

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COUNTY SUPERVISOR

by Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks, February 2010

When I'm out speaking to service clubs, civic organizations, or even to scouts, the first thing I'm usually asked is what does a County Supervisor do? In addition to Board meetings and assisting constituents who contact me, I work to make government accessible and do what I can to bring services to residents and businesses in my District. In order to give an idea of what a Supervisor does, I'll walk you through a typical day, last Monday.

The morning began early with a bike ride for some exercise, reading local newspapers and then getting ready and off to the Ventura Government Center. I lease a small office there to meet with staff and folks from the west county so they don't have to drive back and forth to my main office on Thousand Oaks Blvd.

My first meeting was with the County CEO to get up-to-date information for the next day's Board of Supervisors meeting. After that meeting I had some time to say hi to Supervisors Long, Bennett and Zaragoza who also have offices at the County Government Center. I then met with a couple of residents from Channel Islands Harbor. After the meeting I put together a new policy to add to our county's Legislative Platform that we would be voting on at the following day's Board meeting. The Legislative Platform guides our County's support for State and Federal legislation.

After I drafted the language for the policy, I had a few minutes to catch up with my administrative assistant on his meetings with staff and constituents, before I headed off to Oxnard for a 1 pm meeting of the Ventura County Mental Health Board (MHB). The MHB is made up of consumers, professionals, and family members of people with mental illness. It is overseen by the County's Behavioral Health Department, whose director is also in attendance. During the meeting I spoke in favor of funding for new supportive housing in Thousand Oaks as part of a larger affordable housing project there. The funding was unanimously recommended for approval.

After the meeting I went to my Thousand Oaks office for some microwaved lunch, and meetings with my staff. We discussed efforts to move forward on a proposal to plant trees in the new Santa Rosa Equestrian Park. The trees would be paid for by local contributions, and planted by volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and local residents. We also discussed topics for my comments at the Oak Park Municipal Advisory Council meeting that I'd be attending in the evening after the Board of Supervisors meeting.

Before leaving my Thousand Oaks office for my next meeting, I contacted the County Health Department to see if we could assist a local small business owner who is required by the State to include a restroom in his building plans despite there being a public restroom nearby. I also worked to help a constituent who graded without permits find how he can comply and get back on track.

I then signed off on a Resolution my staff prepared for the Westlake High School Varsity Football Team who were all coming to the Board meeting to be honored for winning the CIF championship. I then gathered the packets for my next three meetings and took off for the 5pm meeting of the Triunfo Sanitation District in Oak Park. I was the lone vote in the meeting to not increase water rates. The increased fees would help pay for a water tank estimated to cost \$8 million. Noting that the costs of construction and materials have been going down, I thought it was worth waiting until March for the construction bids to come in so we would have a better idea of the actual costs and if they warranted a rate increase. I left the meeting at 7:10 pm to meet up and carpool with a fellow Conservancy member to our 7:30 pm meeting of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and its Advisory Committee which, thankfully, was at the Calabasas City Hall that evening.

We often end up driving much farther to Temescal Canyon, Franklin Canyon, Malibu, or the Los Angeles River Center for the late night Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy meetings that don't get us back home until 11pm. During the meeting we heard a status report from the State Parks about closed campgrounds and from the Forest Service about a major reforestation effort that will use Federal Stimulus funds to create jobs replanting the area burned out by the Station Fire. We also approved a comment letter to the City of Simi Valley expressing the Conservancy's opposition to a project that would take land zoned open space in the canyons north of the 118 freeway and build 2 miles of roads on it and 148 estate houses on 20-acre lots. It was the Conservancy's understanding that this open space land was supposed to be deeded to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District to mitigate for a previous development.

After dropping off my fellow Conservancy member at the park-and-ride lot, I got back home in time to eat some dinner, touch base with my college-aged kids on Facebook, work on my powerpoint for a conference I was organizing that weekend, then unwind with my husband before diving into bed in anticipation of the morning's Board of Supervisors meeting in Ventura.