



Avalon City Council Weekly Update 08-15-14

City Manager/City Attorney's Offices - State Water Bond/ASM Lowenthal:

Yesterday, the Governor signed a \$7.54 billion water bond that contains funding for a variety of different types of water projects, including projects related to water storage, watershed protection, drinking water quality, water recycling, and overall water management. Catalina Island may be able to benefit from some of this funding. Of particular significance to the City of Avalon, \$100.5 million goes to the State Coastal Conservancy for watershed related projects, which include storm water capture and possible water supply projects with ecosystem benefits, in certain areas. Assembly Member Lowenthal was able to get an amendment to specifically add Catalina Island to the bond language and make sure that Catalina can apply for some of these funds. Without this amendment, it is unlikely that Catalina would have been able to get any of the \$100.5 million and the fact we are specifically mentioned will hopefully help our chances. This is great news. In addition, there is \$725 million for water recycling projects, including desalination projects, and Catalina is eligible to apply for some of these funds. There will be a competitive grant process to get any of these funds. Having said this, Joe Byrne from the City Attorney's Office has advised that the desal "pot of money" is particularly interesting in that there is a 50% local costs share, but very few other conditions (unlike other components of the bond). Potentially, in a perfect world, this could be a perfect fit for Avalon!

City Manager's Office – Intergovernmental Relations:

At the monthly Gateway Council of Governments (COG) City Managers' Meeting on Thursday of this week in South Gate, Congresswoman Janice Hahn (D-San Pedro, 44th District) spoke about her efforts regarding the Congressional Port Caucus (she is the Co-Chair), and H.R. 5101, the National Freight Network Trust Fund Act of 2014 (our Congressman, Alan Lowenthal, is a cosponsor of the bill). H.R. 5101 seeks to create a dedicated funding source from existing federal tax revenue collected at the ports for proposed funding for the National Freight Network, roads/railways connecting or networking to a port, on-dock rail, projects that appear in a State freight plan, projects that appear in a regional transportation plan, and high freight volume roadway or rail corridors that provide port connectivity. Considering Avalon's reliance on ports, I will be bringing for City Council review and consideration at a near-future meeting a proposed resolution offering support for the bill.

Recreation Department - "Harbor Polo":

With the recent addition of the water polo court to the Harbor, The Recreation Department has been contacted by several teams, clubs, tournament organizers and facilities interested in hosting water polo retreats and tournaments in Avalon Bay. The first of these groups is scheduled for next weekend, with another trying to squeeze dates in before the school year begins!

Recreation Department - Joe Machado Field/City Facilities/Water Rationing:

The City's agronomist, Kelly Parkins, will be spending Wednesday, August 20th on the island to review the water rationing plan of the City, including Joe Machado Field (which she reviewed three weeks ago), the Cemetery, and downtown planters and parks. Her written report will include recommendations for cultural practices (watering, mowing, etc.), drought recommendations, and effects of non-watering at specific locations.

Recreation Department - Stand Up Paddle Board (SUP) Rack:

The new stand up paddle board (SUP) rack is partially constructed and will be completed by early next week! The rack will be placed in the space across from Del Sol on Crescent Avenue, and will provide lockable year-round storage for SUP boards for those interested in renting a slot from the City.

Recreation Department - Scheyden Catalina Air Show:

The Scheyden Catalina Air Show Special Event Permit was received Thursday, August 7 for their proposed October 4th event. Staff and safety personnel are reviewing their requests and will have the first pre-event meeting in the coming weeks.

Finance Department - Fiscal Year 2013 Financial Statements:

This week we issued the FY2013 financial statements as well as the requisite SAS 114, SAS 115 and GANN Appropriations Limit reports. Copies of each of these reports have previously been sent to Council Members under separate cover. This brings the City current on all of its outstanding audit requirements, thereby allowing us to now focus solely on wrapping up FY2014. Good news!

Harbor Department:

A meeting has been set for Tuesday August 26, 2014 with Leon Sutcliffe of Carnival Cruise Lines (CCL), Greg Bombard of Catalina Express, Don Beaumont of Catalina Classic Cruises, David Creigh and City Staff to discuss further developments for the cruise ship visitor experience in Avalon. Topics of discussion will include Catalina Express & CCL operations, security screen ashore, CCL hospitality desk ashore, operations on days when 2 cruise ships are scheduled, CCL extended cruises, along with guest satisfaction scores, ranking & feedback.

City Attorney Office/Housing Authority:

We are pleased to report that escrow has closed on the purchase of a home by Griselda Hernandez. The sale of this property was assisted by funds allocated to the Housing Authorities Down Payment Assistance Program.

Fire Department - Rattlesnakes:

In the past few weeks, the Fire Department has responded to several public assistance calls for rattlesnakes and several sighting reports have been received from people in the island interior. This is just a reminder that rattlesnakes are moving around quite a bit this time of year and to use caution and good judgment if you come across one. Specifically, nearly ALL rattlesnake bites occur when people are NOT leaving the snake alone and providing them with the wide berth they require and deserve. Any situations where a rattlesnake or potentially dangerous animal is in a position that could cause harm to persons should be reported to 911.

Planning Department – Proposed Vons Project:

City staff will be meeting with Vons representatives for a pre-submittal review of their application this coming Monday. Vons is contracting with a cultural resource consultant who has done work locally to prepare an archeological resource report. Vons, like the Conservancy, is desirous of an October Planning Commission review.

Planning Department – Proposed Conservancy Trailhead Project:

The Conservancy has submitted the additional application information requested by staff. We expect to deem their application complete by next week. Initial review indicates that the project will require a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for CEQA compliance. The schedule to process a MND puts their application tentatively on the October Planning Commission agenda.

Planning Department – Proposed Alternate Planning Commissioners:

The Planning Commission will be discussing guidelines for proposed alternate Planning Commissioners and sign regulations at the next Planning Commission meeting on 8/20.

Information Technology - Server Room cleanup and re-organization:

The cleanup of the server rack has been completed. The network cables were re-organized for easy troubleshooting and a new network switch was installed to replace one of the slower outdated switches. Replacement of the second switch will be replaced in the next month.

Information Technology - Terminal Server transition:

Permanent conversion of all staff to the terminal server is 98% complete. It is anticipated that 100% will be achieved by September.

Information Technology - Network link between City Hall and the Warehouse/Yard:

It is anticipated that Catalina Broadband will install an internet connection at the warehouse/yard within the next few weeks. Once installed, we will be able to link City Hall with the Warehouse/Yard through the internet connection providing network access to that facility. This will allow terminals to be installed and provide Public Works the ability to access email, the server, future time entry systems, create work orders, etc. from the yard.

Information Technology - Surveillance cameras at the Yard:

We are evaluating the cost and feasibility of installing surveillance cameras at the yard. There may be opportunity to incorporate these cameras into the system that was recently approved by the City Council for the Harbor.

Public Works – Bay Water Quality:

The PWD has committed substantial efforts to maintain and clean the beachfront. The increase of visitors to the island this year has necessitated the need to spend even more time along the coast, and on Front Street. Not only are we checking for possible sewer or storm drain interventions, the daily clean up has caused us to significantly increase our workforce in the area. That being said, we are proud to report that this week's testing of our bay water quality by the County have again revealed that our efforts are successful. We received no "hot" readings.

Public Works – Salt Water Intrusion:

Environ Strategies, The City's wastewater treatment plant contract operator, has been very concerned with more saltwater than usual entering the storm drain and sewer systems. During the treatment process, this extra salinity requires more energy and materials to treat the water. Last Tuesday, a test was conducted at the openings in the bay where storm water enters. We plugged these openings and ran daily tests/readings at the plant to see if these areas were the cause of sea water intrusion. The test was successful. The overall levels of salt were lower than before the storm drain gates/openings were plugged. Although we are not totally convinced that this is the sole cause of the intrusion, it produced valuable information and allows us to plan for the addition of special gates at our bay locations in the future.

Public Works – Reclaimed Water Outreach and Proposed Tour:

On behalf of the City, Dennis Jaich attended a Community Leaders Briefing in Long Beach this week. This meeting was hosted by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). MWD is the primary provider of water to Southern California, with pipelines from the Colorado River, and from Northern California by various connections from rivers and reservoirs. At this discussion, Dennis was able to speak to City Council Members from various cities in the Orange County area. The discussions dealt squarely on Avalon's tough times with our fresh water supply, and our appetite for exploring the possibilities of a water reclamation process here on the island.

As a result of these discussions, the Avalon City Council, and any interested community leaders, have been invited to a special tour of the Orange County Water District's Ground Water Replenishment System, which will explain various options to start and implement a water reclamation process. Orange County is largely regarded as the leader in this area. Please advise if you are interested in participating in such a tour, and we will make appropriate arrangements.

Public Works – Demonstration Desalination Units:

The Public Works Department is still looking at various ways and means to be able to bring another demonstration desalination unit to the island. There are several options, and we are trying to find a way to implement demonstration production of fresh water (as the City is not the purveyor of fresh water on the island, of course). Bringing another demonstration unit will require barging fees, labor hours and additional energy costs. However, we will continue to explore various options, including any contributions from business owners or the public that may be available to us here on the island.

Respectfully submitted,


Ben Harvey
City Manager
City of Avalon

Internal Distribution:

Chief Administrative Officer/City Clerk
City Attorney
Department Heads
Mr. Jaich
Ms. Schuchard
Ms. Byerrum
Mr. Grady

External Distribution:

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Los Angeles County Fire Department
Santa Catalina Island Company
Catalina Island Conservancy
Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Edison
Catalina Island Medical Center
Catalina Express
Supervisor Knabe's Office
Assembly Member Lowenthal's Office
Congressman Lowenthal's Office