics mandate intended. This was not intended to create a windfall for trash companies at the hands of lackadaisical city and county staff workups and lazy, wealthy, attorney-type city council members. It's really an outrage.

Now Hermosa Beach residents are to be getting screwed because 1) the city staff were evidently duped by Athens, and 2) the Hermosa Beach City Council just rubber-stamps whatever Suja's staff (virtually all operating from her own department and out of their homes mostly) while she herself is operating from a Smart Phone somewhere unknown because she's apparently too or too good to be bothered driving to this city that so-overcompensates her and her minions, the city she supposedly manages.

The best thing for the City Council to do (and it's long overdue) would be to fire her and most of her bloated operation that operates under her apron strings. She's unquestionably the most incompetent city manager in the City's over 100 year history. **Everyone knows it except those who are using her for their own selfish personal agendas.**

Also I don't know if you Doug are using a boiler-plate email response or not, because once again you stated, **"We want to remind that, even with the additional green cart, Hermosa Beach residents have some of the lowest trash rates in the South Bay (see rate survey attached)."** And again who is the "We"? Did you again state in your response since I pointed it out to you in my last reply, to somehow show some irritation to my comments? That's an offensive and ignorant thing to say to a resident as justification for anything.

With all due respect, did you not read my reply, or put that nonsense in again intentionally?

I would assume you read my email reply? But perhaps you did not bother and just scanned it. I realize I write a lot, however it often takes a lot of words to enunciate one's comments.

And further that bit of hyperbole that you stated again has nothing whatever to do with anything. Using your logic, or the logic of the "we", it could be said that we have the lowest murder rate, and thus does that imply that that justifies an increase in the murder rate by 55%, since other cities in a "survey" indicates higher murder rates. That's the kind of nonsense-logic and propaganda I'd expect to hear from i.e. the Athen's sales people. Just my views Doug as all of my comments are herein.

Also, if the city's trash rates are so low, why hasn't Athens departed from offering the service since the contract is essentially over now. Are they claiming they are operating at a loss? I doubt they are. And why have I heard nothing about the contract being placed out for RFPs and bids? I suspect there are many contractors that would love to take over the Hermosa Beach trash and street sweeping contracts at the same or even lower rates.

I've been around long enough to see staff reports that base their stuff on what others are doing in other cities, others who are often doing things even more poorly than HB has been doing things of late, especially given the ongoing staff hiring mess under the city management of Suja Lowenthal, the City Councils darling. And of course, the word is supposedly out to professional staff people looking for work, to avoid Hermosa Beach as you would a plague, due to the present City Council and City Manager Suja Lowenthal's running of the city into the proverbial ground.

Also Doug I am again still interested in receiving (and I would hope the City Council is also) the answer to the other question I've been asking repeatedly. See the PS of my last reply. I.e. re: who was the State Licensed street/traffic engineer used to review/approve your Prospect Avenue temporary project. This is a serious question regarding a serious matter. Is not the Council even interested, especially given the lawsuits they've been dealing with?

Thank you for your reply nonetheless. Hopefully you can answer my remaining question(s).

Howard Longacre

On 7/19/2021 6:18 PM, Douglas Krauss wrote:

There are about 4000 affected residential accounts, approximately 1000 of which already have green carts. We will have a better sense of these numbers and the scope of the program as we move forward with implementation.

We want to remind that, even with the additional green cart, Hermosa Beach residents have some of the lowest trash rates in the South Bay (see rate survey attached).

Doug Krauss

Environmental Programs Manager

310-750-3603

dkrauss@hermosabeach.gov

Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 3:42 AM

To: Douglas Krauss <dkrauss@hermosabeach.gov>

Cc: Suja Lowenthal <suja@hermosabeach.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov>; City Clerk <cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>

Subject: Re: Hermosa Beach Program Questions

To: Doug Krauss (Environmental Programs Manager, of Hermosa Beach City Manager's office)

Thanks for your reply Doug to the questions I sent to City Manager Suja Lowenthal.

Unfortunately the general statements in your reply did not really answer the questions I sent.

Since you did not echo my original email, I am wondering if you even saw it. Thusly I have attached it following your reply.

With regards to the so-called "Mandated-Organics" as essentially having now been rubber-stamped by the Hermosa Beach City Council and which undoubtedly is to be giving Athens quite a non-bid windfall:

I doubt that the state law on organics was intended to increase trash rates to residential customers, especially Seniors, some 55 to 65% per month and mostly give trash haulers such a windfall, while essentially still to be hauling the same tonnage of trash.

In fact the original organics stuff as first passed two or more years ago by the state and implemented by Hermosa Beach in 2019 was supposed to be optional for residential customers but of course the government in California being now all but arrogantly and dictatorially completely out of control does anything they damn well please.

Unfortunately our own milquetoast City Council with they're all being virtually useless in pushing back on anything, could evidently not care less of the ultra-left-wing version of "Trumpism" that's operating in Sacramento and in fact right here in Hermosa Beach.

So Doug, in my review of the limited materials that you presented to the Hermosa Council on the agenda for the May 25, 2021 Public Hearing, I could not find any indication of the total number of single and duplex residential properties currently being served by Athens in city and which are to be significantly effected by the latest "organics" ordinance the City Council unthinkingly rubber-stamped.

Thus what are the estimated total number of additional green barrels that Athens will be servicing weekly for the single and duplex residential properties as a result. I very much suspect that Athens knows, and I would assume you also have such estimated data.

Also what percentage of those single and duplex residential units (I'm not talking about the multi-multi-unit properties) are currently subscribing to and paying for the presently-optional Athens Services green-waste-barrel.

Please review your data and let me know what the numbers are for the single and duplex residential properties.

Also, in your workup with Athens, please send me the expected new **total** additional billings per month that Athens is to be making for the added green barrels in city for the properties mentioned.

Now also, I am very much put aside by your response that stated, **"we (in the city staff) want to remind that even with the additional green cart, Hermosa Beach residents have some of the lowest trash rates in the South Bay"**. Whom is the "we" that you mention? Notwithstanding that bit of hyperbole by whomever the "we" are, at the time the Athens contract was awarded (I followed it carefully back then some 9-10 years ago during the extensive RFP and bid process) there were two other contractors that bid essentially the same amount, basis the compactness of the city and many, many other factors. Furthermore the entire City Council, all members at the time extensively got involved. They didn't just rubber-stamp whatever staff whipped up for an agenda.

That other residents in other cities pay much more, way too much in fact, such as the overly-bureaucratic city of Torrance which operates their own entrenched trash-hauling system, and quite inefficiently and with poor customer service from what I've heard, **such a statement has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the situation and my particular questions.** I find such a response of the "we", simplistic and very much insulting to my, and our city-residents' intelligence.

The present City Council operates basis rubber-stamping virtually anything that is placed before them as you have no doubt learned by now. And unfortunately I am getting too old to monitor all the sloppy stuff being railroaded through since City Manager Suja Lowenthal has been given carte blanche by the City Council in my view, to essentially drive out of the city many good staff people, and even a council member, while systematically she's been replacing them one by one with mostly puppets to be operating in her own ever-more-bloated, self-serving, costly city manager department, i.e. employees replaced with those who clearly appear to need to now ingratiate themselves to her for having been hired by her.

I'll look forward to receiving the simple pieces of information requested above from you.

Thank you,
Howard Longacre

PS: Also re: the Prospect Avenue, easily \$340-thousand by now, waste of tax money lunacy, I keep asking specifically for the name of the California state-licensed street and highway engineer who reviewed and approved the temporary modifications made to Prospect Avenue.

If no state-licensed engineer approved the design, please so note that no state-licensed engineer reviewed and approved the temporary additions which in my personal view, as one actually having a Civil Engineering degree (although I am not California state licensed having worked in private industry), and who has studied street and highway engineering, find the Prospect temporary additions to be absolutely of no benefit to safety for pedestrians or drivers.

They should be removed now. In fact I believe the traffic circle having been placed at the peak of a roadway hump at 10th and Prospect was not only insanely idiotic and unprofessional in design, but extremely dangerous. Driver's headlights in both directions because of the hump in the road at that location made that unlit, stupidly design "traffic circle" a disaster waiting to happen especially after dark.

End of PS:

On 7/13/2021 10:11 PM, Douglas Krauss wrote:

Howard,

Thank you for your questions. Regarding organic waste service, beginning January 1, 2022 all customers must have organics recycling service. This is part of a comprehensive State organic waste reduction mandate that is being implemented by jurisdictions statewide. The City adopted an Ordinance in May 2021 that details this mandate and the City will be working with Athens Services to implement this program and distribute educational materials in the coming months. We do understand the concern of additional costs but want to remind that even with the additional green cart, Hermosa Beach residents have some of the lowest trash rates in the South Bay.

Thank you also for your feedback on the Safer Prospect project. This is a temporary demonstration project for which we are actively soliciting feedback from the community and

monitoring the performance of the various installations. Please be sure to share your comments through our survey which can be found at www.Asaferprospect.com

Please feel free to reach out to me for more information on these topics.

Doug Krauss

Environmental Programs Manager

310-750-3603

dkrauss@hermosabeach.gov

Subject:Organics / green barrels / website obsolete information

Date:Sun, 11 Jul 2021 02:41:51 -0700

To:HB City Manager Suja Lowenthal [<suja@hermosabeach.gov>](mailto:suja@hermosabeach.gov)

CC:HB Council [<citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov>](mailto:citycouncil@hermosabeach.gov), City Clerk

[<cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov>](mailto:cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov)

7/11/2021

To Hermosa Beach City Manager, CC-others.

Hello Suja,

Please pardon any typos etc., as it is late but I wanted to be sure to send this to you this weekend before the meeting Tuesday night, July 13. I am not placing this memo on the agenda at this time.

The city's trash company, Athens Services, included with their current tri-monthly/quarterly bill some flyers that appeared to mandate that every residence is to order and pay for a green barrel commencing Jan 1, 2022. I hope that's not precisely true on the part of these latest Athens bill-included flyers.

In the past I recall that Athens has included other flyers that appeared to try to indicate to residents that they needed to purchase this or that, or do this or that, when in fact they didn't. Up to now only a small minority of residents have chosen to pay a monthly charge for an optional green barrel per the existing contract which of course is itself overdue now to go out for RFPs and be bid out, much as the contract City Attorney services are decades past being submitted for RFPs and bid out.

Suja, would you please determine and respond to me re: the following.

Is every residence, including those with just one senior living in same, now to be required to pay monthly for at least one green barrel starting January 1, 2022 (in 6 months). Note that if that is a fact my net total trash bill will increase by approximately 60% per year. That's a significant jump. Whatever the amount, that may not seem like a lot, however I, Suja, do not have a \$350,000 salary and benefits income package. In fact it's not even 10% of that obscene amount.

Note, I seldom fill my black barrel even 1/4 full. If I now am required to pay for another barrel, i.e. a green barrel, and store it in my garage, then my black barrel will be perhaps only be 3/16th filled weekly, and my green barrel will then be perhaps 1/16th filled weekly and I will be paying a net 60% more for the exact same amount of trash being picked up.

When Athens' sales rep, Gary Clifford first sold the city the contract, (btw which again is now expired I believe) he indicated, as I recall, that switching to Athens would "knock our socks off". Well if a 60% increase in my trash bill is what he meant, then at least he was truthful, and the present city council evidently has not a clue, and others serving in the city's government may be lacking very much in skills to protect the resident-customers' wallets from professional sales reps of these corporations, basis not fully and completely understanding the present contract's nuances.

Btw, Hermosa Beach presently tolerates three sets of 'noisier and noisier' Athens trucks tearing up the city's 40 some-odd miles of residential streets two days every week everywhere. That's like one set of trucks traveling 120 miles of city streets weekly. We could have had just one set of trucks traveling once the 40 miles of residential streets, as Athens originally stated was preferable, and at the same contract/customer pricing, as Athens claimed they separate the trash additionally anyway once at their facilities.

So now with this latest agreement, the Council evidently made re: "organics", basis some state law so it's claimed, how much are the residents of Hermosa Beach actually going to be reamed by the latest of your management, and the City Councils rubber-stamping of whatever it was that Council agreed to with Athens on this latest, 2nd round of "organics" revisions? I note that Leeanne Singleton worked on this two years ago for the first round, and rate increases vis-a-vis "organics", but since then she evidently got fed up, and left and another of your "team" took over for now this second "organics" go-around.

Be assured that many residents are going to be rightfully PO-ed if they now have to purchase and store monthly, a green barrel besides the black barrels and blue barrels, and then place out the blue barrels, the black barrels, and the green barrels on two different days, while paying up to 60% more than they presently pay. No doubt this is a tremendous windfall for Athens given they're to be picking up the same amount and taking less to a landfill, if their flyers are correct while billing up to 60% more.

I'll look for your reply Suja. **Note: I'm still waiting** for answers to the questions I sent to the Public Works Director in January, and then recently to Engineer Lucho, CC-d to you re: the **two dangerous sidewalk issues on 7th place**, and the issues re: the completely-insane temporary "Safer Prospect" or actually as implemented "Dangerous Prospect" project

(whatever it is?) on Prospect, vis-a-vis, **who was the state licensed transportation engineer who signed off on those final "temporary" installation plans** before the dangerous changes were made to the roadway, especially as related to the so-called mini traffic circle that was placed directly in only the northbound lane of Prospect Avenue at 10th Street at a relatively blind peak in the roadway, especially for low-sitting drivers.

Also, as City Manager did you yourself take the time to drive the street in both directions and note that the idiotic design and implementation of the "mini" traffic circle had no affect on Southbound traffic flow whatever, but was however for the Northbound driver (in which lane it was placed) not easily even visible to an unsuspecting driver under various daylight/nighttime, oncoming headlights conditions from Southbound traffic, etc.

I note again that the completely idiotic thing was 1st installed, then it was removed, then it was reinstalled, and now has since all that been again uninstalled after creating so much confusion and havoc. It was an incredibly dangerous, safety obstruction and evidently was accidentally hit by one vehicle in less than a week of its presence. See picture as posted on a local blog of the so-called mini-traffic circle after being struck by a vehicle. Fortunately the sign didn't end up spearing the driver, passenger, pedestrian, or other through, or possibly did it.

Whoever accidentally was impeded by the incredibly idiotic design probably could sue the city for damages to their vehicle given that it was so unprofessionally and insanely designed and installed. It completely lacked highly visible blinking red or yellow lights. The entire amateur design mess at the other two locations of Prospect (9th St and 14th-15th Streets) is unbelievably tacky looking for a residential area and achieves absolutely nothing. Makes little to no sense as designed. What a waste of \$340,000 or more to date (The grant itself was \$280K as I recall).

I also remember placing a supplemental letter on the agenda regarding the ridiculous idea of a traffic circle at, of all places 10th and Prospect, not that such letters from me carry any weight, being just an old resident relic who actually lives in town, pays taxes, and knows the street well from some 55 years of driving it.

Also, just in case you are not aware Suja, there's been a Public Works Department lighted message billboard trailer parked and operating in the northbound direction warning of, now the no-longer-existent, 'traffic circle ahead'. It has needed some orange cones near it to help warn and prevent a car or truck from hitting and damaging that expensive piece of electronic message billboard equipment. It is quite wide and could actually cause a head-on collision from cars or trucks trying to avoid hitting it but instead hitting an oncoming vehicle. Perhaps it would be more effective to simply park an older unused police car(s) along Prospect from time to time instead of that very wide electronic billboard sign.

I hope you are enjoying your work as Hermosa Beach City Manager now especially that, I assume, you are back operating from your nice office in City Hall. I can't imagine being a city manager from afar (I believe Malibu) of the city's wonderful staff during the pandemic. I've worked with many professional private industry managers over the years and the best ones were the ones who were always available and close working with their professional staffs, and

especially those who maintained an open-door policy. Next time I'm in City Hall I'll drop in to see you for sure.

Mostly my views above, but I'll look forward to your responses to the issues I want to make sure you're aware of, especially those the city has significant liability for, especially once it's been made well aware of.

Howard Longacre

Note also that the information at the following link (of your city manager department) appears to have one or more non-working links and also obsolete/incorrect information.

<https://www.hermosabeach.gov/our-government/city-manager/environmental-programs/solid-waste>

Following image (attached if not in view) by unknown photographer, but believed to be an actual recent image, of the mangled sign and ridiculous now-removed mini-traffic circle that was located in the Northbound-only lane of Prospect Avenue at 10th Street. Only the tacky blue/white pavement paint/graffiti remains now. Hopefully the tacky graffiti-paint is to be removed too and soon. Who puts a white square sign in the street, with no caution lights, on a steel pole to spear an unsuspecting driver. Beyond stupid, unprofessional, and very-likely not meeting California state roadway standards.



End of communication.