Whittier Hills Collection

Oral History

Bob Henderson

Transcript of Interview

August 23, 1998

Interviewed by Carole Hull

1998.0001
Cassette # 2 + 3

This is an interview of Councilman Bob Henderson, (BH). The interviewer is Carol Hull (CH). We are in the Whittier Public Library, It's August 23, 1998 at 10 a.m.

CH: Councilman Henderson, you've been instrumental in the preservation of the Whittier hillside area from the very beginning, when a proposal was made by the City Council in the late 1970's to develop, for a condominium development in the hills. Can you please give us a chroological overview of all the events that led from that time up to the present moment, when we now have the hills preserved?

BH: Yes, I'll try. I'm not sure I have the dates exactly, without notes here today, but I'll try to give you an overview. In 1978 I was serving on the Whittier City Council together with Jerry MacDonald, Jack Mele, Blake Sanborn and Delta Murphy. At that time, a developer came in with the concept of putting an "upscale concominium" in the Whittier Hills. At that time, the Whittier General Plan had what was known as appendicies A & B attached and these were hillside development controls that had been developed several years earlier in protest to the Starlight Estates development. When that development did a cut and fill track at the end of Greenleaf, it was very visible to everybody in the City and there was great outcry and furor about it. So the appendices A and B were attached, as general guidelines to the general plan, were supposed to provide some controls for the future. At the time the development came forward, the majority of Council decided that these appendices were not part of the General Plan itself, and, therefore,did not require the full public hearing and debate that was necessary to delete them as it would have if they had been part of the General Plan itself. It got into a very technical argument. Jerry Mac Donald and myself were a minority in trying to stop the removal of these and the exploiting of the hillside areas. It got to be fairly acrimonious on the Council and there were a lot of little incidences within that, for example, the City had just decided to adopt a newsletter to help inform people about the Whittier General Plan and the City of Whittier plans in general and to try to talk about the things that were important to the City. Right after the deletion of these controls, there was a very pro-development piece that came out in this Whittier newsletter. Because of that, there was so much bitterness about that, that that newsletter vanished from that point on, and it's never been reinstated and it was just a way for the majority of the Council to promote whatever issue they particularly wanted to see promoted. A lot of citizens that we didn't even know before that period of time, started getting involved in this whole question of should the appendices be deleted. Bob Sawlber for one, Kent Riley and his wife were other people who got involved early on, Mary Hansen was a very active member and we had a number of people that formed a committee. But interestingly enough, almost none of them knew each other before, and all of them got involved in this issue. Out of that came a plan to circulate an initiative, excuse me, a referendum, which would overturn the decision of the Council and within a few weeks they had the necessary signatures to require the Council either to rescind their prior act or to come up with a, ah, putting it on the ballot. I believe it was in March of 1987 the item went to the people. It was a very, very bitter political campaign. The developers spent about $25,000 which today doesn't seem like a huge amount of money but probably be something around equivalent to $100,000 in current dollars.

CH: This is in 1978?

BH: 1978, ah, the , our group was able to raise about $2,000 but we had a tremendous number of volunteers and they silk-screened "No on Prop. A", which became the initiative effort, signs, ah, we developed model pieces to argue the, the merits of the development which was going to cause a tremendous amount of cut and fill with the project. We walked door to door and, against that , they ran some real gutter-ball political pieces. The developers, in particular, put together a newsletter that was so bad that even some of the supporters started bailing from that side at that point. They were really quite shocked at how low they had sunk in this piece. I've got a copy of that that I'll have to give to the records, one of the original flyers, but it accused, for example, it talked about people that went door to door as being "pushers and solicitors". (Laughter) So, it was

really low. Mary Hansen became our champion at that time. Mary was, had been, was a trained actress for one thing, so she became the spokesperson in public debates, since Jerry and I had to stay in the background, having been on the Council. She did a masterful job and a, and a, taking on everybody in those debates. At any rate, when it came to vote, the "no" side, when it was to reject the prior decision of the Council, won by about 60% of the vote and everything quieted down for some period of time after that. The Council, however, didn't change. MacDonald and I stayed on and while there was a change where Blake Sanborn retired, and Jack Mele retired, they were replaced by two very similar minded people, ah, Vic Lopez amd Gene Chandler. As a result, there was still this feeling that the people had made the wrong decision back in 1978 and there was probably a better way, something that could be developed. In 1982 it festered again. The Council had worked for probably a year prior to that, trying to come up with a compromise, trying to figure some way to put together a general plan that we could all agree with, that had some reasonable controls. So we had done a tremendous amount of work as to trying to define the zoning ordinances to reflect some kinds of controls. But the majority would not go along with that. And when a particular development was proposed at, basically at the end of Mar Vista, where today the Friendly Hills Estates are, there was a condominium project proposed at that location by, I believe it was Coast Development, Nat Hardy. Nat had a plan to build a number of condominiums there. When that came up again, it got into, first, an acrimonious discussion on Council with again trying to amend the rules to permit this project, and at that point, it was pretty much a general consensus of those who had worked on the previous effort, to go out to an initiative to permanently change the way that the Whittier General Plan and related zoning rules reflect hillside development. So, coming out of the discussions that the Council had had, and then writing them into more detail, we had several meetings where we sat down and re-wrote the Hillside Ordinance. People who were particularly involved in that were myself, Jerry MacDonald, Mary Hansen again, Jim Markman, who has been a city attorney for a number of cities in Southern California, volunteered his expertise, and then a number of other peoples, Dave Dickerson, an attorney in town, and some others all worked on this and we wrote the Hillside Initiative and started circulating the petitions for that. That, which became the "Yes on Prop. A", 1982 special election, was a much easier battle. By this point, the people in general in town were tired of it, didn't like the project, people in Friendly Hills, in particular, were outraged by it and so we had sources of money for the first time in one of these campaigns, and when everything was said and done, that initiative won by about 75%, so with a 3 to 1 advantage in the votes, at that point, I think everybody pretty much decided that that was going to be the end of the battle. A number of prior Council people, all of which, by the way, had supported the pro-development, said enough was enough, and, as a result, there was no major discussion of any hillside development from that point till about 1990.

CH: Did this initiative preclude all hillside development or did it limit it in some other way?

BH: Yes, it just limited it. What it really did, we decided number 1, one of the things people were really upset about was the idea of ridgeline development, where you just went in and topped ridgelines and put your developments up there. Also, it protected wildlife corridors, sensitive ecological areas, it made a determination that the amount of development could only be determines by the slope density, so that if the, in the flattest, best possible development area you could get about 2 houses per acre, and in the area which was considered to be the steepest, which we use the model of the Hellman Estate Property, which was above Orange Drive and to the east of Greenleaf, that became the study for the other, and that was designed for about 1 house per 10 acres. So it was very restrictive in these very steep hilly areas. But it did allow development, in a matter of fact, in much later years, the Beverly Hills East development, which is above Beverly Blvd. developed a relatively small project of about 14 homes under those guidelines That really was pretty much my involvement. I got off the Council after 2 terms in 1984. Jerry MacDonald had gotten off two years before in 1982 and with that, there was not much of a pro-environmental or effort on the Council, but no plans came forward, for a number of reaso

ns. In 1989, I got talked into considering to run for re-election again. This is primarily because of the way the town had been rebuilt after the 1987 earthquake. I had been involved in 1988--the City Council had asked me to serve on a specific plan committee for designing the rebuilding of Uptown Whittier. There were a number of fairly wellknown public figures on that, including Lee Strong, who had served with, on the Council before and ah, I ah, he and I co chaired that committee for the design of Uptown and we both were just very concerned about the way the rebuilding was going on and, Lee and a number of other people asked me to run for City Council, so in preparing for the 1990 election, started running, probably in August or September of 1989, and out of that the hillside issues started to come up again, because we found, at that point, Dave Cowardin and, the name escapes me for a moment, I'll think of it in a minute, as, I'm sorry, I hope I'll get his name in the record here, but the 3 of us had started talking to a number of people and this was because of what Dave Cowardin had done back in 1988. Dave Cowardin is a really interesting person. He had become the President of the Friends of the Whittier Hills, and I guess I should divert a little bit and go back. In 1982, when we finished winning the Hillside Initiative, I suggested that we put together a permanent organization so we could continue to monitor how the Hillside Ordinance was being used, and build public support and recommended we form a group and call it the Friends of the Whittier Hills, which seemed appropriate for our Quaker town. And as a result of that, a group of us got together and wrote the by-laws and wrote the by-laws for the Friends of the Whittier Hills. Mary Hansen became the first president and Mary was very active in helping to draft that, as I was, and JimHuebler, Jim had been the Chair of the Yes on Prop. A., the Hillside Ordinance in Whittier, and Jim was a very good friend of Jerry MacDonald and I, and had taken over that and is also just one of those really great organizers. He had also been involved in the initiative but this time he bacame the actual Chairman and the leader of the Yes on Prop. A group. So Jim was involved in that, Dave Cowardin, no, not Dave Cowardin but Dave Dickerson, the attorney, and a number of others, the Rileys, in particular, had all sat down and drafted the wording for the Friends of the Whittier Hills, Jerry Mac Donald was very much involved. So, anyway, we had formed this organization and now, by 1988, although Mary Hansen had been President most years in there, Dave Dickerson, I think in 1988, became the President, in that area. At any rate, in 1988 David called me and said that he had this idea that what we really needed to do was to stop just simply defending the hills and to find a way to actually plan for the hills, and to think about what could be down as a permanent wilderness park, and so, being a planner in L.A. County, Dave certainly had all the credentials necessary to really organize and think this through. We , Dave and I and a couple of other people, Lane Langford at one point, all met with a number of people in the area, including the Director of State Parks and some other activists within the area. Dave's idea was to sit down and write this. I was pretty busy at that time, we were still re-building our house from the earthquake--I told Dave I didn't have a lot of time on it, but fortunately he kept at it and through his personal drive and goals and expertise, he put together what became the Whittier Wilderness Park plan. That document did, for the first time, really give a comprehensive sense that there was something that you could form, that there was a very valuable asset to be protected there, and that it was certainly within the range of feasibility to form a Wilderness Park and to protect the land that was up there. His original recommendation was a park of probably somewhere between 3,000 and 3500 acres, and was really nicely done in detail. TheFriends of the Hills adopted that as a goal and they constructed a 3 dimensional model of it that they took around to fairs, and talked it up and circulated this whole concept and it became a real rallying point for people with the community. In 1990 election, we, I had learned through a number of my sources, City Hall and other places, that Chevron was moving forward with a concept of building a development within the property that they owned. Chevron oil had a large oil field--it was a piece of property of about 971 acres that straddled both sides of Colima Blvd. and ran east to west primarily, and almost came to the Whittier extension of Hadley over in the west part of Whiiitier. Actually, they owned a property called the Home Newlin site, which was a 40 acre parcel that was detached from the rest of it that's right at the end of where the Hadley, where Hadley was going to go. As a result, Dave Cowardin and I and this poor fellow whose name I can't remember at the monent, oh, Glen Robertson, there we got it, Glen Robinson, ah, Robinson, who is another local activist and so on, we started calling on the oil companies and talking to them about the Hillside

Park Plan, trying to get them interested in it and trying to get them to buy into this concept that they should donate some land to make it happen. Not a very popular idea with them, by the way. But out of that, and out of these contacts, we begin to flesh together the idea that secretly, Chevron was circulating a development plan. It had been shown, I know, to some of the City Council members that were currently sitting, it had been shown to Whittier City staff, and they were keeping it very, very quiet. They were also talking to some of the people in Mar Vista Property Owners Association and that probably requires a little bit of background. For years there had been a major debate about whether or not Hadley should be extended through the hills. The idea would be that it would go from where Hadley is on the west side of town to Colima Blvd, quite near the Monte Vista, where Monica Crest development is. That was a bitterly contested issue in Whittier, basically pitting the Mar Vista Property Owners Association, who saw that as a salvation of their neighborhoods because it would take traffic away from Mar Vista, and the people in the west part of town who saw it as a, as pouring what amounted to a freeway access into middle of their communities. The objection was that it would carry 55,000 cars a day across it. So it was a huge, huge impact on the west side of town. And that had been festering for years, so to illicit support, they pushed, they were also talking secretly with the Mar Vista Property Owners Association.

CH: What was. what were Chevron's plans, what were they going to put in there?

BH: The idea basically was that, they wanted to build about a 1400 home development. That's obviously not real dense, but you've got to understand the topography of that property is that it's extremely hilly, extremely sensitive areas, lots of major ridge lines that would be impacted. And so it would never have qualified under Whittier Hillside Ordinance. However, it was not in the City of Whittier, it was in the Whittier sphere of influence, and, being in the sphere of influence meant that, while we could have input to the County, L.A. County, on it we didn't absolutely control it. So there was this big argument of how would the County react. Would the County just simply allow it to more forward or was it a feasible development. In the 1990 election, I raised it as an issue because I could see it coming forward and argued the fact that we needed to preserve the hills and that this would be something that would be very detrimental to Whittier--it would add a lot service, requirements for services, and very little tax base. California League of Cities, for example, has shown that housing developments typically cost about $1.20 for every $1 of taxes that are generated in the local community, so that it had that impact plus the major impact on West Whittier, which would be a huge amount of additional traffic. When I say that it's because, in order for the development to be built, in order to have proper fire access and so on, Hadley would have had to gone through. Interestingly enough, Hadley going through was not a major thing that Chevron wanted to do. The projection at that point was that that road would cost somewhere around 27 million dollars and that made their development plans awfully weak. It was way too costly for a 1400 home development. So their idea was to put together a coalition of surrounding property owners and there were 3 major surrounding property owners at that time. One was Unocal, Unocal was basically to the east of them and over on the, what you'd call the southwest side of Colima, and Rose Hills, which was basically to the north of them, and they felt that the 3 organizations could pay for the development of the road, but the total development that would have been required to do that would have been somewhere around 3,000 to 3,500 homes by building out all those properties. So, with that kind of a major devastation looming, I brought it up as a campaign issue and we ran, we actually made a couple of ads, we did the first television ads ever done in a local political campaign in the 1990 election in Whittier. One of the little 30 second spots we did was the Preservation of the Hills and talking about the danger of losing all that in the election. For, I guess because of that and for some other reasons, we won the 1990 election, and another person who I hadn't known at all before the election, Helen McKinna Rahder, was also elected. Helen was a local land use activist, and neighborhood activist, who had been outraged at the poor development that came about in Whittier after the earthquake, the proliferation of apartment buildings in what had previously been single family neighborhoods, and the construction of mini-malls. Since these had been issues that I'd campaigned on and she

campaigned on, we politically became very close on that because we saw those as major goals. She picked up also in, and had a real concern on the hills issue, so when we were both elected in, rather overwhelmingly, in the 1990 election, displacing one of the incumbent Council people, which we hadn't found the record where it had been done previously in Whittier, so it was kind of a major shock. It became, it gave a lot of credibility about theses issues and we were able to start working on them right away.

CH: How did you stop the County, since the City did not control this property? How did you stop the County from permitting all these developments?

BH: Well, we didn't stop the County directly, although that got sort of interesting. The first thing that we did, we came in and because of the shock value of this big change and it was very dramatic, unfortunately became sort of a radicalized election. I felt a lot of bitterness towards the old Council mainly because of the things happening after the earthquake but also the hills issues. There was a pretty good sense of cooperation with the Council when we came in, and at that point, that was Tom Sawyer, Myron Claxton, and Bob Woehrman. We started working together and discussing this and, interestingly enough, although we had some really major disagreements in style and so on, the Council did really work well together in the next two years. We put a moratorium first on commercial construction, and rewrote the commercial guidelines, which basically stopped mini-mall construction in Whittier. Then we put a moratorium and rewrote the multiple family development standards, which pretty much put a stop to the small apartment buildings going on 7,000 square foot lots in previously single-family neighborhoods. But one of the other things we did is, at that point there was a what was known as Proposition B, and I believe that came actually in November of 1990. It was to get 15 million dollars to the City of Whittier parklands. We had had a little bit of a chance to lobby for that and we actually got the whole Council to support that, so, I mean, I've got to say in that sense we were able to reach an agreement, maybe not from a purely environmental point of view, but the concept that if we could get the money and buy land, that was preferable. At that point, it was kind of cute, because before I was elected in 1990, one of the arguments that Chevron used against us was that we could never possible by the Chevron property because it was going to cost $125 million dollars and the City of Whittier could never come up with that kind of money. After the election, Chevron started talking about the fact that the property was going to be worth $75 million dollars and they, but we still couldn't possible do that. But they were willing to give away about half of the property as mitgation for their development. I was asked what I thought about that, and what I said was that I thought that we hadn't even sat down at the table yet and we had already gained $50 million dollars, so, you know, I thought that by the time we actually sat down, maybe we could do that. Proposition B, unfortunately required a two thirds majority and it lost. It got about 61% of the vote in LA County and it fell apart and collapsed. So that went out of the picture. But, 2 years later, in 1992, November, we could see that it was coming forward again, it was moving towards a possibility that it would come on the ballot--we saw that early in 1992, and we started thinking about how we could be some help in that. In April of 1992, we had another City Council election. This time we had 3 seats up, and at that point, people who had allied themselves with us were elected to that Council. That was Alan Zolnekoff, Michael Sullins were both elected. MIchael was the founding President of the Whittier Conservancy, and Alan had been very active in a number of other issues. Also, elected in that election was Larry Haendiges, he ran the local plumbing business of Haendiges Plumbing, and because of some indiscretions in his election, he never was seated. He declined to be seated at that Council meeting when they swore in the new Council members, and because of that, several months later we appointed Janet Henke to serve that. We really had very like-minded people, especially regarding the hills issues at that point, so we had a viable Council and were able to really start working. As Mayor, I started working on trying to make sure that the funding that went into the Prop. A. measure was adequate for Whittier, and we were very, very fortunate in that one of the major moving forces in seeing that whole Proposition A more forward. Anyway, Senator Frank Hill had worked for the City of Whittier in Prop. B, but he was a local Assemblyman, a Republican, somebody that I had made very angry when he ran

for election by endorsing against him and there was not a great affection or closeness there. But I've got to say that when Helen and I were elected in 1990, one of the first public figures that ever came in was Frank, who took us to breakfast and said "I want to work with you. You're elected officials and I want to work with you." So we started building a pretty close relationship. I really found him to be very refreshing. He was one of these guys that just liked to solve problems and not get idealogical and wanted people to work together. So we got fairly close and Frank was, had come up with this concept about how to get a simple majority for Park Bonds and what they came up with was the idea of using Assessment Districts. Assessment Districts didn't require a 2/3 vote, but there was a lot of controversy because, what was happening was a lot of people were using to get around Proposition 13. School Districts, Municipalities and so on were forming these special Assessment Districts for special needs and doing them by just the vote of the governing body so you'd have 3 Supervisors vote to put, to bond, you know, these millions of dollars of bonds, and it was obvious that that was going to get kicked out one way or the other. Well, Frank came up with an idea to put together Assessment Districts for Park Bonds, provided it was simple majority but it required it to go to the vote of the people. He, working with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Lands, had come up with this concept about how to put that measure together. Frank had shephered it throuogh the Legislature and it was now law and so they were able to start moving forward with Prop. A to allow it to become a simple majority vote. They were trying to structure the Bond Act, and originally, we were supposed to get $15 million dollars, as as with Prop. B, and maybe some more and really, in deference to Frank having done all this work, this was his area, so they then did some polling and they found out they needed to down-size the Bond by about a third, because they didn't think they could pass it at the assessment. I think it was, went from roughly $680 million dollar to a $540 million dollar, or something of that order, bond. When that happened, suddenly the City of Whittier was sitting there with $10 million dollars instead of $15 million dollars in the act. So Frank and Helen and I decided we would go down and talk to our Supervisor, who at that time was Dean Dana. Dean was a fairly new Supervisor in this area, there had been a re-Districing and he ended up with what's known as the 4th Supervisorial District and Whittier became part of that. So, as a result, we sat down with him and his Chief Deputy, which was Don Knabe, who later became Supervisor in his own right, and talked about this, and Frank and I had decided that the City of Whittier was not getting a fair shake because we, because of Frank's efforts on the thing, and the fact that you were not balancing money properly from the east side to the west side. Santa Mountains Conservancy, which is the big 800 pound gorilla in these areas, was getting some $30 million dollars on the east side for their efforts, largely due to the....

CH: On the east side or the west side?

BH: I'm sorry, on the west side, in the Santa Monicas. And, we're over here on the east side, we were getting $10 million basically in this area, and altogether something maybe like $15 million dollars in all the west side.

CH: Can I interject and ask you to, you mentioned the Trust for Public Lands and the Santa Monica Conservancy. Can you just define those for us?

BH: Yes. Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, which I did not realize at the time, I always throught they were a group that was basically a local group, like the Friends of the Hills, formed to work on the Santa Monicas, actually is a State agency. It's part of the Resources Agency in the State of California and they had, again, started out as a small local group, gotten some joint-powers agreement put together and finally had managed to get themselves put in as a State Agency. Basically were in the incredibly huge enterprise of buying the Santa Monica Mountains, which is an area of probably 60,000 acres throughout that area, and were very well known, and very, very very good at putting out these Grants and so on, and making sure they were a part of it, due in no small effort to the fact that they had a brilliant General Director, Executive Director Joe Edmiston, who had been the Executive Director from the founding, one of the great personalities in Southern

California. The Trust for Public Lands isa non-profit organization, came out of the Nature Conservancy. Nature Conservancy is basically set up to buy and help faciliate public agencies buying and preserving sensitive ecological lands where there are endangered species and that sort of thing. Trust for Public Lands came out, cause they also saw a need for other lands that didn't really have endangered species on them, for those lands to be acquired as everything from city parks to wildernes open space. And so it is an organization that raises about half their money through donations and about half through what you might think of as real estate commissions on helping facilitate these transactions. By being a non-profit trust it would allow people to donate property or money to them, get a tax write-off, and they have a tremendous group of people that are very knowledgeable in financing matters and land law matters and so on, so they are a great resource, and we came to use them at a later date in our Whittier acquisition efforts.

CH: Now, let me get you back to negotiating--it was you and Frank Hill negotiating with Dean Dana?

BH: Right, and Helen Rahder was down there, too, so Frank, who is just a hard-ball negotiator, basically said "This just isn't fair" and then he said to Don Knabe, who was leading the discussion, you know, "Don, it's just not fair that your, that the east side is not getting money that the west side is." Well, the Supervisor's Office basically had just a very very major problem with theSanta Monica Mountains Conservancy, I mean, they disliked them in no uncertain terms. So they became and immediate ally with us for arguring for that money. And, in some very, very hard-ball negotiations, mainly with Dean Dana, Don Knabe, and Frank Hill, over the next few days, we wrested $7 million dollars away from Santa Monica in the preservation of the Whittier hills. That came about in a strange way--rather than have, re-write the Bill at that point, and what the leverage was in all that is that Dana would vote against putting it on the ballot if they didn't support, so..

CH: So Whittier would get $17 million?

BH: So now it brought us to $17 million dollars. That was the way it was finally done. The $7 million dollars, though, had a kind of a funny attachment to it. Instead of re-writing the Bill and just giving us $7 million dollars, what they did, they had Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy form a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Whittier and the Whittiers Hills Conservation Authority. But, subject to Board Approval, it all had to be spent in the Whittier Hills. The Board would consist of 2 members of the Santa Monica Conservancy Board, 2 members of the Whittier City Council, and then a third member, a fifth member to be elected from the Whittier environmental community.

CH: Can you define Joint Powers Authority?

BH: Yes, Joint Powers Authority is a legal instrument under California Law that allows 2 or more governmental entities to come together to accomplish some public purpose that might be outide of the scope of the entities themselves. For example, there are Joint Powers Agreement like the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, which is, I can't remember, 24 cities or so within LA County that have come together to manage sewage control throughout all the District, and the water reclamation and trash pick up and disposal, so not any one city could have done it on it's own very efficiently, but by putting all the cities together, you can form large regional solutions to that.

CH: Am I understanding correctly, then, that the $7 million block of this money was controlled by the Joint Powers Authority and not directly by Whittier, but then the $10 million would be under the control of the City?

BH: Exactly right. In effect, because Whiitier had, by carefully controlling the fifth appointment, the City of Whittier had majority control of that Joint Powers Agreement.

CH: I was going to ask, what was the agenda of the Conservancy to get this, at least, partial control?

BH: Well, I think the point is that it turned out to be one of the best things that ever happened to us because Santa Monica came in and we had a chance to meet Joe Edmiston and a number of the Board members over there, and really get an idea about how you do land acquisitions. Here's an organization that at that point had probably bought $250 million dollars worth of property and negotiated with probably hundreds of different property situations and was really knowledgeable and when they came in, although their feelings were a little bent to begin with, they took it, they decided to make lemonade out of the lemons, and decided to work with us very closely. As a result, both of us benefitted tremendously. They broaded their base out here to the east and became invloved in a number of projects as a later development, which helped them probably politically. They now have friends in other places, in the legislature for other things and, on the other hand, we gained this tremendous amount of expertise and help. So it worked really well for us.

CH: I don't want to destroy your chronology, but, I wonder, was this the beginning of the idea of establishing the corridor that would go, the wildlife corridor that would be continuous from the Santa Monica Mountains down to, what is it..?

BH: Cleveland National Forest.

CH: OK, yes.

BH: The, well, yes and no. After the 1990 election and our subsequent in starting to acquire property, a number of people had contacted me. People in La Habra Heights were undergoing a major battle --let's see, we had to turn the tape over and I probably lost my train of thought. I think I was talking alittle bit about how Wicker got involved. And to jump ahead a little bit, in La Habra Heights, there was a group that became known as the Committee to Save the General Plan, fighting a development out there in Powder Canyon,called, of course, housing tract and they were looking for expertise, so they came to myself and Helen Rahder, and basically asked, how do you fight a City Council battle and we became in touch with those peole and we also had inquiries from some people in Diamond Bar, the Tonner Canyon Conservancy, and so we had started to get these contacts of people that were, in surrounding areas, and we knew that there was this connection, that these animals moved up and down in the wildlife corridor. Basically, from the Whittier Narrows area to the Cleveland National Forest, and we began to think a little bit about shouldn't we maybe get together and just talk about some of those issues, so I'll come back to that maybe chronologically a little bit. But that was how that came about.

CH: Back to Prop. A., I don't think the election has been held yet...

BH: Well, anyway we did win that battle, as far as getting the money broken out. The entire Council here went into a real effort to get the Proposition passed, and we started working with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy that was working very hard to put together this general concept of how you pass a major, major bond act like that, and worked with a number of those people. So, we had some connections by the time the election was won in November of 1992. Good working relationships with a number of the Santa Monica people. When we won that election, which did actually almost get two-thirds vote, but not quite, so it was absolutely vital that it had a simple majority requirements. That finally became passed and Whittier finally had its hands on lots and lots andlots of money that we could start negotiating, and I think the funniest story out of that, right after that election, when we had the money, Jack Mele, who had been on the Council with me and had been a Mayor of the City of Whittier, and who I had good relations with although I had been on the opposite side the effort to remove appendices A and B, Jack came up to me and was very excitied and said he had been talking to Chevron and that they

were actually interested in selling the land to us for probably something like $25 million dollars, so, from $125 million dollars it had come to $25 million, they said, Bob what do you think about that? And I said,"Jack, like I told you before, we haven't even sat down at the table yet." So that was our first item of business was to sit down at the table with Chevron and to see if we could start talking with them. I've got to go back a little bit, too, and then understand the bitterness that had gone on with Chevron because in the 1992 election, this would be the situation when we had the three Council seats up, it was pretty obvious that we had made a lot of momentum against Chevron about the Chevron development. There had been a lot of little news articles and a lot of argument about should Hadley go through and the Daily News had run a poll, just asking people and that had come overwhelmingly that people were against Hadley going through. So there was obviously, there had been some momentum built up and it was obvious to all of us that the critical election was 1990 election, because if the pro-development Council stayed in place, that they would not challenge the County on anything they wanted to do with that area, our sphere of influence. But if, on the ther hand, there was a majority environmentally concerted community, then we would see a very difficult time for them to go through with their development. What they decided to do, what Chevron decided to do, was to secretly pour money into that campaign. And our first indication of it was, sometime around probably July or August of 1991, with the election on the horizon in 1992, there was a telephone poll being taken in Whittier and through our many, many contacts, we got some interesting information on that, and one of the information basically was, it was obvious it had something to do with Chevron because there were talking about developments and property owner rights, and wouldn't you rather see Hadley go through and wouldn't you like to have nice houses rather than ugly brown sillsides, and those type of very, very biased questions. We were able to actually find out that out in Silverado, Colorado, was where this was actually being conducted out of, although we couldn't find out for sure who was paying for it, so we knew comething was up. Then we went into the election and there was a group in Whittier which had really it's roots back in the 1978 election--it had originally been known as the Committee for Good Government, and later became "COG" here in town, which was a group basically of conservative Whittierites that wanted to see good government but always had been tied up with the pro-development situations...

CH: Were they pro-development or..?

BH: Definitely pro-development. A lot of these, the people who formed it were the people who had been very involved in working with the developers in the 1978 election, never particularly high on the Bob Henderson candidacy or the Jerry MacDonald candidacy. So, anyway, what Chevron decided to do was to wash, and I think that term is legitimate, because it was obviously designed to hide the money, to wash it through this committee. So what they did basically is to give them $40,000 to help pro-development candidates that were running in that election.

CH: Chevron gave "COG"?

BH: "COG" --the way they did it, based on this polling data, they decided to secretly spend this polling money to turn out voters that they thought would be particularly friendly to their cause. The funniest thing about the election was, they did turn them out, they had one of the higher turnouts, not quite as high as 1990 when they had all this furor in the election, but almost that high, probably the second highest turnout certainly in the last 50 years. As Bob Brooks, who was the Chevron representative, the guy doing the development, he said, "We turned them all out but we didn't understand that they were going to vote the same was as everybody else, you know, they lost the election just terribly, so it had happened. We knew about it because of leaks within COG but decided not to make an issue of it in the campaign, analyzing that it wasn't getting done what they thought was getting done, and we couldn't prove it at that point, but after the election it became, when Chevron had to file their disclosure papers, which was July of 1992, 3 months after the election, at that point it became a major cause celebrin Whittier and Chevron took a tremendous amount of heat from it as did COG, and it really set back everything that had been

done in that it was, it somewhat broke Chevon's will, I think, because they realized that they were now with a community that they just couldn't win in and it became a problem.

CH: Is that when they decided to close down the wells, do you think?

BH: No, no. They had been closing that for at least 2 years prior to that and they spent almost 4 years closing the well.s They had just realized that the economics of running that field out there were gone. The reason they closed so many wells was that so many of them had been closed for 50 years, but it was a very old oil field that was owned by a number of people, but Standard Oil being the primary one--bought it in the twenties. But there were wells that went back into the 1800's, back when they used to haul redwood derricks in on mule, and drill and so on. But the intersting thing that I've learned over the years is that, in this wildlife corridor area, the reason that it still is a wildlife corridor primarily is because there were oil companies that preserved it and drilled on it and never actually built much in the way of structures, so it stayed together for that. Three of the four largest oil companies in the United States were, had their bounties in the Whittier, Chino, Puente Hills area. Standard Oil, Unocal, and Texaco all started within these hills, so there's a lot of history tied up in this area. Anyway, to go back to Chevron, right after the election, Grace Napolitano had been elected Assemblywoman, and I had backed Grace in that election and the same time Prop. A. passed, and she was very enamored with the hills and the preservation battle for it, and she said she would do anything that she could to help us after the election. Indeed, she did know some of the Chevron people, and she set up a meeting for us, for Bob Brooks and I, to sit together in her office and see if we could start negotiating on this property.

CH: Bob Brooks, again, is the Chevron representative who tried to defeat the Proposition?

BH: That's right and also he was a project manager for this area and , therefore, was in charge of this particular development. Bob's an interesting guy--we became actually pretty good friends, finally, although we had some incredibly bitter arguments. Bob is a black man and he is from Virginia, has a very cultured delivery, very pleasant demeanor, and so on, and a very, very tough negotiator. So, we had some very testy discussions going on because we felt very betrayed that they had tried to buy the Whittier election, and did that, but I told him we needed to get over that, and so we started into a period of negotiations which really went on for about 18 months, in some degree or another, where we would meet and talk and discuss different ways to get to price, different ways to look at value, different scenerios, we looked at, because remember, at this point, they were looking at $25 million dollars, and we had really $17 million to spend, and, but what he kept trying to do was keep that $25 million dollar figure and so we would look at, well, pay us $15 million dollars to let us build 200 homes, or we would look at, well, what if we put it all on the east side of Colima Blvd, how would that scenario work out, would you allow us some homes there and so on. We, I spent an awful lot of time with financial people and so on, and we tried to figure out what the property was worth. I think the best advice that ever came down was from my friend Jerry Mac Donald who was a very successful CPA, really looked at this thing early on and he said, actually you should pay him $1 for it, it's not worth any more than that, and the reason for it is because, his contention was that there is no way that they could ever really build the project that they had. That the cost of building Hadley was too high, and therefore they couldn't get the whole project going and that the environmental concerns that would come about from the closure of this many wells, and so on, would become an intolerable obstacle for them to overcome.

CH: Because of the environmental laws and other things aside fromthe...

BH: Yes, some of it because of environmental laws, although environmental laws really are very lax on oil fields. The old companies wrote the laws years and years ago, and, if you look, I mean oil is not a toxic waste. Oil is a contaminant but it's, it can be cured, and so there's some real arguments about that. On the other hand, they put some nasty things in a lot of those wellls. They used to improve wells, their flow, by putting arsenic in them and cadmium, heavy metals, and

things like, so, lot and lots of questions about that. I think ultimately he was right, I think that it was practically an impossible situation. On the other hand, we had some money and we wanted to get it accomplished, but on the other hand, we certainly didn't want to pay too much. So, as this discussion went on, I became more and more convinced that the property was worth much less than $25 million and probably, ultimately, it was worth more like $10 million dollars. So, at one point, at a meeting at the Cat and Custard Cup out on Whittier Blvd, a little restaurant there, we had a discussion and Bob said, well, make me an offer for the property and I'll see if I can possibly get it. And I said, Bob, it's not worth more than $10 million dollars. And he said, well, we can't get to a price on that, and I said, fine, let's just not talk for awhile, and when you make some more movement, come back and see us. We had done one other really critical thing in the battle, at that point. In November of 1992, there was a re-election of Supervisor Dana. He was very, very concerned about this new area of Whittier that had been added to his area. He had been pushed into a run-off election and was really concerned that he could lose it, because the typical situation was when you put an incumbent into a run-off, the money now starts flowing to the other side, and if ther are any things, problems, in the background, they're going to come forward. So he was desperately looking for support and so on. And, Alan Zolnekoff ran into a friend of his who lives in Whittier, when he was running for Council, and Alan said, well, you know, we want Dana to support us on the hillsides and so on, and so, finally, we got a call and it basically said, can you put together the Whittier City Council to support Supervisor Dana? I said, why don't we have a meeting? So, I was Mayor, by that point, so Alan and I met with them at the old Reuben's restaurant, which was out in the Whittwood Center, and met with Supervisor Dana. Well, it ended up we had Supervisor Dana and 4 of his aides. We said, basically, look, they only thing that we wanted was, we wanted the County to do as they had done in other areas, which was basically just follow the City's building plans as respects property in their sphere of influence. The Sphere of Influence, by the way..

CH: I was going to ask, is that a legal term?

BH: Yes, it's a legal term. In California, we have what's known as LAFCO, which is the Local Area Formation Committee, and the concept is that all County areas of entry should become part of cities, and, what was happening, in the 50's, in particular, is that cities were bidding against each other by going out and grabbing new development, encouraging them coming to the city if they generated tax revenue. But not if there were just housing, which cost money. So, for example, in Whittier, the Mall down on Washington Blvd. somehow became part of the City of Santa Fe Springs by a little psueda podia that came up from Santa Fe Springs, up several blocks of residential neighborhoods and then they just surrounded this little economic base. It makes no sense from a planning point of view. So, to get around that sort of thing, California instituted these local formation commissions that have to approve boundaries. So, they then drew what they called Sphere of Influence, and that would be the area that, if it ever incoporated, it had to go into the city within that Sphere of Influence. All the Whittier hills up to the ridgeline, to the top of the hills, basically, are in the Whittier Sphere of Influence. Dana was very supportive of that. He said indeed that would have been his policy as a Supervisor, that he'd be behind it and that he would tell Chevron in no uncertain terms, and he wrote us a letter to that effect. So, at that point, we had a 5-0 endorsement of the Supervisor out in this area, and as history recorded, he got elected and got 61% of the vote in Whittier. So, it worked out very well. Chevron obviously had that now to think about, too, that they were going to have to come under Whittier Hillside Initiative, which is very restrictive, and they would have a problem. But, we couldn't make any more forward progress with them, and so, I was using the Trust for Public Lands, at this point, to help us in some of the negotiations, but was doing the individual meetings with Bob Brooks, because we had this rapport, by this point, and we were trying to get along. We did all these dozens and dozens of scenarios, and so, we decided to proceed. One of the things we had already proceeded with was that, in 1994, we bought our first property under Proposition A. On Jan. 1, 1994, we recorded the acquisition of the Child-Hall estate, which is a piece of property up along the ridgelines in the Whittier Hills, just to the left of the water tank, and that was a strategic purchase,, because we

bought it for about $7,000 an acre, because they wanted to sell--it was practically an un-developable site, and we wanted to get something in quickly that was low priced, that didn't set a standard of buying high priced land, so that had been one of the situations. And then, with this breakdown in communications between Chevron and ourselves, I asked the Trust for Public Lands to do nothing but concentrate on the Unocal, I'm sorry, on the, yes, the Unocal development. The Unocal development, excuse, me not development but property, was about a 300 acre site. It also had abandoned oil wells on it, but very, very few by comparison, and it's the property that basically lies in the valley, again to the south and east of Colima Blvd., and alonside the Friendly Hills development. We finally reached an agreement with them. That was important because, in effect, we were starting to surround Chevron and cut off their access for the development of Hadley. So, we reached that agreement and that, again, very difficult negotiations when you're dealing with oil companies--they think they are so powerful, they have an awful lot of people who work for them and they spend an awful lot of money on attornies--but we were able to buy that property and close it in Dec. of 1995. I think we probably actucally made the agreement some time around April of 1995 and, at that point, Chevron broke. It was with a couple of weeks of making that agreement, which we bought for about $12,000 an acre, or around $3 million dollars. They then broke and called the Trust for Public Lands and said, we think we can make a deal. And we said, we really don't want to sit down again unless you're thinking about something in the area of the property values that we paid for Unocal, and we're not sure that we can get to those values with you. They said, yes, we think we're serious and we'd like to sit down. So, that then started a process where TPL (Trust for Public Land) was meeting very regularly with Bob Brooks and working with him. Finally, they came up with an idea that they would go for what is known as a Habitat Preservation Act, an HBA, which is under Rule 10 of the Engangered Species Act, which allows for someone who had to disturb sensitive lands, and by sensitive lands they're talking about where they are endangered species, which there were gnatcatchers on Chevron. Chevron owned two other parcels; one in Montebello and another one in Fullerton that had gnat-catchers on them, and what they want to do, in effect, was to trade some of that land for preserving land here in Whittier, and, under the auspices of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Federal Agency, under that organization, if they could get an approval, then they can do what was called "a taking" , which means, basically, that they could kill the animals by grading the land. Those properties in exchange for creating larger and better habitats somewhere else, preserving. Whittier, because we had this connected habitat, where we have properties of very large size that were all connected, was considered to be much better habitat for the long term preservation of gnatcatchers than little parcels that are fragmented, that are just isolated by themselves even though they may have gnatcatchers on them today, they won't tomorrow, because they'll eventually die out. So, they thought that they could make that kind of a situation and proceded with doing planning under this concept with that agency for about 600 acres. Now, the thing that's interesting to the City of Whittier on that, that means they have to give you the 600 acres, they can't take a price for it because then they're not doing any mitigation, as respects the other property. So we then started going back and forth about what was the other 400 acres worth, and went back and forth. They wanted $7½ million dollars for it, and back and forth, and finally, one day, I got a call from Bob Brooks. He said, I want to get this thing resolved, can I come down and talk to you. And so I said sure, come on in, and so he came into my office in Whittier and we bantered back and forth for awhile, and then he finally just said, All right, give me and offer and I'll see if I can make it possible fly. I said, oh Bob, I said, you know , I just dont, I've never thought this property was worth what you think it's worth. And he said, just give me a figure. And I said, ok, $5 million dollars. He thought for a minute and then said, I think I can make that fly. Will you give me another $250,000 cause we've got to pay some of these study costs that you're going to make, all this pollution clean up, cause we could see that they were going to have to do probably $2 million dollars clean-up work in addition, that was part of our situation.

CH: On the 400 acres?

BH: Well, on the, all of the property, but they still had a lot of clean-up work to do and our

problem was that anything with toxics they had to take off,and then anything that was a hazardous material, which is like oil and that type of thing, they had to do certain mitigations on that. We we had this elaborate wording which was worked out, which is basically up to about 2 million dollars of additional pay-out. So, after some reluctance, that was the deal. We shook hands and that became the contract and for the next several months we put it together. So we ended up buying that property, 125 million dollar property for $5,250,000, and that was the end of the great Chevron site.

CH: After how many hours did you negotiate with Bob Brooks?

BH: Oh, I mean, in total, I mean several hundred, but it's funny how it finally came down. Now, what was driving them wasn't just their paternal instincts or the fact that they were sure we could do it, but they were also in the process of just closing up all their operations in California, getting out of the country, putting money into Russia, in particular, and also into Indonesia. They were trying to turn alot of cash at that point, they realized they had a lot of pollution clean-up problems that were left and so on, so, if you think about it from the fact, that from the time of closure, they probably never actually made a dime off the land. It probably cost them more than that because the clean-up work that they had done before, we required them to do the final clean-up work that obviously cost them millions of dollars, so..

CH: But they made profits over how many years...

BH: Oh, that's right, and I don't feel sorry for them at all, but that was the truth of the matter, that they were getting out because it was time for them to get out. Same thing in the Unocal. Unocal actually, the confounding point on that and the reason that we pushed that deal a little bit harder than maybe we should have and included it, two reasons, one was, we knew it closedChevron off and made it much more difficult for them, but the other thing was, they were going into a bulk sale of all their developable lands in California and we got it done just in time to keep it out of the builk sale, so that we wouldn't have to start over again with negotiations. Kind of a cute story--when we first started trying to deal with Unocal, we started with them right after the election also, trying to have establishments..

CH: 92?

BH: It was 92, so early 93, when the money.. And I had contacted their representative, the name now escapes me, out here in Brea, and they kept, they were going to talk to us and then we would get shifted from this division to that division, up north to Bakersfield, back to L.A. , and poor Trust for Public Lands were just going crazy trying to deal with these various people. And we just couldn't seem to make them take a real honest to goodness sensible negotiation. So, I was sitting at my desk one afternoon, and I thought, gee I wonder if any of our local Representative could help use, so I called our fairly new Congressman at that time, Esteban Torres, who had gotten Whittier in one of the re-Districing situations and that I had met, and his son-in-law, Jamie Caruso, is, was his main field man here in town, so I called Jamie and said, Do you think the Congressman knows anybody at Unocal. And he said, You know, that's funny, I think he knows Rodger Birch, who is the President. I said, Do you suppose there's any way the Congreeman could make a presentation to us, all we want to do is buy it at fair market value, but we just can't get them to deal with us seriously. He said, well, Bob, you know, it's 4 o'clock so it's pretty late back east but let me see if I can call the Congressman and see and I'll give you a call in the next few days. So, that was about 4:15, I left the office and went home, was there a few minutes after 5, walked in and the phone's ringing. So, I pick up and it's Jamie saying I've got the Congressman on the other line. I said fine, so I got ahold of, picked up and had a 3 way conference going. There was Esteban and Esteban said, you know, I just took a chance and I called Roger Birch and said and explained the situation to him, I caught him in his office and I talked to him - he was here in L.A. And he said well, I'll certainly look into it, Congressman, I'll try to have somebody contact you. Well, about

two days later, I get a call from our contact a the Trust for Public Lands, and he's laughting. He said, I got this call from our local contact, I want to say his name is Chapman, anyway, the story goes as follows. Apparently, he is standing in line at the Brea planning counter, waiting for some project they're working on. His cell phone rings, he picks it up, and it says, this is Roger Beech. First of all, I want you to start dealing with the City of Whittier. He says, by the way, where the hell is the City of Whittier? (Laughter) So, we get a call back from Dave Sutton, who was doing our negotiation for our Trust for Public Land and worked for us for years, and did an excellent job, Dave gets a call back from him and he explains the story to him and he says, Tell Henderson, for Christ's sakes, don't ever call Roger Beech again, so we will negotiate, I promise you, we will negotiate!. And, honest to God, from that point on, they did negotiate in a straight line and we did get the deal down.

CH: Well, obviously you did need to call the President...(laughter)..what a great story.

BH: And we also got, at that point, Grace Napolitano also went out and got about 10 other Assemblymen and State Senators to sign a petition asking them to also deal with us. That went in at the same time, and so that whole thing did keep the focus, did break that deal open for us and that was how that deal came to be.

CH: Incredible. So you got first the little parcel, the Child's parcel from Unocal and then Chevron.

BH: Right, and Chevron closed also, I mean, it took months and months, I mean, that was probably the most elaborate fact-finding situation, actual negotiations, we spent hundreds and hundreds of hours on that and the attorneys, Tom Mauck, our City Manager, and give a point back and forth, and back and forth. All the toxic issues had to be addressed and, you know, learn more about all the various rules on toxics, and so on, and hazardous materials that I ever wanted to know.

CH: You had the Federal Government and that complicated it.

BH: Well, everything complicated it and, but it did close, it closed Dec. 26, 1995. But we probably we were in on, you know, both Unocal and Chevron, it probably took 7 to 8 months, at least, after we made the agreement to get the signing form, because they were just very complicated because of all the pollution issues and so on.

CH: Have you bought any other land?

BH: Yes, we've bought quite a big of additional land. I'm trying to think of the sequence of events. Maybe I ought to digress for a minute, too. The other thing that happened, that's just a real big picture item in all of this, is that, as Mayor, from 1992 to 94, when all this was breaking and becoming very citical, right after the Prop.A had passed and we were trying to get all the players together and understand about this relationship with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and deal with the Trust for Public Lands and get them involved in how to to this. In, what I think was probably April or May of 1993, we decided to put on a helicopter tour and the Fire Department out here has been wonderful, they keep the helicopter up behind the water tank in Whittier, on our property...

CH: On Greenleaf?

BH: Yes, right up behind the water tank. They have a station up there, they keep about 10 people up there during the fire season and then they have this helipad so that they can respons very quickly if fire is in the Whittier hills. They've been very nice, that if they're not busy and they can do it as part of their training, they'll fly local officials around for us and show them the sights,

and so on. So I had set up one of these tours for Trust for Public Lands, Joe Edmiston from the Santa Monica Conservancy, and the City Manager and some people, I think there were 6 of us. Helen Rahder was there. Helen was the Mayor Pro-tem at the time and so we decided to go on this flight. We did, and we flew over the area, and then I took them to lunch at Hacienda Golf Club to sit and talk about the whole thing and what our game plan was going to be for the future. Well, as Mayor, on of your official duties is to sit on the Los Angeles County Sanitation District Board of Directors, and all the mayors from all the cities involved in this part of the County sit. The big item that was going forward at that time was expansion of the landfill. Puent Hills Landfill wanted to expand where they could put trash....

CH: Puente Hills landfill is off Workman Mill Road and below the 60 Freeway?

BH: Yes, it's basically at the junction, if you will, of the Pomona and the 60 Freeway, like you say more correctly off of Workman Mill Road and it is the second largest landfill in the country. It services about half of L.A. County's trash needs. The landfill had been given 10 years in additional use permits, so that every 10 years they have to come up and make the decision of whether they are going to close the landfill or continue. If they're going to continue, in this case, they need to expand.

CH: And you were on the board at that time?

BH: Right, on the board, the Board of Directors at that time. In actual fact, Helen Rahder had gone to alot of thoses meeting for me because, as Mayor, I didn't want to be Mayor but I was Mayor because I was the only Council member who had more than 2 years experience at that point. I told them I would take it for 2 years to help them in transition, but it's not something, that if you run a business full time that you really want to be doing, let alone being involved in this land negotiations. But, at any rate, so I asked Helen to cover most of these, and I'd go to maybe every third or fourth one. So, at the meeting she was bringing me up to date on the problems on that and the fact that the people in Hacienda Heights, I'm sorry, yes, in Hacienda Heights, near the landfill, were very, very distrubed about the expansion of the landfill, were fighting it bitterly and she really felt heartfelt concern for them, but, it was obvious to her, that of the 14 members that would vote on that, if she voted the other way--she was asking for my adivice--that she'd be the only one. So, what could we do about it? Joe Edmiston was asking some questions about the landfill and Joe said, you know, there really ought to be some way that we could get some money for the purchasing of lands out of mitigation from landfill and there I had probably my only creative idea I think since I had been on the Council but, it had, it was a good idea at that point. I said, you know, suppose you did the following. Suppose you set up a mitigation fund, the concept being that you ought to put some money aside from the landfill, because it is causing a social harm in an area, and therefore it should mitigate that to the extent it can. One, it is causing two problems: one is it had the potential for causing damage to the homes near there. I mean, their contention is that they would be hurt, the property values go down because the landfill is closer to them. The Sanitation District's point of view was, that's not true and we have landfill out in Palos Verde were there are $700,000 homes within 200 yards of the landfill, and it doesn't hurt it because of the way that we take care of it and other matters. And I said, so, number l, that's a potential and I said, number two, there is the problem of just filling these canyons over the years has taken away habitat and they could buy replacement habitat fromthe same eco system in the same area. There was a Marina Del Ray did a mitigation where they bought wet lands in San Diego County, for some 17 million dollars, to mitigate expansion of that, and I said, this is right in everybody's back yard would help, you know, people could hike on these trails, people could enjoy the nature and so on, and I said it also guarantees that they can't manipulate for expansion, which is what they've said, they were going to, they want a 20 year footprint on an area that would go over 20 years, and they wanted to be able to put trash in it. In the 20 years, they would be closed and that's the end of the situation, although the permit that they would file for was just 10 years, so they have another 10 years that would have come up after that. But, I said, so ok, let's

do the following. Let's ask them to put away a dollar a ton for every ton of trash that goes into the landfill. Let's have them put away $1 a ton, and that fund could be used for two purposes: 1, for wildlife mitigation by buying replacement habitat, maintaining it and re-vegetating it in the extent that is necessary, so it's really taking care of, it's service, not just bought, but also paid for for maintenanace, for rangers, for trail maintenance and things like that. So it didn't become a burden on the people and then they could also, is they could set up an arbitration process, that you can come in and say, my property values have been hurt, here's my appraiser, the District has to hire an appraiser, if they disagree about value they hire a third appraiser at their agreement, and the people are simply awarded that money, if it's true, so it's a low cost easy way to prove that they've been damaged. I said, if the District's right, it's a no cost situation, if they're wrong then they should pay for it. That gets them some shelter for the newly elected Supervisor, who is going to have some problems with this area because they are beating up on him terrible, and I said, we almost can go through anyway, so why not get something good out of it.

CH: Sounds like a win/win.

BH: Yes, and Jo said to me, he said, well, yes, Bob, you know, $1 a ton, how much can that be? I said, well, you've got to remember, Joe, they put 3.7 million tons a year into that landfill. He said, Oh, well, now, now we're talking some money. So what I did on that is I first called Frank Hill, Senator Frank Hill now, and explained it to him and said, Frank, I know you were involved in this before, what do you think about it? He said, I think it's a good plan, why don't you go talk to the District. So, with that backing, I then called the District and went and sat down with, no, first I called Don Knabe, over at the Supervisor's office, and explained it to Don, because I knew he would have a big play, and I said, look, I think it's good protection for you guys, I think it's good public policy and I think you should back it. So, he checked with Dana and came back and said, OK, I think it's good public policy, I think we can do it, get back to us with more details. So, then I went down and I sat down with Chuck Carey and Chuck is the Executive Director, Chief Engineer for the Sanitation District and probably one of the finest bureaucrats I have ever met in my life, very, very smart man, an engineer by training, not a political type of guy, but very knowledgeable and Chuck heard me through on the whole thing, said, well, what else can the money be used for and I said, Nothing, we'd tie it up with the Joint Powers Agreement formed between L. A. County Sanitation District, City of Whittier, and we would form this group and we would, I would recommend that there be an appointment from the Hacienda Heights Improvement Association, which is the, it's not a city over there, it's an incorporated County area, that it's kind of their only governing body and the group that's most in the face of the landfill people all the time, and then therefore they should have some kind of representation and that could be appointed by the Supervisor's office. I said, I think..(tape change)

BH: Anyway, he, Chuck Carey just, he asked about other uses, how maybe it could be taken away, and so on, how can we tie it up and I said, well, we've given some thought to it, the Joint Powers Agreement, the fact that it would become part of the official mitigation of the conditional use permit, meaning that it would have to be written into place as a mitigation measure, meaning that you can't change it once it's done and it's gone through the approval process, it's locked in, so some greedy group later couldn't come and use it for other purposes,and so on. Chuck, at that point, just said, you know, this is just great government policty. This is something we should do. This is right. I don't like the fact it increases fees because that, the Sanitation District, because they operate so much cheaper than any other landfill in the area, like about 1/2 to 1/3, everytime they put an extra dollar on their fees, everybody in the County goes up a dollar, because they're the bench mark, and he really worries alot about that, he hates to see that, but, he says, it's not, he said, I can see it though as being a good public policy. It's not simply like there are all these other jackals out here trying to get it up so they can make more money. He said I will support that in front of the board. So, with that in place, we were able, then, to start working on other people. I got other government people involved, I , probably one of the biggest mistakes in my life, I called Hilda Solis, Senator Solis, who is an old friend from her being on the Rio Hondo College Board, and I

said, I've got this great idea – oh, by the way, Chuck Carey did amend one thing, he says, Don't put the mitigation for the arbitration fund in that. He said, Just keep it as a mitigation fund for the wildlife. He says, It's never going to cost us anything, and I'm willing to have the district back that up. In other words, if there are people's values that are hurt, then we should just pay for it. And he says, Don't tie it to the mitigation fund. So we took that out. But we'll do it. But we'll set up the arbitration fund. I said fine. So I called Hilda Solis, and I said, Hilda, I've got this great plan, you know, I explained it to her, she said, "Oh, that's wonderful, Bob, it's just a win-win thing." I said, But I can't talk to the people at Hacienda Heights, because they just think that we're betraying them, because we're going to go in favor of this development, but I said, I'll explain to them why I'm, I think we're getting the most we can possibly get out of… great. So she set up a meeting for a couple people, and I don't remember the other gentleman, but Jack Yorn [?], very active guy over there. Civil Engineer. And vehemently against the expansion, but I met with those two people and Hilda in her office, and proceeded to explain this idea. And they all liked the idea of the mitigation funds, but were adamant that we couldn't possibly, you know, that we should really vote against this. I explained to them, I said, Look, I said, I'm not just one of these politicians that just wants to go down in flames, why should I vote, you're going to lose this thing 13-1 if we vote in favor, and I want to instead get something that's good. So okay, yeah well, we understand that. And from that point on, I was just lambasted – I mean, in print, in letters to the editor, and so on, as the guy who sold out, heh heh, the… Hacienda Heights. I mean, vicious stuff, from Jeff Yan [?] on me personally, and so on. So it was not the brilliant move I made… but anyway, we then went ahead and sold it, we had to make a presentation first at Regional Planning, and I did the presentation out there, and they adopted it, then it went back to the Board of Directors of the same district, and I made the presentation there, and plus Chuck Carey, you know, told them this is the right thing to do, and so on, and when that unanimously… it went onto the County Board of Supervisors, and because of political pressure, Dana Diven Deet [?] vote against the expansion of the landfill. He was coming up for election. And but the votes were in 4-1, and so it was extended. We then went through about a year and four or five months of legal challenges that HHIA filed. And the property owner of the property near there. And at the end of that time, though, the agreement was ratified. And we had already been receiving the 3.7 million dollars per year. Which, it tends to fall around that figure. It's a little less some years. But basically there's a… So that became the great money machine. If you think about that, I mean, from our 17 million dollars with Prop A, with which we were able to do a lot of things, this generated about 37 million dollars over a ten year period of time, and will generate some 74 million dollars since it will be extended. And it stays as part of the process. It's just going to be an extension of that. So at that point, it generates a huge amount of money, not only for acquisition, but again, the thing I'm proudest about out of it, we were also able to say it's for the maintenance and preservation of those lands, and re-vegetation, so that we are now paying for all of the ranger services. Threshing, trail maintenance, everything out of that fund, for all the wilderness lands within the district boundaries. And the district boundaries are basically the 605 freeway to the west, the 60 freeway to the north, Whittier Boulevard to the south, and Harbor Boulevard to the east. So that we've created this area that's a large segment of the wilderness corridor, and developed a funding source to buy and maintain the properties. And we've brought a number of properties with that money now. Specifically from there, we've bought Powder Canyon in the City of La Habra Heights, 531 acre beautiful canyon out there that was part of that great public battle, and is a story in itself, and how we've acquired that property, and we've acquired Sycamore Canyon, which is the property that's clear to the eastern boundary, and touches on Workman Mill Road, and…

CH: Would that be the western boundary, that area that you described?

BH: Yeah. The western boundary. Did I say eastern again? I have trouble with east/west, you know? But anyway, it's clear to the other side, and we are in negotiation right now on another seven properties, and are trying to buy all of each up, from Harbor Boulevard to the City of Whittier. We're in escrow on a parcel immediately adjacent to the Unocal property now, which is our most recent acquisition, so anyway, it's been a great money source, and sense of that, basically we've spent all of the 17 million now out of Prop A, and some 5 million dollars

something like that, so far, out of the mitigation fund, and are negotiating on a whole lot more.

CH: There's an elegant symmetry to funding this preservation fund from trash.

BH: Oh yes, we did a little video, my wife does multi-media stuff, and we actucally, for one little presentation, took a trash truck and worked it into a tree, with the idea, it makes a nice point and it's a really interesting social thing and it will become a model because I can tell you that there are a number of environmental groups that are just waiting for the next landfill expansion, or whatever, in areas, to try to tie this together. It makes a lot of sense to find a societal benefit for areas that are negatively impacted, this is a good process.

CH: Well, I think we'll close for today and I certainly want to continue this discussion when you have more free time, because there's a lot more to this story. Before we close, I just want to re-affirm that we have your consent to make this interview and the transcription that we do from it, available to the public

BH: You certainly do.

CH: Thank you very much, Councilman Henderson, we'll talk again.

BH: Thank you.