



Avalon City Council Weekly Update 1-16-15

City Manager's Office/Human Resources - Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)/Employee Associations

This week, the City commenced the process of rebooting the negotiation process with all employee associations (Fire, Harbor and AMEA). With the fairly recent hiring of Tiffany Bose, Human Resources Manager, management finally achieved the requisite bandwidth to compile a proposed, management-modified MOU document (starting with Fire) to be submitted for employee association consideration. Following review and approval from the City Council of the proposed management changes to the MOU in Closed Session on Tuesday, the first rebooted negotiation with the Fire Association was convened on Wednesday. Additional negotiation sessions are actively being scheduled with the AMEA and the Harbor associations - with some already on the calendar for the next few weeks. While each association will have unique needs due to the different scopes of work performed by their respective memberships, some commonalities exist. Under the authority of the City Council, management will be working cooperatively with all the employee associations to explore and discuss issues that are important to both sides. Thank you for your support and recognition of the City Council's role in this important undertaking. Both management and the employee associations are understandably anxious at the prospect of eventually reaching mutual agreement to produce ratified MOU documents for City Council review and consideration.

Public Works Department – Pebbly Beach Sewer Pump Station Emergency Repairs

The Pebbly Beach Pump Station (PBPS) required emergency repairs to old valves and fittings this week. There were deteriorated bolts, pumps, and valves that required replacement and immediate attention. The PBPS is the 2nd sewage pumping facility that transfers all the sewage that accumulates in town. As with the Catherine Pump Station, these facilities are crucial as they collect ALL the wastewater from the lower elevations and pump it to the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Consequently, extreme attentiveness and forethought have to be in place to keep these facilities in continuous proper working order. We are happy to report that no outages or adverse impacts were realized as a result of these repairs.

Public Works Department – Repairs to Catherine Salt Water Booster Station

The PWD, with assistance from Harbor Department personnel, are making preparations and starting repairs to the Catherine Booster Station. These repairs are needed due to the timeworn electrical components that keep the pumps working properly and efficiently. As with the aforementioned importance of our pump stations, the Catherine Salt Water Booster Station is also critical as it accumulates and pumps salt water to the reservoirs and then pressurizes all the salt water pipelines and fire hydrants within the city.

Public Works Department – Concrete Repairs/Replacements

As has been reported in previous updates, the PWD is continuing with our sidewalk/curb & gutter replacement plan. This week we are working on the removals of broken sidewalk along the middle stretch of Metropole Ave., where trees have uprooted the existing walkways. We

would like to thank the public for their understanding during any inconvenience this work is causing, and for their anticipated continued cooperation.

Public Works/Capital Improvements- Reclaimed Water Discussions

The City Manager and the Interim Public Works Director were pleased to attend a meeting with a few of our committed community members to discuss the City's potential future fresh water needs and the potential for reclaimed water. Last year at the Mayor's behest, an informal citizen's advisory committee was formed, and has been named "R-Tap". R-Tap has primarily been discussing the potential development of reclaimed water, and the advantages that this process may bring to our community. City Management and the members of R-Tap are committed to find a future resolution to our fresh water needs (as you know this is one of the City Council's priorities). R-Tap is working to present the City with a proposal for a reclaimed water feasibility study that will address concerns including fresh water rights and anticipated costs. R-Tap anticipates that it will have the proposal available for the City to consider sometime in February.

Separate and distinct from the meeting with R-Tap, the City also had a discussion with representatives from CR&R today to discuss an organic waste management and waste water recycling concept that CR&R has put together with the involvement of Environ Strategies. Staff will be reviewing and discussing further internally the draft proposal. We hope to provide City Council with a recommendation from the draft concept as to potential next steps within the next few weeks.

Finance Department – Employee W-2 and Vendor 1099 Reporting

We've completed the year-end payroll reporting requirements relating to employees and have received the W-2s. Instead of mailing the majority of these, we plan to save costs and instead attach them to the payroll checks/remittances for distribution next week. The vendor 1099s will be finalized next week and then mailed out. IRS regulations require both the W-2s and 1099s to be issued this month.

Finance Department - MTA Audit

The Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) audit, which started last October, is set to be completed with financial statements issued this month. We had to delay the completion because we needed to have the Transportation Fund for FY14 finalized, and to also supply actual General Ledger reports matching the financial statements. In the past the General Ledger had not been in a completed state, so a combination of system reports and Excel schedules were used to support the financial statement amounts. The financial statements have all been drafted and are being reviewed.

Finance Department – Phone Services and Costs

The Finance Dept. staff over the past two months has been working to identify all city phones, hot spot devices and cell phones in use to make sure the City is paying only for those that are needed. When the review is completed it is expected we will be able to cancel several unneeded phone lines, and redeploy other phones or devices to justify their retention. One phone line was cancelled immediately once we found out it had not been used in four years (!). Other lines it appears may not have been disconnected that were associated with the former City Hall site. Included as part of this analysis is the correction of phone location identification information (important for public safety purposes).

In February our contact with AT&T will be expiring, and as an inducement for us to remain with them, they brought to our attention the State's CalNet2 contract, whereby we can join in under the contract and receive substantial savings. For example, we've been told that we would be able to pay \$9 monthly per phone line instead of the \$40 that we have been paying. Yet to be explained by AT&T is why this contract was not mentioned to us when they were awarded it six years ago, given that the City's contract was signed just three years ago. Lastly, we are undertaking an audit of our contract because we think that we may have been paying more than what the contract called for. Our IT Director, Pat Grady, has now become involved and will be able to troubleshoot remaining issues to conclude these efforts. We bring this matter to your attention (as embarrassing as some of the findings may be) such that you are aware of the Finance Department's ongoing efforts to find methods to save the City money and correct past inefficient practices, contracts, etc.

Planning Department - next Wednesday's Planning Commission Agenda/Multiple Items

The agenda for next week's Planning Commission (January 21, 2015) includes a Review in Concept for two alternate loading bay designs submitted as part of the Proposed Vons Project. Catalina Freight Line has provided their comments to the alternate loading bay designs. This item was noticed as a Public Hearing, and a requisite mailing to surrounding property owners was furnished as well. The appeal of the proposed Vons project's approval that was previously granted by the Planning Commission is on hold pending the outcome of this item at Wednesday's Planning Commission meeting. If the consensus of the Planning Commission is in favor of one of the two alternate loading bay designs, the Site Plan, Mitigated Negative Declaration and Coastal Permit will come back to the Planning Commission to change the loading bay design. If the Commission defers to the original design, the appeal will go forward to the City Council.

Additional Planning Commission agenda items on next Wednesday's meeting include an Addendum to MND for the Santa Catalina Island Company Descanso Beach Kitchen project for an addition 255 sq. ft. on the second story in order to relocate the service bar for the second level. Also on the agenda is a review of the amended SRO ordinance to address the Inclusionary Housing aspect. Finally, the election of the Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair will also take place.

Planning Department/Grants Administration - MTA Call for Projects

At the December 2, 2014 City Council meeting, staff was authorized to contract with Wildan Engineering to assist with developing design and construction costs for three pedestrian projects to be submitted to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Call for Projects grant program at the end of this month. Originally envisioned as one comprehensive pedestrian project to provide needed pedestrian facilities on Tremont Street, Five-Corners and the City Hall side of Avalon Canyon Road; staff asked the City Council to prioritize the projects due to Metro's \$3 Million funding cap per project. Staff has been working closely with Wildan who have utilized recent public construction numbers to develop a realistic cost for each project. It was determined early this week that all three pedestrian projects combined will come in under the \$3 Million cap. Accordingly, staff is reworking the grant application to submit as one comprehensive pedestrian project. Wildan and City staff concur submitting one application that proposes to correct multiple pedestrian deficiencies (as opposed to separate applications) will likely be scored better and considered more favorably within the competitive MTA process. Fingers crossed!

Chief Administrative Officer/City Clerk's Office - Avalon Environmental (CR&R)

We would like to thank Avalon Environmental (AKA CR&R), the City's contractor for our solid waste and landfill, for working very closely with the City, providing support and services toward the efforts of cleaning up the debris from the last storm. Staff is meeting with CR&R today to get an update on the baler progress at the landfill, which will be reported out to you all next week.

Chief Administrative Officer/City Clerk's Office - City Leases

The new City leases have been trickling back in. There has been some fine tuning of some leases to accommodate special circumstances (this was anticipated).

Chief Administrative Officer/Code Enforcement Update #5 - Public Nuisance Abatement of property

A public nuisance is created by any condition or use of a building, structure or property which is detrimental to the property or safety of others. Violations of these conditions when noted and reported are taken care of by Code Enforcement and the Building Official. California Building Code provides that "all building or structures which are structurally unsound or not provided with adequate egress, or which constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life, or which in relation to existing uses constitute a hazard to safety, health or public welfare by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidations, obsolescence, fire ordinance, etc. are unsafe buildings." Should such a condition exist at a home, the resident is notified in writing of the issue, and that they need to abate the problem. After several attempts - if the owner does not respond and/or abate the problem - the City then has the option to pursue legal action.

Recreation Department - New Programs

The Recreation Department hosted week one of an eight week dance session this past Wednesday at Tremont Hall. The class is in partnership with Kick It Up, a Long Beach based dance studio, and is priced attractively with locals in mind. Over 50 students ranging in ages from 3 through 16 years attended classes, many for more than one class. Everything from ballet, to contemporary jazz to hip-hop is offered. Class registration pays for the instructor's time and travel, and a second session of classes will be held in the spring along with a parent recital. Below is a picture from one of the dance sessions:



Also starting this week is Youth Flag Football, which will play their first league games this Sunday at Joe Machado Field. The league has been revamped from past years to reflect a more skill-based, quick-paced game that is 6 on 6, and open to boys and girls in grades 3-8. This style is commonly played throughout youth recreational leagues, and the department is looking forward to tracking the benefits of this style of play.

Recreation Department – Professional Development

In keeping with the City Council's priority to assist in the professionalization of the municipal organization, and to provide training to all staff, the Recreation Department attended the Sports Turf Manager's Association National Conference this week. I expect to receive a debrief from the experience, and trust much was gained both in knowledge and networking from the experience.

Harbor Department - Harbor Dive Inspection of Pleasure Pier and Cabrillo Mole

Frey Environmental and Blacklegde Diving were in Avalon this week to conduct the scheduled dive inspection of the Pleasure Pier and Cabrillo Mole pilings. The information from the inspection will be compiled and recommendations will be submitted to the City in the near future.

Fire Department – Christmas Trees

With the passage of the holidays, the Avalon Fire Department wants to remind everyone to be sure that Christmas trees have been removed and properly disposed of from homes. Occasionally, people will leave a dry/dead Christmas tree inside or outside their home where it creates a significant fire hazard. This year, CR&R, the City and the Catalina Island Conservancy coordinated to allow Christmas Trees to be dropped off for disposal at the former horse stables location, directly across from the lower school entrance on Avalon Canyon Rd. The last day to do so was Wednesday of this week.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Harvey

Ben Harvey
City Manager
City of Avalon