

Caught on Tape! Resident Attacked at Improvement Association Meeting

The La Habra Heights Improvement Association held its annual General Meeting at the Park Building on June 17th, as was noticed in the Heights Life.

Resident George Edwards set up his broadcast video camera on a tripod to videotape the meeting and present it to the community. Edwards has previously videotaped other community events, such as the AERA development hearing in Diamond Bar, the Wildlife Corridor Crossing Grand Opening, Historic Home Tour and the recent ribbon cutting for the Fire Department's new living quarters.

Edwards was video taping the room as people gathered, when in the background of the video, the voice of Association member John Pearce is heard saying, "I'm going to kick your #### a**".



John Pearce Attacking George Edwards

John Pearce then pushes the camera, tripod and George Edwards into the chairs and appears to be trying to wrestle the reported \$44,000 camera away. Prior to lunging at Edwards a second time, Pearce says, "Don't you put that f....n' thing in my face".

After Pearce and Edwards separated, Improvement Association Treasurer, retired police officer, and Water District Board member Jeffrey Heintz grabs Edwards and starts pushing him, saying, "This is a private meeting, membership only". Heintz appears to be trying to wrestle the camera away from Edwards and chases him around the room.

As Edwards is being attacked, other Improvement Association members are heard calling out, "Why don't you leave" and "It's about time (that Edwards be attacked)".



Treasurer Jeff Heintz Attacking George Edwards

Seconds after the first attack started another reporter present at the meeting pulled out a digital camera and started video recording the "crime in progress".

At no time during the melee was Edwards seen making any offensive or provoking moves or comments.

As the incident unfolded, a "mob" of Directors and members, including Parks & Rec Chair Karen Vipperman, surrounded Edwards taunting him and shouting negative comments.



In his 911 call, exclusively obtained by this publication, Edwards said: "This is George Edwards. I've been attacked by the Improvement Association...."

Three Sheriff's cars arrived some time later taking statements, exclusively obtained by this publication. Edwards filed a Citizen's Arrest against Heintz and Pearce for assault and battery. Pearce and Heintz filed Citizen's Arrest against Edwards, claiming in their statements that he pushed them.

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Courtesy of KCBS News



President Pam McVicar interviewed by Channel 2

Both videotapes of the incident were submitted to the Sheriff's Department as evidence, one included several minutes leading up to the first attack.

In a Whittier Daily New article, "Pam McVicar, association president, said there was confusion on whether Edwards, not a member of the association, had a right to be there. But now she believes he had a right to be there."

A KCBS Channel 2 story on the incident aired June 21st on the 11 p.m. news, after video of the attack was released on YouTube.

The matter is now in the hands of Sheriff's Department detectives and District Attorney.

Caught on Two Tapes! You Decide

See split screen simultaneous video from both cameras, hear the 911 call, read the statements made to the sheriffs' deputy and find the link to the KCBS Channel 2 news story and Whittier Daily News article at www.LaHabraHeights.net

Residents' Input on Projects Squelched

Planning Commission Vice-Chair Margarita McCoy requested a discussion of General Plan Land Use Element Policy 25 at the June meeting, noting recent controversial projects.

Policy 25 requires that property owners adjoining a proposed project be able to work with the applicant, planning officials, and staff to ensure that the proposed structure is compatible with community character, privacy, view preservation and other amenities valued by residents.

Vice-Chair McCoy felt that this policy had not been implemented and concerns of neighbors were not being sufficiently considered in the planning application review and development process. The other four Commissioners felt that City Staff handles neighbors' concerns regarding proposed projects and no changes are necessary to the current process.

Animal Keeping Showdown

City General Plan Goal 9 says, "Allow and encourage animal husbandry, including keeping of horses, animals used for 4-H projects, and other livestock as allowed by local ordinance."

A standing room only crowd at the May Planning Commission meeting voiced concerns over perceived crackdown on animal keeping in the city and disparate treatment of violations as compared to those building Urban Estates.

A June City Council meeting agenda item on the subject resulted in a 4-1 vote to have City Staff write a clarifying statement on types and numbers of animals allowed.

Councilmember Westerhoff disagreed, preferring to send it to the Planning Commission for more definitive Code language.

Fire Dept. "Fire Suppression Ability" Update

Our May issue reported on the decline in the ISO rating of the Fire Department from 3 to 6, on a scale from 1 to 9, and that the City Council had removed monies traditionally designated to the Fire Department and put them in the General Fund, giving the appearance that the Fire Fund was "bankrupt" laying the groundwork for a possible tax increase..

We have since learned that the Fire Chief sent a letter to the rating agency stating that the City would take no steps to improve its rating.

The City website was recently revised from stating that the Fire Department staffs two engines daily, to one engine daily, despite having six engines.

A recent brush fire on West Skyline and house fire on East Rd did have only one City engine respond.

The 2010-11 City budget no longer includes line items for the Fire Training academy, and there are no longer any full time people working in the Fire Department. The resident volunteer training program was disbanded in 2005.

The City went from a full time fire chief in 2008-09 at \$106,000 per year, to a part time (less than 20 hours per week) fire chief for 2010-11 at about \$100,000.

A Founding Father Passes

Charles Wolfarth, husband of Ruth Wolfarth, was one of the City Founders and on the first City Council. Mr. Wolfarth served three terms on the Council and was Mayor twice.

Mr. Wolfarth was born in Illinois and passed at age 80, just days after celebrating his 60th Wedding Anniversary.

The Wolfarths moved to the Heights in 1964.

Charles was President of the Improvement Association in 1976.

The Wolfarths were Heights Man and Woman of the Year for 1985.