



Avalon City Council Weekly Update 7-31-15

City Manager's Office – New City Council Agenda Procedure

In response to City Council requests, we are rolling out a formalized City Council agenda preparation process for City Council agenda items and supporting materials. This new process was discussed this week internally at the weekly Department Heads meeting such that all City Departments are in the loop, and able to work with the City Manager's Office to ensure that the City Council agenda packet is available to the City Council, and posted online by the end of business on Wednesdays of the weeks prior to the regular standing City Council meetings.

City Manager's Office/Finance Department – Bob Mescher, New City Finance Director

Bob Mescher, the City's new Finance Director, came by City Hall today to fill out his new employee paperwork. Bob will officially commence his duties with the City of Avalon this coming Monday, August 3rd. Bob has expressed an interest in getting the opportunity to meet with all the City Council Members (he briefly met Council Member Hernandez today while at City Hall), so please let me know if I may set up a "meet and greet" time for you for this coming week. Below you'll find a picture of Bob with our own Stephanie Campbell in front of Bob's new home, the Finance Department office. Welcome aboard, Bob!



City Manager's Office – Employee Association Negotiations – MOUs

In an effort to streamline and expedite negotiations with all the employee associations regarding the proposed memoranda of understanding (MOUs), City Management jointly met with representatives from all three associations this week. Dubbed “The Union Summit”, this meeting was highly productive, and allowed for the three associations to interact with each other and discuss important remaining issues that are currently being negotiated. City management is working in good faith with all associations to bring back proposed MOUs for City Council consideration hopefully as early as the end of August, or early September. We will continue to keep you updated on this important topic.

Public Works Department /Capital Improvements – Fuel Dock Project Update

Much effort has been spent on the fuel dock project, and we are pleased to provide you here with an update on the project's overall status, along with our areas of concern.

Our efforts to acquire the requisite permitting from the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) and the California Coastal Commission (CCC) have proven to be very challenging due to the California Coastal Commission's preference for concrete pilings (instead of timber, as called for within the City's submitted plans), a recent Executive Order regarding rising sea levels from the Governor, and the non-responsiveness of the ACOE to a required historical resource report submitted by the City.

Drawing from our solid intergovernmental relationships and strong support we enjoy from our County, State and Federal representatives, we reached out to Supervisor Knabe, Assembly Member O'Donnell, State Senator Allen and Congressman Lowenthal for assistance and counsel. All of our representatives were concerned and responsive regarding the City's permitting concerns and needs. Special mention and thanks needs to go out to Supervisor Knabe and his team for the assistance with the California Coastal Commission, and Congressman Lowenthal and his staff for the assistance with the ACOE.

The Fuel Dock project is on the CCC agenda for their August meeting. We are cautiously optimistic that the City will be able to adhere to submitted plans allowing for timber pilings and an elevation consistent with the adjoining seawall. We will continue to keep you posted on this important project.

Public Works Department – Tree Trimming & Removals

Tree trimming has been taking place again this week at various areas within the City limits. The necessity to keep these trees properly maintained is an important task that reduces the risk of falling limbs, branches, or palm fronds.

However, specifically this last week, we had to remove a palm tree out on the tip of the Mole area. This tree was suspect in nature, due to its curve and possible weak trunk condition. Although we certainly do not enjoy removing any trees at all, a decision was made to cut down this palm tree due to the possibility it may snap and/or break at the curved area of the trunk. We appreciate the public understanding and cooperation during this procedure.



Planning Department/Grants Administration - City Awarded \$992,283 in Federal Ferry Funds for Cabrillo Mole Restrooms

The City was notified last week that a grant application submitted in January to rehabilitate the Cabrillo Mole restrooms (including infrastructure) through the Federal Ferry Boat program has been approved. Grant funds awarded are in the amount of \$992,283, with a required City match of \$198,457 for a total project cost of \$1,190,740. This recent award adds to our “war chest” of available funding for the Cabrillo Mole restoration. In the next couple of months, we will be coming back to the City Council, responding to direction for a proposed plan regarding next steps for the renovation of the Mole.

Planning Department – Planning Commission Approval of Santa Catalina Island Company Test Well and Upcoming Informational Meeting within the City Council Chambers

In the event that you had not heard, I wanted to advise you that the Planning Commission at their regular July 22nd meeting approved the Conditional Use Permit, Local Coastal Permit and Site Plan for the construction and operation for exploratory drilling and water supply test wells at the golf course in Avalon Canyon. The Santa Catalina Island Company has held some informational meetings regarding the test well previously at their Country Club facility, and recently approached the City about holding another information meeting within the City Council Chambers for those residents who are interested in learning more about the test well effort. We are working with the Santa Catalina Island Company to schedule the proposed informational meeting, and will advise you of the date once it has been set.

Harbor Department – Harbor Patrol Officer Ride-Along

Last week, I had the pleasure of being taken on a ride-along in Avalon Harbor with William Flickinger, one of our Harbor Patrol Officers (accompanied also by my father, who is seen in the picture below, with William). I learned a lot as I witnessed first hand the assigning and re-assigning of vessels to moorings, dye-tablet testing, coordination with the sanitation crew, and general Avalon Harbor customer service that is offered to both visitors, as well as residents by our Harbor Department. During the ride-along, I was struck by William’s skill, professionalism, knowledge of the Avalon Harbor, positive relationships with mooring owners and frequent visitors, and his love for the job. While this was not my first (or second) ride-along in the Harbor, this most recent trip during one of the more busy times was a valuable experience that I greatly appreciated – and will repeat in the near-term future.



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Fire Department – Importance of Working Smoke Alarms/All Call Siren

With last week's fire on Claressa Avenue still fresh in people's minds, it is an appropriate time to remind people of the importance of having working smoke alarms in their homes. Approximately two-thirds of home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Since most fatal fires occur at night, it is essential that every home has working smoke alarms to provide an early warning. Working smoke alarms increase the chance of surviving a home fire by 50 percent. For persons in need of smoke alarms, they are available free of charge at the Avalon Fire Department.

On a related note, the question is routinely asked about the "all call" siren and the number of cycles and meanings. The Avalon Fire Department maintains the siren solely for the purpose of rapidly recalling all of our emergency responders. In addition to all of the technology (i.e. radios, pagers and cell phones that the department employs), when the emergency dictates a rapid staffing need, the siren remains our best method to accomplish that quickly. In years past the siren had designated meanings to emergency responders, such as if the call was on land, sea or the interior of the island. What has evolved is that until personnel respond to the fire station for their safety gear and assignment the location isn't a priority. What we do request is that people keep roads and areas clear for emergency responders and not compound the problem by responding themselves to the scene. This will allow our emergency responders the access and clearance needed to effectively perform their duties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben Harvey

Ben Harvey
City Manager