

## **Position Two:**

Provide transparency in governance and let the public decide on zone changes.

Recent attempts to convert residential land to commercial use have given me cause to agree with some of my fellow residents that perhaps an initiative is needed to allow a vote of the people for zone changes that can change the character of a neighborhood, traffic patterns in an area, and destroy the tranquility that we have come to know and love in Rancho Palos Verdes. Perhaps these decisions should not lie with the City Council entirely. The applicant is free to hire clever presenters with state-of-the art media, and hire lawyers with threatening presentations. The public has only the City Council to filter out the truth, but it is a neighborhood's life-style that is at stake.

Any appearance of undue influence tends to cloud decisions even when made in public meetings. It is not fair to the applicant or to the public when a cloud is cast upon a decision. Limiting the size of donations is one way to deal with this issue, but has not proven to be effective. Giving the final word to the public is an issue that I think is worth pursuing sooner than later. Some places in the United States require any elected officials to recuse themselves if they have accepted donations from development interests/applicants within their jurisdictions. We currently only require disclosure of all donations over \$100. Accepting donations from applicants within one's jurisdiction tends to create a cloud of distrust when the applicant appears before the elected body. It is true that the elected official does not always know or expect that a donation may become controversial. I take the time to ask anyone who gives me a large donation what their plans are to avoid any appearance of undue influence. We have seventy-two hours to return a donation and it sometimes is a very good idea.