



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH WATER QUALITY/COASTAL TIDELANDS COMMITTEE AGENDA

Crystal Cove Room (Bay 2D)

Thursday, February 5, 2026 - 3:00 PM

Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee Members:

Councilmember Michelle Barto, Chair
Councilmember Joe Stapleton, Vice Chair
Curtis Black, Member
Charles Fancher, Member
Craig Hudson, Member
Sharon Ray, Member
John Wadsworth, Member
Vacant, Member
Vacant, Member

Staff Members:

Jim Houlihan, Deputy Public Works Director/City Engineer
Chris Miller, Administrative Manager
Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant

The Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee meeting is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Among other things, the Brown Act requires that the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee agenda be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of each regular meeting and that the public be allowed to comment on agenda items before the Committee and items not on the agenda but are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee. The Chair may limit public comments to a reasonable amount of time, generally three (3) minutes per person.

The City of Newport Beach's goal is to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all respects. If, as an attendee or a participant at this meeting, you will need special assistance beyond what is normally provided, we will attempt to accommodate you in every reasonable manner. Please contact John Kappeler, Water Quality Enforcement Manager, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible at (949) 644-3218 or jkappeler@newportbeachca.gov.

NOTICE REGARDING PRESENTATIONS REQUIRING USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT

Any presentation requiring the use of the City of Newport Beach's equipment must be submitted to the Public Works Department 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

- 1) **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- 2) **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 3) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS (10 min)**

Public comments are invited on agenda items. Speakers must limit comments to five minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Committee has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers. As a courtesy, please turn cell phones off or set them in the silent mode.

- 4) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES (5 min)**

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented

[WQCT Draft Minutes 01/08/2026](#)

- 5) **CURRENT BUSINESS (70 min)**

(a) Orange County Watershed Water Quality Report (Michelle Barto) (5 min)

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

(b) Single Use Plastics - Public Information Outreach Status (Michelle Barto) (5 min) Update on future education outreach program.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

(c) Lower Bay Main Channel and Balboa Yacht Basin Dredging (Chris Miller) (30 min) Presentation on two dredging projects in currently in construction within the harbor.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

(d) Eelgrass in Newport Harbor (Chris Miller) (20 min) Presentation on the City's Eelgrass Protection and Mitigation Plan for Shallow Waters in the harbor.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

6) COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM) (10 min)

(a) Prado Dam sand mining (February 2026 - Lisa Haney or Southern California Sand Collaborative)

(b) Vector problem areas in Newport Beach (Spring 2026 - Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District)

(c) Status of trash source identification in Santa Ana River (Spring 2026 - John Wadsworth)

(d) Newport Bay Trash Interceptor - Trash Characterization (Spring 2026 - Ellis Peterson)

(e) Big Canyon Phase 3 Restoration Site Tour (June 2026 - Andy Tran)

(f) Ocean Beach Sand Renourishment plans, efforts, status - (May 2026, Chris Miller)

(g) Santa Isabella Restoration Grant Application (Summer 2026 - Heather Cieslak)

(h) Pumpout maintenance update (Summer 2026 - Chris Miller)

(i) Santa Ana River trash mitigation (Winter 2026 - TBD)

(j) Draft copper Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Winter 2026 - TBD)

7) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (5 min)**

Public comments are invited on non-agenda items generally considered to be within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee. Speakers must limit comments to three minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Committee has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on non-agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers. As a courtesy, please turn cell phones off or set them in the silent mode.

8) **SET NEXT MEETING DATE (5 min)**

Recommendation: March 5, 2026

9) **ADJOURNMENT**

Date: January 8, 2026

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Location: Crystal Cove Conference Room, Newport Beach Civic Center

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember/Chair Michelle Barto

Committee Member Curtis Black

Committee Member Sharon Ray

Committee Member John Wadsworth

Committee Members Absent:

Mayor/Vice Chair Joe Stapleton

Committee Member Charles Fancher

Committee Member Craig Hudson

Staff Present: Karen Gallagher, Administrative Assistant
Chris Miller, Administrative Manager
Kayla Nyberg, Management Analyst
Ellis Petersen, Associate Civil Engineer
Dave Webb, Public Works Director

Guests Present: Paul Blank, Harbormaster
Jim Mosher, Resident
Nancy Gardner, Orange Coast River Park
Nancy Scarbrough, SPON
Nancy Skinner, SPON
Virginia Anders-Ellmore, Resident
Dennis Baker, SPON
Heather Clayton, Chambers Group
Joanna Kipper, Chambers Group
Adam Leverenz, Resident
Susan Keefe, Beyond Plastics/Eco Forward

Chair Barto reported that there have been nine applications for the Committee's two vacancies.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

4. Review and approval of minutes

Recommendation: Approve minutes as presented

In response to Chair Barto's inquiry, Administrative Manager Chris Miller confirmed that the threshold for a quorum is presently four members due to the Committee's two vacancies so the minutes can be approved with the members present. It was noted that, although not online presently, Committee Member Hudson was going to attempt to join the meeting remotely.

Motion: A motion was made by Committee Member Ray to approve the November 6, 2025, minutes as presented, seconded by Committee Member Wadsworth. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Current Business

- a. Coastal Quest (Tegan Hoffman) Proposition 4 grant application.

Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Committee Member Ray reported that the non-profit organization Coastal Quest was heavily recommended by State officials as the City looks to pursue Proposition 4 grants. She stated that she worked with former City staff member Bob Stein on contracting Coastal Quest, with North Star Beach being the starting point of choice.

Coastal Quest Executive Director Tegan Hoffman reported on working on a proposal for North Star Beach with the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) alongside Committee Member Ray and Mr. Stein. She discussed the services Coastal Quest provides, focusing on coastal resiliency in vulnerable communities, including work with Senate Bill 1 funding. She stated that their work in Orange County started in 2020, finding many willing collaborators on building coastal resilience, with a focus on aligning collaborators to help get funding resources.

Ms. Hoffman reported that Prop 4's Climate Bond includes \$10 billion over the next 10 years, and preproposals are starting to be submitted, including the one for North Star Beach. She noted that there is an administrative stall while some rule-making matters are decided, leading to the application not yet receiving a response. She reported on the fiscal breakdown of Prop 4's allocations for subjects such as drought, flood, water supply, sea level rise, and other areas. She noted that the State has a detailed online portal with Climate Bond funding allocations, which is regularly tracked by Coastal Quest.

Ms. Hoffman reported that Coastal Quest is the technical systems provider for S.B. 1's Ocean Protection Council, adding that the City has already received a grant for sea level rise planning from the group. She added that a second funding track will open soon for implementation projects, noting that cities must have projects identified as a priority to receive funding, with Newport Beach being ahead of the curve on a Statewide level. She added that Coastal Quest would help the City with technical assistance if it applied for Track 2 funding. She reported that Coastal Quest can also manage grant funds for a municipality if so desired to take advantage of the group's non-profit status and ability to serve as a neutral third party. She noted that Coastal Quest constantly monitors grant opportunities and where the funds are awarded.

Coastal Quest Program Coordinator Alexandra Stella added that grant opportunities which could interest the City include those for waterways and community resilience.

In response to Chair Barto's inquiry, Committee Member Ray confirmed that Coastal Quest is aware of North Star Beach's status, as the grant proposal is already in motion. She added that the next presenters from Chambers Group, Inc. have also walked North Star Beach to formulate a restoration approach. She added that the City's plan for North Star Beach should be finalized within a month, and there are other similar projects that the City could conceivably do with assistance from Coastal Quest. She noted that the groins need work but was unsure how the infrastructure is categorized.

Administrative Manager Miller clarified that the groins are a federal project, so State funds likely cannot be used to maintain them.

In response to Committee Member Ray's inquiry, Ms. Hoffman confirmed that Coastal Quest can work beyond California.

In response to Committee Member Wadsworth's inquiry, Chair Barto reported that the S.B. 1 funds received by the City were for sea-level rise adaptation planning, and a portion of it is being used for

sand dunes. Administrative Manager Miller added that the City's planning staff is working on the dunes project.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiry, Chair Barto stated that they will be dividing up the list of projects for the next two years approved by the Committee at its last meeting. Committee Member Wadsworth added that several projects on the list could benefit from Coastal Quest's work.

Committee Member Ray noted that, in addition to projects on the Committee's list, there could be items in the City's Strategic Plan and General Plan that could benefit from Coastal Quest's expertise.

Committee Member Black pondered if Coastal Quest could help with funding for things discussed by the Committee recently, such as tracking sand movement.

Chair Barto recommended sharing a list of potential projects with Coastal Quest to see what may work for Track 2 funding, adding that the City has 10 years' worth of projects listed out, but it is too much for staff alone to accomplish.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiry, Ms. Hoffman confirmed that many sand movement studies, like what Newport Beach is discussing, have been conducted in ways that connect neighboring municipalities to increase grant approval potential. She added that assemblymembers and county supervisors can be involved once a study crosses city lines. She encouraged looking at the project plan to identify partnership opportunities. Ms. Stella added that the State is not going to fund something like the sand movement study unless it connects jurisdictions.

Ms. Hoffman offered to look at the Committee's project list and further discuss what role Coastal Quest can play in achieving it.

Committee Member Ray confirmed that the preapplication for North Star Beach funding has been submitted to the State, adding that the State has lagged in its response. She stated that a full proposal would have to be drafted and submitted if the preapplication is approved.

In response to Still Protecting Our Newport's (SPON) Nancy Skinner's inquiries, Ms. Hoffman reported that they have been working directly with the City of Santa Cruz on S.B. 1-related projects, whereas most of their partners are community groups, non-profit groups, and Native American tribes. She stated that Coastal Quest will be able to identify more opportunities for the City once they analyze Newport Beach's fill project list. She clarified that Coastal Quest is advocating for nature-based solutions and not hardening.

In response to SPON's Dennis Baker's inquiry, Ms. Hoffman agreed that there are many purchase-for-preservation opportunities.

Mr. Baker urged the Committee to consider purchasing Bitter Point, the privately-owned portion of the property, which is considered wetlands.

Ms. Hoffman confirmed that there is acquisition funding available through the Climate Bond, adding that wetlands are considered a priority and compelling. He noted that Public Works Director Dave Webb has discussed the property with the owner and its potential acquisition.

Ms. Hoffman reported that the Climate Bond funds will go quickly and encouraged the City, if interested, to find a price that the owner is willing to sell for within the next 6-9 months.

Public Works Director Webb confirmed that the property owner has been approached by the City in the past and stated that the owner thinks he will be able to build condominiums on the wetlands. He reported that the owner has refused offers previously for the land, with his price expectations being far too high. He confirmed that Mr. Baker has had similar dead-end conversations with the owner.

- b. Restoration Planning (Heather Clayton) Presentation on detailed concepts for proposed restoration projects for North Star Beach and Irvine Avenue (Upper Flathead).

Recommendation: Committee discussion on moving forward with grant applications

Chambers Group Botanist Heather Clayton reported on a tour of North Star Beach with Mr. Stein and Committee Member Ray.

Committee Member Ray noted that the site is next to the Newport Aquatic Center, with the facility's management staff being very excited about the rehabilitation project.

Chambers Group Botanist/Restoration Specialist Joanna Kipper presented an overview of the site, noting its extensive exotic vegetation. She echoed Ms. Hoffman's comments from the previous item about there being ample grant funding available, with the North Star site checking many of the boxes the State looks for in approving grant funding.

Committee Member Ray reported that there is a homeless encampment on the site, requiring work with other City departments for its removal.

Ms. Kipper reported on the condition of the land, adding that there is a lack of native plants, providing an insufficient buffer against high tides for the homes on the slope above the area.

Ms. Kipper stated that she has reviewed Coastal Quest's grant proposal, and the Chambers Group's staff feels like it aligns with their vision for the land. She reported that improvement opportunities include safer public access, clearing out exotic plant species (noting that some are highly flammable), reducing trash, increasing the foraging and breeding habitat for endangered and threatened wildlife, increasing tourism and economic opportunities for local businesses, and improving water quality and sea level rise protections.

Ms. Kipper reported that The Chambers Group looked at the project through the lens of a restoration contractor, adding that the first step for the City is to secure the WCB funding. She added that the project will also require community engagement, permitting, environmental consulting, biological studies, planning, and other tasks, including a long-term management plan.

In response to Committee Member Ray's inquiries, Ms. Kipper clarified that mitigation needs can be negotiated depending on the type of activity. She agreed that the North Star work could serve as mitigation for work occurring elsewhere in Newport Beach.

In response to Chair Barto's inquiry, Ms. Kipper recommended not touching the slope as much and focusing on the lower area. She added that there is some native plant canopy along the slope that would be supplemented as the exotic species are removed and replaced.

In response to Committee Member Ray's inquiry, Ms. Kipper recommended not doing any work that would impact the water, including the drainage pipe in the area.

Mr. Baker reported that the drainage pipe is for runoff water.

Chair Barto recommended that the project include something to encourage area residents to see the nature in this enhanced backyard park.

Mr. Baker reported that the Newport Bay Conservancy (NBC) is in the North Star area weekly during the winter with school groups. He encouraged the development of planned group routes as part of the public access component of the project as an improvement over the current trails. He added that some of the schools taking their tours are from lower-income neighborhoods in neighboring cities, noting that serving these populations not existing in Newport Beach could open some funding opportunities. He echoed comments on planning for maintenance costs, as restoration projects without budgeting for increased ongoing maintenance costs are a foolish move. He added that the houses above the site are a pool of invasive species plants ready to penetrate.

Chair Barto pondered if S.B. 1 funds could be used for ongoing restoration projects that require regular maintenance.

Mr. Baker noted that the NBC has a long-term history of performing habitat maintenance work, adding that they could be involved in the process.

In response to Associate Civil Engineer Ellis Petersen's inquiry, Ms. Kipper stated that soil testing would have to be conducted in compacted areas to see how they could handle native plants but added that she sees positive potential based on surrounding vegetation growth. She noted that there are a variety of plants that can be used for difficult soils, such as those with high salinity, and that the soil samples would only cost about \$250-300. She reported that The Chambers Group also assists with a habitat management plan for when their restoration work is completed.

In response to Mr. Baker's inquiry, Administrative Manager Miller reported speaking with Real Property Administrator Lauren Whitlinger, who confirmed that there is a Joint Powers Agreement between the County and City for the land. He added that it should not be difficult to get the County to agree with the City's plans. Ms. Kipper added that The Chambers Group works with the County and agreed that they would likely be amenable.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiry, Ms. Kipper clarified that the flathead by Irvine Ave. is County land. Associate Civil Engineer Petersen confirmed that this area is County land.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiry, Committee Member Ray confirmed that the grant preapplication has been submitted to the State but lamented that the City cannot do much until it receives a response. She reported that Coastal Quest did the preapplication work for free as a means of starting a relationship with the City but added that they will expect to be paid to submit the formal application.

In response to Chair Barto's inquiry, Public Works Director Webb confirmed that there are no red flags associated with this proposal. He cautioned that many agencies like to get involved with any project on Newport Bay. Committee Member Ray added that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is already familiar with North Star's ecosystem and will not have to conduct a study. Ms. Kipper disagreed, adding that CDFW would still require biological impact studies and inventories for the project despite the area being familiar.

Associate Civil Engineer Petersen noted that the project will be close to homes and cautioned that the neighbors may not be supportive of a project that will increase the number of people coming close to their residences.

Ms. Kipper noted that increased park usage would increase vehicular traffic and recommended the creation of a parking area.

In response to Committee Member Ray's inquiry, Ms. Kipper confirmed that the tall palm trees that pose a fire hazard are not native palms and would need to be removed in this project.

- c. Beyond Plastics (Susan Keefe) Presentation on a proposed trash awareness campaign strategy.
Recommendation: Committee Discussion

Committee Member Wadsworth reported that this project is a subset of the larger goal of reducing the amount of trash washing up on the beaches and in the harbor emitted from the Santa Ana River. He noted that the City's long-term plan for mitigating Santa Ana River trash flows includes working with upstream neighbors to reduce their portion of the trash entering the river. He added that the City wishes to lead by example by reducing its own trash footprint. He noted that 80-90% of the trash is single-use plastic containers, and this should be their focus.

Beyond Plastics Southern California Director Susan Keefe confirmed that much of the trash on the City's beaches is composed of single-use plastic bottles that came down the Santa Ana River. She noted that, in addition to the bottles, small plastic fragments often get embedded in the sand and brought back to the surface as the sand is turned. She reported that plastic is everywhere, polluting the environment, and making people sick through the chemicals in its material and toxins released in the manufacturing process. She stated that plastic recycling has been a failure due to the many different types of plastic that cannot be recycled together. She added that plastic recycling is infeasible and unprofitable, with only 15% of clear bottles and 5% of colored bottles being recycled.

Ms. Keefe reported that Newport Beach's restriction against Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) is one of the very few plastic bans in Orange County, adding that most of the City's peers only ban EPS from City facilities, making the bans less pervasive than Newport Beach's. She lauded the City of Laguna Beach for also banning single-use plastic (SUP) at City events but criticized the County's communities for not doing more to reduce SUP usage.

Ms. Keefe cited the City of Carlsbad and the City of Solana Beach for taking an additional step to ban SUP beverage bottles, offering her commendations. She stated that there are opportunities for local control in creating SUP restrictions. She stated that another option for the City to reduce its SUPs, other than passing new laws, is to focus on compliance with existing State laws, citing lightly enforced Assembly Bill 1276 as an example. She reported that she has been working with multiple Orange County cities and the County itself to create A.B. 1276 awareness and encourage enforcement, presenting a poster she drafted for the City of Orange as a public educational example.

Ms. Keefe stated that the way out of the predicament is not through recycling but rather through the encouragement of reusable plastics, investing in refill infrastructure, eliminating SUPs from City facilities and events, along with public education and civic engagement. She noted that some of this involves a larger cultural change to move away from disposables. She stated that the City could encourage The Irvine Company to install water bottle refilling stations in its shopping centers. She lauded the Lido House hotel's \$50,000 one-year savings by eliminating SUPs as part of the Ocean Friendly Hotels program, stating that it should be a model for other local businesses. She stated that the same concept can expand to plastic-free neighborhoods participating in a local residential challenge through Homeowners' Associations.

Ms. Keefe reported that the average coastal city spends an average of \$13 per resident on environmental trash cleanup, creating an opportunity for Newport Beach to save significant money that can be reinvested elsewhere in the City to the benefit of residents. She encouraged the City to act to promote A.B. 1276, offering to assist, like she has with other cities, and to lead by example for its upstream neighbors in reducing Santa Ana River trash.

In response to Mr. Baker's inquiry, Ms. Keefe agreed that much of the waste comes from large national chains. She reported encouraging large companies to follow A.B. 1276 by having large dispensers for things like ketchup instead of individual packets. She lamented that she would need a team of volunteers to cover all the businesses.

Ms. Gardner stated that the City already sets a good example for upstream neighbors in trash collection, but it needs more acknowledgement in addition to continuing to improve its good example with Ms. Keefe's suggestions.

Public Works Director Webb noted that Ms. Gardner is the City's former Mayor and has been working well ahead of the curve on refillable water bottle stations. He agreed that Newport Beach's legacy of leadership can use more acknowledgement.

Ms. Keefe agreed and stated that she was impressed that Newport Beach was one of the first cities to offer compost bins when Senate Bill 1383 first came out.

Public Works Director Webb reported that the City now gives out free compost at five locations.

Associate Civil Engineer Petersen lamented that restaurants running on a narrow profit margin may not be willing to invest in a product like bamboo forks if they cannot get them from a major supplier like Sysco. He pondered whether the City could help its restaurants buy them in bulk.

Ms. Gardner reported that Newport Beach used to have a Restaurant Association, which was critical in passing the EPS ban because the City could work with a single entity.

Chair Barto recommended reaching out to local restaurateurs to discuss possible collaborative efforts with the City surrounding A.B. 1276 and other environmental concerns.

In response to Committee Member Wadsworth's inquiry, Ms. Keefe reported that the City of Irvine's recent attempt to ban SUP did not go well. She reported that the City put together a detailed list of alternative vendors for local businesses and statistics about how the investment in reusables can pay off quickly. She lamented that many smaller restaurants cannot afford the initial investment and encouraged the City to find ways to help those businesses with the initial funds.

Adam Leverenz stressed the need for public education, expressing his disappointment to learn how few of his plastic items at home are eventually recycled as opposed to being put in landfills. He lamented how American corporations have conditioned the past two generations of consumers to expect so much of what they eat and use to come in SUP packaging. He encouraged focusing the education on children.

Ms. Keefe agreed and decried how mass home recycling efforts are more of a public relations stunt with poor results, designed to make consumers think it is somehow their fault if plastic is not recycled. She noted that the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) has a website detailing just how a large portion of California's plastic ends up being sent to foreign countries, in addition to plastic accounting for 50% of the State's landfills.

Chair Barto reported that part of the Committee's plan is to work with the City's Public Information Officer (PIO), noting that the position is presently vacant. She added that work can be done with the interim one to highlight what the relevant State laws are. She stated that the City has made a good effort with reusable water stations, including a good relationship with local schools. She added that it is probably a good time to bring back a campaign like the one used to push reusable water stations.

Committee Member Black noted how the Surfrider Foundation highlights Ocean Friendly businesses. He pondered if cities could create a similar program to highlight environmentally friendly businesses as opposed to punishing non-compliers.

Committee Member Wadsworth stated this would be a good idea since there are about 300 restaurants in Newport Beach. He stated that the Surfriders' Ocean Friendly program has a roadmap to compliance that rewards rather than shames. He reported that data exists showing that restaurants that comply save money in the long term.

Chair Barto recommended checking with Assistant City Manager Tara Finnigan on whether she wants to craft this campaign or if she would rather wait until a permanent PIO is hired. She encouraged conducting such a campaign.

In response to Committee Member Wadsworth's inquiry, Chair Barto stated that the next steps for her would include a discussion with City Manager Seimone Jurjis and Assistant City Manager Finnigan to see where they would like to take it, including possible City Council discussion. She added that the discussion will be more impactful if the beaches look like they currently do.

Ms. Keefe stated that she would be happy to help the City.

6. COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

- (a) Prado Dam sand mining (February 2026 – Lisa Haney)
- (b) Low Harbor Dredging status report (February 2026 – Chris Miller)
- (c) Lower Harbor Eelgrass Plan (March 2026 – Chris Miller)
- (d) Vector problem areas in Newport Beach (Spring 2026 – Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District)
- (e) Status of trash source identification in Santa Ana River (Spring 2026 – John Wadsworth)
- (f) Big Canyon Phase 3 Restoration Site Tour (June 2026 – Andy Tran)
- (g) Ocean Beach Sand Renourishment plans, efforts, status (May 2026 – Chris Miller)
- (h) Santa Isabella Restoration Grant Application (Summer 2026 – Heather Cieslak)
- (i) Pumpout maintenance update (Summer 2026 – Chris Miller)
- (j) Santa Ana River trash mitigation (Winter 2026 - TBD)
- (k) Draft copper Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Winter 2026 - TBD)
- (l) Newport Bay Trash Interceptor – Trash Characterization (Spring 2026 – Ellis Petersen)

Committee Member Black inquired about the status of the Santa Isabella Channel restoration grant.

In response to Committee Member Black's inquiries, Ms. Gardner reported that the General Plan Advisory Committee will meet again on January 21st, and its actions at that meeting will determine when the final drafts of the updated General Plan return to the Committee. She agreed that the March meeting is probably a good time to have time allotted for review and discussion of the General Plan's elements that are relevant to the Committee.

Committee Member Ray reported discussing the Santa Isabella Channel restoration grant with Mr. Stein, stating that the NBC has submitted the grant twice previously and intends to submit it a third time. She added that it was denied in the past because the NBC has also recently received a large grant for restoration work in Big Canyon.

Chair Barto confirmed that the NBC has made multiple attempts to obtain grant funding, with overlapping Big Canyon work being the reason for denial. She added that the City may have to take on the Santa Isabella Channel efforts this summer if the NBC cannot get it across the finish line.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Virginia Anders-Ellmore expressed concerns about runoff from the Santa Ana River and flooding potential when there are heavy rains. She requested the City's report on flood preparedness.

Public Works Director Webb stated that an Orange County Flood Control representative could speak to the Committee about the Santa Ana River's risks.

Chair Barto noted that the PIO position is currently vacant and acknowledged that the City could do a better job of sharing the flood preparedness report with residents to alleviate concerns.

Mr. Mosher reported that City Manager Jurjis spoke earlier today about the City's priorities and stated that there has been a considerable learning curve about the Newport Bay Trash Interceptor's operations. He requested that Item No. 6.l's future discussion be expanded to discuss its operations in addition to trash characterization. He added that it has been multiple years since the bacterial reports have been discussed by the Committee, noting their impact on water quality. He requested that a discussion of the bacteria levels in the City's water be added to an upcoming agenda.

Committee Member Black stated that those regular reports faded away after Monica Mazur of the Orange County Health Care Agency stopped attending Committee meetings.

Chair Barto agreed that it would be good to bring back periodic Committee updates on the County's bacteria reports. She reported viewing them with the Orange County Water District six months ago, adding that they looked great.

Mr. Baker stated that it can be a simple printout of the report's data provided for the public.

Public Works Director Webb reported that the reports have not changed much and indicate that the City's water is of high quality. He agreed that the data can be publicly presented to the Committee regularly, suggesting quarters.

Chair Barto agreed with a quarterly presentation frequency.

Committee Member Wadsworth reported that the United States Bureau of Ocean Energy Management decided that it would open most of the country's coastlines to additional offshore drilling. He noted that the east coast was spared due to political factors and encouraged bipartisan support on the west coast to prevent its opening to additional oil and gas leases. He encouraged residents to sign the Surfriders' action letter available on their website. He added that the impacts would be significant to the State's \$50 billion marine economy and, along with it, the County's \$5 billion marine economy. He reported discussing the City sending a letter of disinterest with members of the City Council.

Chair Barto confirmed that City Manager Jurjis is drafting an opposition letter for the Council to sign. She added that the Committee could also send its own letter.

Committee Member Wadsworth reported that, after the 2021 oil spill, the City passed a resolution in opposition to offshore drilling in either California or federal waters. He added that the 27 existing rigs were built in the 1970s and pose a coastal danger due to their age. He offered to draft a letter of opposition about the current situation.

Chair Barto stated that the Committee would have to approve it by motion.

Ms. Gardner noted that the City of Huntington Beach was hit hard economically by the 2021 oil spill.

Chair Barto noted that offshore drilling prohibits the State from enforcing its standard safety metrics.

Committee Members Black and Ray stated that they would second a motion for such a letter.

Chair Barto stated that she would provide Committee Member Wadsworth a copy of what the City is drafting so that he can rework it on behalf of the Committee.

Committee Member Wadsworth reported that the comment period ends on January 23rd, stressing the urgent need for a formal response. He added that a future disaster is inevitable.

8. SET NEXT MEETING DATE

Recommendation: February 5, 2026

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Chair / Michelle Barto