

The Inside Scoop

January, 2025

Dear Poway District 3 Resident,

My name is Peter De Hoff, your current City Council Representative for Poway's District 3. This monthly-ish newsletter one way of keeping you informed about some city government activities. My goal is to provide clear, accurate updates on current topics so you can stay engaged and informed.

Let me know if you'd like any further refinements!



Fire Safety

The recent extreme wildfires in the north and surrounding areas have understandably made fire safety a top concern for everyone. Ensuring fire safety and preparedness requires collective effort, including regional collaboration, city-level operations, and individual actions to safeguard personal properties.

At the time of writing this newsletter, there have been two small fires in or near our community. While the official causes of these fires have not yet been confirmed, there is some indication that unauthorized habitation and/or cooking activities may have occurred in these areas. What prevents these fires from becoming larger disasters is the swift, all-hands-on-deck response by our fire department and regional partners. Their quick action in extinguishing these fires is nothing short of heroic, and we owe them our deepest gratitude for their efforts in keeping our community safe.

Fire safety is a team effort, and we all have a role to play in protecting our community. On the City Council, I focus on four key areas:

1. **Supporting public safety teams** (Fire/Sheriff funding and resources).
2. **Zoning and building policies** to mitigate risks at the urban-wildland interface.
3. **Municipal code enforcement** for fire prevention (e.g., defensible space, encampment bans).
4. **Regional advocacy** for stronger building codes and brush clearance rules.



COMMUNITY MEETING: JANUARY 29TH 6:30PM

HOW PREPARED IS POWAY?

Join us for a discussion with the Poway Fire Department, the Poway Water Department, the Poway Division of the San Diego Sheriff's Office, and San Diego Gas and Electric to discuss Poway's preparedness for wildfire, evacuations, and public safety power shutoffs.

This meeting is open to all Poway residents.

Location: 13325 Civic Center Drive – Poway City Hall Council Chambers

Date and Time: January 29th at 6:30PM

Learn how our City's first responders have prepared for wildfire, how evacuations are issued, and how a public safety power shutoff is determined. Get valuable resources to help you be more prepared.



WHO WE ARE

The Poway Neighborhood Emergency Corps (PNEC) regularly organizes a variety of community preparedness & resource presentations and has established complementary programs, collaborations and services to aid in achieving its overall mission of neighbors helping neighbors to be better prepared for a disaster or emergency situation.

The Poway Fire Safe Council (PFSC) collaborates with a variety of other government, non-profit, and community-based organizations to make Poway better prepared for wildfire through community education and community risk reduction projects.

Supported by funding provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Prevention Program as part of the California Climate Investments Program.



WWW.POWAYNEC.COM

However, these efforts can only go so far. Your actions to protect your own property are essential to making these initiatives truly effective.

Please attend the PNEC/FireSafe Council open house on **January 29th at 6:30 PM** in the City Council Chambers to learn vital fire safety tips and details about the Firewise program. This program helps neighborhoods improve fire safety, increases home resilience, and may lower insurance rates. Homes that survived the Palisades fire were firesafe – yours can be too.

Also, don't miss Fire Chief Mitchell's **fire preparedness presentation** on **Tuesday at 7 PM** in the City Council Chambers or watch it online: (<https://poway.org/637/Meeting-Video-Stream-and-Archive>)

Brush fires, like those we've recently experienced, can be sparked by various sources, including brush clearance activities, illegal cooking or campfires, fireworks, and arson. If you observe any suspicious activity or signs of past activity, report it to the sheriff immediately.

For non-emergency situations—such as discovering an abandoned campsite—please contact (858) 513-2800. This is important even if the site appears abandoned as smoldering ashes could still spread and ignite a new fire.

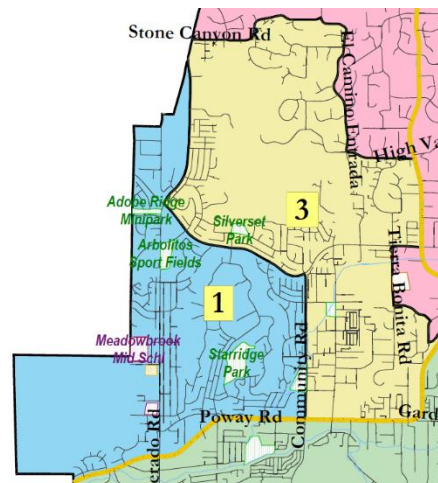
As always, **call 911 for emergencies**.

District 1 Council Vacancy – Filled

At the January 21st council meeting, I joined the majority in voting to fill the District 1 seat vacancy by appointment rather than a special election. Thank you to everyone who wrote in—I read all your messages. After hearing from constituents, consulting other city leaders, and researching similar cases, I found that general law cities like ours often prioritize timely and capable representation by appointing, as allowed under California law. This approach is common after election cycles and ensures legislative duties are handled effectively.

From District 1, five highly qualified and dedicated Poway residents from diverse backgrounds applied for the vacant seat, showcasing the strong talent and civic engagement in our community. While the quality of the candidates made the decision difficult, I was grateful to have met with each of them. All were capable of excelling in the role, but only one could be chosen.

The council selected Chris Pikus, whose extensive experience in a large corporate organization, budget management for his Parish, and recent service as Chair of the Poway Budget Review Committee made him uniquely prepared to step into the role. I believe his expertise will ensure competent representation for District 1, particularly on water rates and budgetary matters. I am confident he will do an excellent job as the District 1 Councilman.



Unfortunately, the process was marred by a council member engaging in apparent *quid pro quo* vote trading to advance personal political ambitions—something I’ve never seen before. I encourage you to review the detailed accounts in the news articles referenced below.

<https://www.axios.com/local/san-diego/2025/01/18/poway-council-vacancy-special-election-blain-vause-dehoff-state-law>

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/01/21/poway-council-member-threatened-recall-effort-against-colleague-based-on-how-he-voted/>

<https://www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/controversy-over-poway-appointment/509-4211b956-3fdb-45f0-93a6-37a92be99b72>

I’d kindly remind everyone to, whenever possible, resist the urge to bribe or extort public officials. Believe it or not, these actions are generally frowned upon and even considered felonies here in California.

Looking Ahead

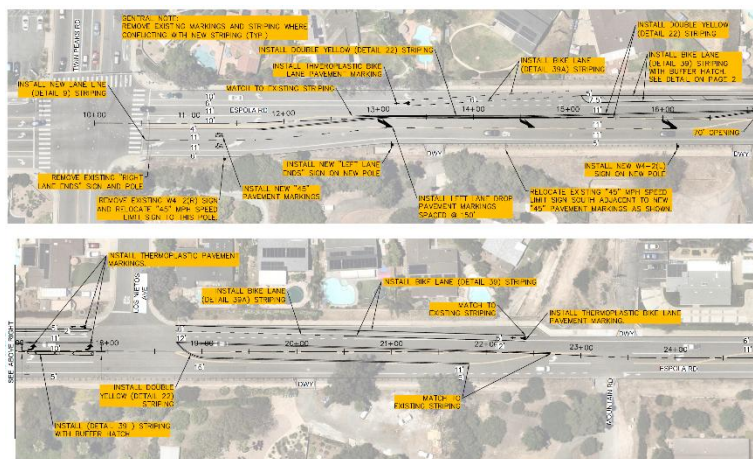
Budget Review/Parks and Recreations Committee Applications Open

February 13th is the last day to apply to be on the Budget Review (BRC) or the Parks and Recreation Committee. These are great volunteer opportunities for the community to provide input and direction for areas central to how the city operates. Don’t pass up the opportunity to learn how the city we love keeps on moving. There are three open seats on the BRC and five on Parks and Rec. Use the link below to learn more about another way to give back to your community!

<https://poway.org/162/Boards-Committees>

Espola Road Restriping

On January 15th, the Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) met to discuss restriping part of Espola Road, from Los Nietos to Twin Peaks, to address a growing traffic issue. The goal is to reduce the backup of left-turn lanes on Twin Peaks east to Espola northbound each morning. This traffic congestion is caused by California's SB 328 and Education Code Section 46148, which mandate later start times for middle and high schools, including Twin Peaks Middle School and Poway High School. With their start times now so close together, the traffic flow in the area has worsened significantly. Many drivers now push through Twin Peaks east of Espola, make a U-turn, and then turn right onto Espola north, creating a safety hazard by disrupting the regular traffic pattern.



The proposed change by the Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) aims to extend the two-lane section of Espola northbound far enough to clear more cars turning left from Twin Peaks. To do this, the car and bike lanes on Espola southbound near Twin Peaks will be slightly angled—it looks to be about 5 degrees to the west—for a short stretch before returning to normal.

Typically, items discussed by the TSC are reviewed by the full council before being implemented. However, given the time-sensitive nature of safety hazards like this, I'm unsure if the same process applies in this case. I've reached out to staff with some pending questions and will let you know if this requires a final council decision. In the meantime, please review the link below and share any thoughts, questions, or concerns you may have. (It's the third item on the list.)

<https://poway.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=4655&month=1&year=2025&day=15&calType=0>

City Council Censure Motion

Due to unprecedented ethics violations and attempts to misuse law enforcement to silence critics, I've been left with little choice but to file a censure motion against Council Member Tony Blain. A truly regrettable "first" for the City of Poway. The hearing will take place on February 4th during the city council session.

Retrospective

Thank you all for your comments on the options in the prior issue. The fire issues have taken up most of the space in this issue, but I will work to get something put together for the next one.

Your Feedback Matters

I want to hear from you about what interests you most for future newsletters. Your input will help shape future updates.

Thank you for taking the time to stay informed and engaged. Together, we can continue making Poway a great place to live.

Sincerely,

Peter De Hoff

Poway District 3 City Council Representative

If you don't want to get this newsletter anymore, please reply "unsubscribe". If you want to add someone to the list, please let me know their contact information. – TIA

If you have a question or concern regarding governance in Poway, please email me at pdehoff@poway.org

Paid for by De Hoff for Poway City Council District 3, 2026

FPPC #: 1492464