

City Clerk and City Manager's office:

This is a 'Supplemental Testimony submitted for [Consent Ordinances Item 3-a of the July 14, 2015, Regular Hermosa Beach City Council meeting agenda.](#)

July 12, 2015

To: Mayor Nanette Barragan and Councilmembers (Carolyn Petty, Hany Fangary, Michael DiVirgilio, and Peter Tucker), City Clerk Elaine Doerfling, City Manager Tom Bakaly, Assistant to City Manager, Community Development Director Ken Robertson, Public Works Director Andrew Brosyna, Finance Director Viki Copeland, and contract-City Attorney Michael Jenkins.

From: Howard Longacre, a Hermosa Beach resident.

Regarding: Ancient Assessor's data evidently having been utilized for sewer charge fees without city updates being applied or even cross-checking using the Assessor's own website.

Honorable Mayor, Councilmembers, and others:

The following are my comments, given freely, and they are entirely my views and opinions on everything I've stated herein.

Please additionally view any other supplementals that I've submitted for Item 3-a.

For all the money being paid to the consultant, it's quite obvious that there was little effort made by the consultant to do anything more than a completely sloppy job with respect to obtaining and cross-checking water-usage data, but more egregiously the underlying parcel data.

Clearly the consultant has perhaps created a cottage industry by dealing with lay City Councils and with little oversight of his work. This consultant has provided nothing but error-laced garbage.

The latest of the seemingly endless errors I've found, indicates that the consultant has used ancient county data, and is using the excuse that it's the county data that's in error. **No! It's the consultant's data that's in error.** In computer science, there's an old expression. GIGO. Garbage In, Garbage Out. And according to the city's public works director's recent boiler plate reply to a three-week-old concern of mine, the county data has flaws. Well who doesn't know that? Would the consultant or the Public Works Director build an airliner using well-known-to-be-flawed data and then blame the defect that brought down the plane on that well-known-to-be-flawed data. It's up to engineers to cross-verify their data and

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results. But evidently these people believe it's my job, and they don't like it that Hermosan's are looking over their shoulders.

The consultant and the Public Works Director need to stop passing the buck while they live well off the Hermosa Beach taxpayer. If they need to make excuses, they should go elsewhere!

If the city is going to tax its property owners it should ensure that all the data is correct before just running defective data through a spread sheet and then quick & dirty spinning off a list of fees to rush off to the county and slam onto the tax bills.

Hermosa Beach evidently is doing things in a too-shoddy-way because it can claim the county's data is shoddy, or that the water company didn't provide what they asked for.

More Errors Noted: (In addition to those listed in other supplementals from me.)

In reviewing a couple of newer tall & skinny single-family homes that were built in year 2012 in the 1000 block of 3rd-Street, and which are clearly indicated as having been around for some three years on the assessor's own website, and after having been built on previously completely-vacant well-established existing dirt lots back in 2012, I note that in the consultants assessments he's still got them listed as vacant lots and rather than having an assessment of \$115 fee each, they have an assessment for a vacant lot of \$57.50 each. (And note; the \$115 fee is the wrong fee in any event.)

Now, if I could so-easily notice these two homes on the assessor's web site, why could not the consultant or one of his minions. And just how many other parcels are like this. Was his firm too cheap to purchase an up-to-date database from the county with supplemental updates? Did he use a database that he purchased from the county for some other city's similar sewer-fee purpose a couple years ago? And if that isn't the case, why didn't he at least verify, using the assessor's own online site (which I use all the time without difficulty), all the vacant lots since the assessor's data he's using is obviously so old or incomplete. The consultant-engineer is obviously not using good engineering practices.

His method seems to be to use known-to-be defective data, and then when problems develop, blame it on that bad data, or someone else. That's a completely unprofessional form of engineering.

All he had to do was cross-check using the assessor-ID number and see what it says on the assessor's website. No, this consultant did not go even that extra yard. He flat out doesn't give a damn as I don't believe the City Council or their City Manager/City Attorney team cares one-iota as to whether Hermosa's property owners are overcharged, undercharged, or flat-out ripped off, so long as they can go on taxing and spending and hiring more consultants.

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Afterall why should they give a damn when i.e. the City Manager and City Attorney are raking in \$1 million or more a year in total from their "work" with HB. This is peanuts to those two, and probably even peanuts to some of our millionaire tax-and-spend council members.

BTW, someone perhaps needs to create a "Walk of Hermosa Shame".

The sloppiness, errors and omissions, as found in this consultant's assessment list, and virtually every time I look at it, are outrageous. Does Hermosa Beach get this kind of sloppy work from all the consultants that run through this town on the taxpayer's nickel?

If the council has a shred of common sense left, they will do the following;

1. Thank the consultant, pay him if he's owed anything, and get him off the books and out of here.
2. Have the city's own staff itself create (a long overdue but evidently non-existent) accurate data base of parcels in the city and put it on the city website for all to view. There are probably plenty of cities that can indicate the best and cheapest way to do that. It isn't rocket science.
3. Then after it is determined in November whether the TOT measure has passed, should the Council (the New Council) decide that additional monies are still required to support full sewer maintenance, then and only then, should Council use the city staff's BRAND NEW accurate parcels database to establish an accurate fee, not one that's based on inaccurate county data, not one that's based on incomplete water company data, but one that's based on accurate physical property data, and with out the need of the GIGO consultant.

Why keep hiring and rewarding this, or other consultants, year after year to continue such a sham application of a simple sewer charge. Get him out of here.

With the election coming up, this incredibly-unfair scam sewer-charge-fee mess needs to be numero-uno on the candidate's debates list, as it is indicative of so much that's gone wrong in Hermosa's government, especially in the last 19 months due to an absolutely-arrogant (can do no wrong) Hermosa Beach city council, city manager, and city attorney operation.

And again, just how many condos, apartments, or homes, let alone commercial properties have wrong assessments due to incomplete, old, or wrong parcel data, when everywhere I look, I find errors and omissions. Is this consultant to be charging the city to check when all the complaints come in from property owners as they receive their property tax bills and

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learn they've been charged one thing while their neighbor has been charged something else or nothing at all? Does this consultant get to now further-profit from his crapola garbage performance?

--- End of this Supplemental ---

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