



NEWPORT BEACH

Harbor Commission Staff Report

November 13, 2024
Agenda Item No. 6.7

TO: HARBOR COMMISSION

FROM: Paul Blank, Harbormaster - (949) 270-8158,
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TITLE: Harbormaster Update – October 2024 Activities

ABSTRACT:

The Harbormaster oversees the City Harbor Department and is responsible for the management of the City's mooring fields, enforcement of the municipal code, events permitting, safety and rescue operations, the Marina Park Guest Marina, marine sanitation pump out equipment and public pier maintenance, water quality monitoring and maintenance, impound and disposition of abandoned and unclaimed vessels and public relations and information dissemination on and about Newport Harbor.

This report will update the Harbor Commission on the Harbor Department's recent activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Receive and file.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

DISCUSSION:

October found the Harbor Department team focused on catch-up and maintenance of equipment and facilities that went heavily used during the summer months. Our patrol boats all now have two, permanently mounted VHF radios with integrated Public Address systems. Maintenance on the docks at Marina Park as well as several public docks was carried out.

Clean

Significant efforts were expended to maintain and improve the cleanliness of the harbor. Highlights included:

- An octopus sighting was reported by Commissioner Svrcek and another was reported by the Kerckhoff Marine Laboratory in their newsletter. The presence of these octopi are an encouraging sign of the quality of water and nutrients in the harbor
- Orange Coast College students enjoying a sailing class flagged down a Harbor Services Worker (HSW) to learn more about our new, electric patrol vessel, "HD-EV"
- While dewatering a vessel in Balboa Coves, alert HSWs identified likely unpermitted construction at a nearby upland property. Our colleagues in Community Development were grateful for the investigation and report
- The department provided support for a contractor performing a survey associated with the upcoming dredging project
- Significant sea lion presence was dealt with in numerous locations despite it being late in the season
- The "NO FISHING" signs at the Balboa Marina Public Dock continue to be vandalized. We continue to restore and replace them as well encourage the anglers we encounter to fish at other convenient locations

Safe

Significant efforts were expended to maintain and improve the safety of the harbor. Highlights included:

- New video surveillance cameras were implemented and focused on the 19th and 15th Street Public Docks. This project was more than two years in the making. New signage was added to both docks indicating they are under video surveillance
- Several mooring assists were provided to mariners visiting for the air show
- Department patrol boats assisted with traffic and speed control of vessels returning from the air show
- An early morning Code Enforcement patrol was carried out to further investigate residential dock lighting complaints and multiple berthing concerns
- An investigation was carried out on a vessel extending past the end of its dock further than its beam
- HSWs assisted a boater tying up on the newly rebuilt Lido Isle Community Association dock
- HSWs provided a late-in-shift assist for a Recreation Department customer that had not returned to Marina Park as expected. HSWs set out and found them in the east anchorage struggled and returned them to Marina Park safely
- A couple of exhausted paddle boarders got a lift back to their rental base next to Lido bridge from where they were struggling near the ferry crossing
- HSWs installed swim safety ladders on the new public dock at 29th Street

- Several assists and tows were provided to mariners in the foggy conditions experienced during October 26 and 27

Well-enjoyed

Significant efforts were expended to maintain and improve the enjoyment of the harbor. Highlights included:

- A frequent unpermitted charterer was identified and documented using a public dock for passenger pickup. A citation was issued and is being followed up with requirements related to having a Marine Activities Permit
- We were able to resolve a conflict over lighting between two neighbors on one side of a channel and a neighbor across the channel that was escalating
- As part of a routine audit and survey of conditions, the opportunity to restore a long ago removed mooring was identified. When restored, the 40' mooring in the J field will be added to the mooring license program

Odds and Ends

Significant efforts were expended to address harbor-related matters other than cleanliness, safety, and enjoyment. Highlights included:

- Twenty-six items were sold at the small vessel auction netting the City \$1400. Two items did not sell and were disposed of
- All team members received (refresher) training on interacting with the public, processing private party impounds and our authority to impound
- The newly placed 24-hour surveillance signs at the 19th Street Public Docks were torn off their posts. Within a day the vandal was identified, contacted and offered an opportunity to participate in restorative justice, which he accepted. The signs have been restored
- A public comment at the Coastal Commission meeting related to the Harbor Department's origination and current budget resulted in an analysis of costs for the various services provided. See the final, new graph in Attachment A - Harbor Department Statistics Infographic with telling information about the costs for services provided by the department

The most amusing call of the month came in the form of an encounter with a paddle boarder on the water in calm conditions and well away from our electric patrol vessel operating at idle speed. Here's the log entry from the Harbor Service Worker:

While transiting from the area of emerald public dock, I was traveling on HD4 at idle speed, approx 1 mph, I observed a paddle boarder in the middle of the channel, while never more than 50 ft from the elderly male, he yelled, "hey." I did not expect an issue and I stared "good morning". He then shrugged at me and asked me if I was trying to run him over. As I was so far away from him I figured he was making a friendly joke. I stated that I was just traveling on my way. He then yelled "a*****" at me and I advised him to watch his language in the harbor and

wished him a good rest of his day. I am reporting this as this man was definitely intending to start a confrontation with me which I did not engage in, and I reiterate, there was never a moment where I was anywhere close to him although traveling very slowly in his direction.

The department is actively engaged in discussions on how to ensure the 2024 Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade is a clean, safe and well-enjoyed experience for all.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the Harbor Commission find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Harbor Commission considers the item).

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A – Harbor Department Statistics Infographic
- Attachment B – Harbor Department Statistics by Month, Current Year
- Attachment C – Harbor Department Statistics, Year over Year Comparison
- Attachment D – Harbor Department Definitions