

NEWPORT BEACH HARBOR COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
City Council Chambers – 100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach  
Wednesday, April 8, 2026  
5 p.m.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Ira Beer, Chair  
Marie Marston, Vice Chair  
Steve Scully, Secretary  
Bob Miller, Commissioner  
Rudy Svrcek, Commissioner  
Don Yahn, Commissioner

ABSENT: Gary Williams, Commissioner

Staff Members: Paul Blank, Harbormaster  
Matt Cosyion, Deputy Harbormaster  
Jose Montoya, Deputy City Attorney  
Cynthia Shintaku, Management Analyst

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Led by Commissioner Yahn

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Adam Leverenz referenced the March 11 Harbor Commission meeting, during which elimination of the mooring length adjustment process was discussed. He cited statements made by the Chair indicating that Newport Harbor is fully built out, that no additional water area is available for expansion, and that increasing mooring lengths reallocates limited public water space, increases navigation risk, and reduces access for other harbor users, including kayaks, paddle boarders, rowing shells, and other human-powered craft. He asserted that these same concerns should apply to residential pier extensions and noted that prior comments distinguished moorings from private piers based on regulatory considerations.

Mr. Leverenz explained that the project line referenced in prior discussions represents the dredging boundary maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers and does not constitute a construction or build-out line. He clarified that the pierhead line serves as the legal construction boundary under federal regulations, beyond which artificial structures may not be built. He stated that some existing docks predate these regulations but argued that enforcement should be consistent. He cited Beacon Bay as an example where recently approved docks extend beyond the pierhead line and, in one instance, beyond the project line, and noted additional extensions to work docks. He expressed concern that restricting mooring expansions while allowing dock encroachments creates inequity, fosters conflict, and undermines fairness in applying standards.

Coeli Hylkema, Newport Mooring Permit Holder, asserted that the City of Newport Beach practices financial favoritism benefiting preferred residential tideland users while disadvantaging general public mooring permit holders. She stated that mooring permit holders have faced decades of regulatory and financial discrimination, including proposals to increase onshore mooring fees by 1,000% and offshore mooring fees by 300 to 500%. She referenced statements by a former Harbor Commission Chair

regarding the City's obligation to manage tidelands in the public trust but contended that mooring permit holders already pay higher fees than other user groups, including commercial entities.

Ms. Hylkema stated that residential pier permit holders pay minimal or no fees for storing vessels while occupying larger areas of public tidelands and benefiting from exclusive use rights and the ability to generate income through dock rentals. She emphasized that the issue is not that residential pier rates are too low, but that mooring fees are too high. She further stated that general public mooring permit holders should not be treated as scapegoats in fee discussions and requested equitable treatment consistent with public trust obligations and recreational boating access policies.

Chair Beer addressed a prior public comment concerning alleged noncompliance among Grand Canal properties. He reported that staff conducted a review and determined that one property previously exceeded allowable limits with three moorings and a pier platform, while approximately 70% of Grand Canal properties were technically out of compliance with current code provisions. He stated that the code allows either one pier or two moorings and provided a breakdown indicating that 23 of 79 properties are compliant, 35 have a seawall platform and one mooring, and 20 have a seawall platform and two moorings. He noted that the previously noncompliant property had since been brought into compliance.

Chair Beer requested that staff review a potential amendment to the Municipal Code that would allow either one platform and one mooring or two moorings, which would bring 59 of the 79 properties, or approximately 75%, into compliance.

Secretary Scully inquired whether properties must remain within their property boundaries and comply with construction requirements for pier platforms and moorings.

Harbormaster Paul Blank confirmed that properties must remain within property boundaries and meet all applicable construction requirements.

Deputy City Attorney Jose Montoya he advised that the matter had not been agendaized and therefore could not be discussed substantively at that time. He explained that the appropriate action would be to consider whether to place the item on a future agenda for discussion and possible action.

Chair Beer acknowledged the procedural guidance and agreed to defer discussion of the proposed amendment until a future agenda item, noting that the matter would be revisited during the portion of the meeting designated for requesting future agenda items.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

## **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **1. Draft Minutes of the March 11, 2026, Harbor Commission Regular Meeting**

Chair Beer opened public comments. Seeing none, Chair Beer closed public comments.

Vice Chair Marston moved to approve the March 11, 2026 Harbor Commission Regular Meeting minutes, as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Yahn. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

**Ayes:** Miller, Svrcek, Yahn, Scully, Marston, Beer  
**Nays:** None  
**Abstain:** None  
**Absent:** Williams

## 6. CURRENT BUSINESS

### 6.1 Resolution Adopting Recommended Revisions to the City of Newport Beach Municipal Code

#### Recommendation:

1. 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
2. Approve staff recommendation to adopt Harbor Commission Resolution HC2026-1 reflecting recommended revisions to the City of Newport Beach Municipal Code.

Chair Beer introduced Item 6.1, a resolution adopting recommended revisions to the City of Newport Beach Municipal Code. He stated that, at the February 11, 2026 Harbor Commission meeting, Commissioners had agreed to recommendations developed by the subcommittee responsible for the annual review of Title 17 and had directed staff to return with a resolution reflecting those recommended changes.

Deputy Harbormaster Cosylion presented a brief overview of minor revisions to the proposed resolution. He explained that certain previously proposed changes had been removed, including a modification to Section 17.25.020 related to prohibiting the loaning of moorings, as well as all changes to Section 17.60.040. He stated that these removals were made because the City is currently conducting a comprehensive review of mooring and residential pier rates, yacht club mooring field rates, the mooring transfer program, and the liveaboard program in response to a State Lands Commission report regarding tidelands management. He indicated that deferring these changes would avoid confusion and allow the broader review process to be completed before implementing additional modifications affecting the mooring permit program.

Deputy Harbormaster Cosylion further explained that subsections B and C were added to the Marine Activities Permit Program, noting that members of the charter community supported these additions. He stated that subsection B requires any person or entity engaging in commercial vessel rental or charter activity within the City, including through online platforms or social media, to prominently display a valid City-issued Marine Activities Permit number in all advertisements and listings. He explained that this requirement would improve staff efficiency in identifying permitted versus non-permitted operators.

Deputy Harbormaster Cosylion also described subsection C, which grants the Harbormaster authority to issue administrative subpoenas to permit holders, agents, charter platforms, or other facilitating entities to obtain information regarding charter listings. He stated that the information may include the names of responsible parties, listing addresses, rental durations, and pricing details for the purpose of determining compliance with Municipal Code requirements. He further explained that subpoenas must allow at least 30 days for response, during which recipients may seek judicial review, and that failure to comply may result in enforcement action by the City.

Deputy Harbormaster Cosylion concluded by noting that these provisions mirror existing enforcement authority contained in Newport Beach Municipal Code Section 5.95.055 related to short-term lodging, and that similar language has been successfully used by the City's Code Enforcement Division for regulating short-term rental platforms.

Secretary Scully inquired where judicial review of an administrative subpoena would be conducted.

Deputy City Attorney Montoya responded that judicial review would be filed with the local court having jurisdiction, typically the Central Superior Court in Santa Ana, and that such review must be initiated within 30 days. He further explained that if a recipient does not wish to comply with the subpoena, they may challenge it through that judicial process.

Commissioner Miller inquired about the applicability of short-term rental regulations to vessels, referencing listings on platforms such as Airbnb where boats are advertised for overnight stays. He asked how such uses are addressed under existing City ordinances and the proposed regulatory framework.

Deputy Harbormaster Cosylion responded that the City's short-term lodging ordinance permits such uses only within designated residential zones and does not allow short-term lodging within the harbor. Staff stated that vessel-based short-term rentals are not permitted and that staff periodically monitors online platforms, including Airbnb and VRBO, to identify such listings. He further explained that when such listings are identified, property owners are notified that this activity is not allowed within the harbor.

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Ms. Hylkema questioned the distinction between prohibited short-term lodging on vessels and the ability of residential pier permit holders to allow temporary use of their docks. She suggested that if dock space may be rented, it could potentially allow short-term occupancy, and requested clarification on how such situations are treated under existing regulations.

Mr. Leverenz speaker expressed confusion regarding the scope of items under consideration in the current agenda materials. He inquired whether additional topics, including prior discussions related to piers and docks, remained under consideration or were still included as part of the materials associated with the item.

Harbormaster Blank requested that public comments be addressed to the Commission and stated that questions would be answered at the Commission's discretion.

Mr. Leverenz acknowledged prior guidance and stated that the Deputy Harbor Master's presentation reflected only a portion of items previously discussed at a stakeholder meeting and prior Commission meeting. He indicated that if additional items were not under consideration, he would refrain from further comment, but noted that such items appeared in the agenda materials. He requested clarification from the Chair regarding whether to proceed with additional comments.

Chair Beer responded that the speaker may provide any public comments he wished.

Mr. Leverenz referenced prior comments he had made regarding restroom facilities and stated that there is a shared interest in preventing human waste from entering the harbor environment.

Chair Beer clarified that the restroom topic and related concerns were not part of the current agenda item concerning adoption of the resolution and stated that comments must be limited to matters relevant to the item under consideration. He advised that unrelated topics should be addressed during general public comment.

Mr. Leverenz stated that both redline and clean versions of the agenda materials included subject matter he had referenced and expressed confusion as to whether the Commission was voting only on items presented in the staff presentation or on all materials included in the agenda packet.

Chair Beer clarified that the Commission was considering the full resolution contained within the agenda materials and invited the speaker to comment if his remarks were relevant to that item.

Mr. Leverenz stated that he would conduct further review and concluded his comments.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

Chair Beer moved to approve the staff recommendation to adopt Harbor Commission Resolution HC 2026-1, reflecting recommended revisions to the City of Newport Beach Municipal code. Seconded by Commissioner Yahn. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

**Ayes:** Miller, Svrcek, Yahn, Scully, Marston, Beer  
**Nays:** None  
**Abstain:** None  
**Absent:** Williams

## **6.2 Review and Discuss Proposed Additions to Mooring Specifications and Inspection Requirements for Helical Anchor and Dynamic Tackle Systems**

### **Recommendation:**

1. 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;
2. Provide direction to staff regarding the adoption of recommended additions to mooring specifications and inspection requirements for helical anchor and dynamic tackle mooring systems; and
3. Review and discuss the proposed amendments to Chapter 17 of the City of Newport Beach Municipal Code and related Mooring Specifications.

Chair Beer stated that, in November 2024, the Harbor Commission had recommended a pilot program to convert three City-owned moorings from traditional anchor systems to helical systems. He noted that the pilot tests had been successful and that staff was now proposing updates to mooring specifications and inspection requirements to allow other permittees to convert to these systems.

Harbormaster Blank presented a report summarizing the pilot program and requested direction from the Commission regarding potential revisions to mooring specifications and inspection requirements. He explained that a consultant and engineer had assisted with evaluating six test sites utilizing helical anchor and dynamic tackle systems. He noted that the Mooring Permit Technician primarily responsible for the project was unavailable, and that the presentation was intended to provide an overview and facilitate Commission direction.

Harbormaster Blank described the differences between traditional and helical mooring systems. He explained that traditional systems consist of large anchor weights resting on the seafloor, connected by chains that may contact the seabed and contribute to scarring, with a float and pennants connecting to the vessel. In contrast, he explained that the helical systems utilize an anchor driven into the seafloor and a dynamic, elastic tackle system, resulting in reduced seafloor disturbance, less chain contact, and a smaller environmental footprint.

Harbormaster Blank provided examples from the pilot program, including the removal of approximately 2,200 pounds of traditional anchor materials, such as train wheels and large volumes of chain, and their replacement with helical systems. He noted that both privately owned and City-owned moorings had been successfully converted, resulting in reduced seafloor impact and improved environmental conditions. He explained that the Harbor Commission has authority under Municipal Code provisions to revise mooring specifications without requiring a code amendment. However, he further explained that changes to inspection requirements would require Commission recommendation and adoption of a resolution for City Council consideration. He indicated that such revisions may include definitions for helical systems, inspection timing, and use of sacrificial anodes.

Harbormaster Blank outlined proposed updates to mooring specifications, including consolidation of existing charts into a single chart and the addition of new criteria specific to helical anchor systems, such as shaft size, number of plates, holding strength, and load limits. He emphasized that existing compliant moorings would not be affected and that the proposed changes would provide an additional option for permittees.

Harbormaster Blank described current inspection requirements, which mandate a two-year inspection cycle for traditional moorings. He proposed maintaining the two-year cycle for traditional systems while

establishing a modified schedule for helical systems, including an initial one-year inspection followed by a four-year inspection cycle. He explained that the use of a sacrificial anode would allow monitoring of anchor condition without frequent removal. He further stated that prior recommendations for extensive load testing associated with helical systems would be removed, as pilot testing of six installations demonstrated reliable performance without incident. He indicated that eliminating these requirements would reduce unnecessary costs for permittees.

Secretary Scully inquired whether existing helical anchor systems in Newport Harbor had been tested during recent severe weather events and whether any issues had been observed.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the helical anchor systems were in place during severe weather events in January and March and performed without any failures or movement. He noted that some traditional moorings did move or drag during those events, but the helical systems were not among them.

Secretary Scully inquired whether data exists from other jurisdictions supporting a four-year inspection cycle without issues.

Harbormaster Blank responded that inspection cycles vary across jurisdictions, with some locations requiring inspections as infrequently as every 20 years. He noted that manufacturer warranties for certain systems also support a 20-year inspection interval. He emphasized that the proposed four-year inspection cycle is more rigorous than those used elsewhere and that no other known municipality has requirements as stringent as those being proposed.

Chair Beer sought clarification regarding whether the proposed inspection cycle requires removal of the helical anchor.

Harbormaster Blank clarified that the proposed language requires an inspection at the end of the first year following installation and a full removal and inspection at the end of the fifth year.

Chair Beer acknowledged the clarification and noted that the language had initially been interpreted differently but understood the intended requirement.

Commissioner Miller inquired whether the size of the sacrificial anode varies based on the size of the mooring and whether larger moorings require larger anodes.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the anode size is determined by the diameter of the anchor shaft rather than the size of the mooring. He explained that the proposed anchors have a diameter of approximately 1.5 inches and that the engineer recommended a 15-pound anode sized to fit that diameter. He further noted that, given local salinity and electrolysis conditions, a 15-pound anode would be sufficient to provide protection for approximately four years.

Secretary Scully inquired if the anchor removal would be performed by a diver and requested clarification on the process.

Harbormaster Blank responded that a diver would conduct the removal and inspection.

Secretary Scully further inquired whether the same diver who installed the system would typically perform the inspection and asked for an estimate of associated costs.

Harbormaster Blank explained that costs for installation and inspection have decreased significantly since initial estimates in 2022. He stated that early estimates were approximately \$15,000 per system for a double-point mooring, while the City recently completed installation of two double-point moorings for less than \$10,000 total. He further estimated that inspection, removal, and reinstallation costs would be approximately \$500. He noted that, by comparison, inspection of traditional moorings by a certified

service provider, including lifting weights and chains, typically costs approximately \$1,500 for a two-point mooring system.

Chair Beer sought clarification regarding installation costs and asked whether the reported cost of approximately \$10,000 applied per double-point mooring or to both moorings combined.

Harbormaster Blank clarified that the total cost was slightly less than \$10,000 for both moorings, specifically the conversion of moorings C32 and C34.

Commissioner Yahn inquired about the material used in the upper connection of the helical system, noting that it appeared to be a flexible or elastic component rather than traditional chain, and requested information regarding its durability over a four-year period.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the component is a synthetic fiber material with elastic properties, commonly referred to by the brand name Dyneema, though other comparable materials exist. He explained that the system incorporates multiple strands depending on vessel size and load requirements, with smaller vessels requiring fewer strands and larger vessels requiring more. He noted that the material is designed for marine environments, does not corrode, and includes an elastic component composed of specialized polymers suitable for saline conditions. He further stated that manufacturer specifications support inspection intervals of at least four years, with some indicating longer service durations.

Commissioner Yahn inquired whether the engineering specifications for the proposed systems were based on manufacturer recommendations or independently verified.

Harbormaster Blank explained that the specifications were developed by an independent third-party engineer with no affiliation to product manufacturers. He stated that the engineer had prior familiarity with Newport Harbor mooring systems and was retained in 2022, and again in 2025–2026, to develop equivalent specifications for the updated technology based on local conditions and prior system requirements.

Commissioner Yahn inquired whether the cost of installing the new helical mooring systems is borne by the City or by individual permittees.

Harbormaster Blank clarified that the City funded the conversion of City-owned moorings, including moorings C32 and C34. He stated that private mooring permittees who choose to convert them to the new system are responsible for all associated costs and that the City does not subsidize these conversions. He further emphasized that participation is voluntary and not mandated.

Commissioner Yahn acknowledged that implementation would occur incrementally over time as permittees elect to convert their systems and inquired whether the City intends to convert all City-owned moorings.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the City currently maintains 17 moorings and intends to convert them over time as budget permits. He explained that no specific budget line item exists for conversions; however, funds allocated for ongoing maintenance may be used for conversion where cost-effective. He stated that no additional funding is being requested for this purpose.

Chair Beer added that the dynamic tackle system utilizes an elastic rode rather than traditional chain, which provides operational benefits. He explained that the elastic nature of the system allows for contraction during tidal changes, reducing the drift of mooring buoys into fairways at low tide. He further noted that the system reduces the overall swing radius of vessels on single-point moorings, improves space utilization, and minimizes seafloor scarring.

Vice Chair Marston inquired whether removal of helical anchors every four years could disturb soil integrity and questioned whether strength testing alone, such as a lateral pull test, could be used as an

alternative to removal and reinstallation. She suggested that if an anchor passes a strength test, it may indicate that no degradation has occurred, thereby eliminating the need for removal.

Harbormaster Blank responded that a lateral pull test is one method to evaluate anchor holding strength; however, it does not address potential degradation of the metallic anchor itself. He explained that removal is necessary to inspect for corrosion, electrolysis, or deterioration that may not be detectable through testing alone. He stated that the inclusion of a sacrificial anode is intended to mitigate corrosion, but emphasized that visual inspection upon removal is the only way to confirm the anchor's condition. He further noted that the disturbance to the seafloor from removal and reinstallation is minimal and does not significantly affect soil integrity or holding strength.

Vice Chair Marston reiterated that strength testing could potentially identify failure conditions without requiring removal and suggested that such an approach may be sufficient.

Harbormaster Blank acknowledged the perspective but maintained that, based on current understanding of the system and environmental factors, removal and inspection provide the most reliable method for confirming anchor integrity. He indicated that practices vary among other entities using similar systems, noting that inspection standards differ depending on environmental conditions and jurisdictional requirements.

Chair Beer agreed with the Vice Chair Marston's concern and noted that, based on prior service on the Multi Vessel Mooring Systems (MVMS) subcommittee and related research, he had not encountered reports of helical anchors being removed due to degradation. He stated that examples he reviewed, including applications on the East Coast and other underwater uses, generally involved inspection periods of 10 to 20 years. He suggested that a four-year removal requirement may be overly aggressive, although the estimated \$500 cost appears modest compared with the approximately \$1,500 cost for traditional inspections every 24 months. He recommended further evaluation of whether a lateral stress test could serve as an appropriate alternative to removal.

Secretary Scully inquired whether grant funding opportunities might be available to assist the City or mooring permittees in converting to helical anchor systems, noting the environmental benefits of these systems for the harbor and public tidelands.

Harbormaster Blank responded that such funding opportunities had not yet been explored but indicated that staff would investigate whether programs.

Secretary Scully suggested contacting Boating and Waterways or other agencies who could provide financial assistance. He acknowledged that potential funding sources could support implementation of environmentally beneficial systems.

Harbormaster Blank noted that, for the first time, temporary docks for the Newport Beach International Boat Show would be installed using only helical anchor systems without the use of piles, indicating a shift toward these methods for large-scale temporary installation.

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Mr. Leverenz referenced a Coastal Development Permit for the boat show and stated that he believed it included approval for 12 piles. He indicated that, based on his research of helical anchor systems, such anchors are often removed after approximately 25 years and can typically be reinstalled without issue. He further stated that, based on his understanding, sacrificial anodes may not experience significant oxidation due to being embedded in soil, and suggested that removal every four years may not be necessary. He recommended that the City consider evaluating systems without sacrificial anodes to determine their effectiveness.

Mr. Leverenz requested clarification regarding the estimated \$500 service cost, specifically whether it applies per anchor on a double mooring system. He noted that, regardless, the cost appears lower than traditional service costs. He also inquired whether referenced products such as Chance and C-Flex are manufacturers. He stated that he had recently serviced his own mooring and would have been interested in these systems, noting that the reduced costs and environmental benefits appear favorable. He acknowledged that some concerns remain regarding soil liquefaction during earthquakes and anchor depth, but stated that the incremental implementation approach would allow for continued evaluation of these factors.

Ms. Hylkema expressed concern regarding statements that the Commission has authority over anchorage, berthing, and mooring regulations, noting apprehension that such authority could lead to future mandates requiring all mooring permit holders to convert to helical anchor systems. She indicated concern about a perceived preference for these systems and the potential for regulatory changes. She referenced information from a 2017 State Lands Commission article regarding Tomales Bay, stating that helical anchors were not permitted at that time due to the need for extensive testing. She noted uncertainty as to whether those findings have since changed and questioned how those conditions compare to Newport Harbor. She raised concerns regarding soil stability, including potential liquefaction during seismic events, and the effects of removing and reinstalling anchors. She compared the process to re-fastening a screw in wood and suggested that repeated removal could weaken surrounding material. She expressed concern that such disturbance could affect anchor stability and concluded by noting these as issues warranting further consideration.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

Chair Beer stated that the Commission may act on the item and invited a motion to provide direction to staff. He specified that the action would include exemption from CEQA and direction to staff regarding adoption of recommended additions to mooring specifications and inspection requirements for helical anchor and dynamic tackle systems, as well as review of proposed amendments to Chapter 17 of the Municipal Code.

Secretary Scully inquired whether the action should be considered in separate components.

Harbormaster Blank responded that it would be preferable to address both mooring specifications and inspection requirements concurrently to avoid creating uncertainty for permittees regarding implementation and compliance. He recommended that the Commission direct staff to return with revised specifications for Commission approval and corresponding code language for City Council consideration.

Chair Beer confirmed that the proposed action would direct staff to return with recommendations for both specifications and inspection requirements, along with proposed amendments to Chapter 17.

Secretary Scully moved to direct staff to return with recommendations for both specifications and inspection requirements, along with proposed amendments to Chapter 17, and noted that the item was exempt from CEQA. Seconded by Chair Beer.

Vice Chair Marston requested clarification of the motion to confirm that staff would return with recommended revisions rather than immediate changes.

Chair Beer clarified that the motion directs staff to return with recommendations for adoption of additions to mooring specifications and inspection requirements and to review proposed amendments to Chapter 17.

Harbormaster Blank indicated that comments from the Commission, including suggestions for a longer testing period and consideration of testing alternatives to anchor removal, would be incorporated into further analysis. He stated that consultation with the engineer and review of practices in other jurisdictions

would be conducted, and that additional research would include potential grant opportunities to support conversion.

Chair Beer requested that the motion be amended to include review of anchor removal requirements and alternative testing approaches.

Secretary Scully agreed to amend the motion accordingly.

Chair Beer confirmed the amended motion and called for a vote.

Secretary Scully moved to direct staff to return with recommendations for adoption of additions to mooring specifications and inspection requirements and to review proposed amendments to Chapter 17, noting the item was exempt from CEQ, as amended. Seconded by Chair Beer. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Miller, Svrcek, Yahn, Scully, Marston, Beer  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Williams

Chair Beer expressed appreciation for the work completed and acknowledged the initiative as beneficial for multiple reasons.

### **6.3 Review and Approve Recommended Harbor Commission Objectives for 2026**

#### **Recommendation:**

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Approve the recommended 2026 Harbor Commission Objectives and forward them to the City Council for review and consideration.

Chair Beer stated that, in late 2025, the ad hoc committee revised the 2024 Harbor Commission objectives to better align with current goals for Newport Harbor. He explained that the subcommittee had prepared a proposed set of 2026 objectives and was seeking Commission approval, noting that, if approved, the objectives would be forwarded to the City Council for review and consideration. He inquired whether staff had a report on the item.

Harbormaster Blank indicated that no formal report would be provided and deferred presentation to the ad hoc committee.

Chair Beer presented the proposed 2026 objectives, stating that the draft had been included in the agenda packet. He explained that the previous format listed objectives individually and assigned them to specific Commissioners, whereas the revised format organizes objectives into functional areas to better reflect prior successful approaches.

Chair Beer stated that five primary functional areas were established, each containing one or more objectives. He explained that this structure allows for ongoing tracking of progress and provides flexibility to add new objectives throughout the year as needed, subject to Commission approval. He noted that, for the first time, deliverables were included with each objective to provide clarity to the public regarding intended outcomes and Commission goals.

Chair Beer outlined the five functional areas. He reported that the first area, harbor regulations and operational readiness, includes review of Title 17 and other Harbor Department operational matters such as service delivery, staffing, and emergency response. He described the second functional area, harbor infrastructure, public access, and capital planning, which includes development of a harbor infrastructure and public access plan, identification of capital improvement needs, and monitoring of ongoing harbor dredging activities. He explained that the third functional area, harbor financial sustainability, focuses on evaluating Tidelands Fund revenue sources and providing recommendations that improve financial sustainability while adhering to public trust obligations. He described the fourth functional area, harbor safety and modernization, as addressing evaluation of enhanced safety systems, development of educational tools for rental operators and harbor users, and integration of new technologies to improve safety monitoring and enforcement. Lastly, he outlined the fifth functional area, interagency coordination and policy alignment, which includes coordination with City commissions, committees, and staff on harbor-related matters such as water quality, land use, and general plan updates.

Chair Beer stated that the purpose of the item was to solicit Commission feedback, consider potential adoption of the objectives, or defer action to allow additional review prior to a future meeting. He further indicated that, if the Commission chose to proceed, assignments of Commissioners to functional areas or specific objectives could also be considered. He opened the item for Commission discussion and invited comments or suggestions.

Commissioner Yahn expressed support for the revised objectives, stating that the document appropriately reflects ongoing discussions and identifies key focus areas for the Commission. He raised a question regarding the structure and terminology of assignments within the functional areas. He inquired whether Commissioners assigned to each functional area would be considered ad hoc committee chairs and whether the assignments themselves would constitute ad hoc committees, noting that ad hoc committees typically have a defined beginning and end, while standing committees require additional public process. He asked whether the terminology had been considered and whether it was appropriate in this context.

Chair Beer responded that the intent is for one Commissioner to serve as the lead for each functional area, with additional Commissioners assigned to specific objectives within that area. He explained that participation would be limited to no more than two Commissioners per objective, in order to remain compliant with applicable public meeting requirements. He stated that the terminology could be adjusted if needed and expressed no strong preference regarding the label used.

Commissioner Yahn reiterated the question regarding whether assignments within functional areas should be considered ad hoc committees and whether the functional areas themselves should be defined as such.

Chair Beer acknowledged the concern and agreed that the point was valid. He suggested that the term "functional area chair" may be more appropriate, noting that the functional areas would be discussed in a public setting, while smaller working efforts related to specific objectives could occur outside of formal meetings as appropriate.

Commissioner Yahn inquired about a formatting issue within Section 4.1, noting the presence of numbers "3" and "4" in the left margin and asking whether they were intended as subsection numbering or bullet points.

Chair Beer responded that the numbering was a typographical error and confirmed that the items were intended to be part of Section 4.1.

Commissioner Miller expressed support for the draft objectives, noting that the discussion regarding terminology and formatting was helpful. He commended the effort invested by the Chair and other Commissioners in developing a format that is clear and actionable, and acknowledged contributions from another Commissioner.

Secretary Scully stated that the document is clear and supported the use of “functional area chair” rather than “ad hoc committee chair.” He suggested tentatively assigning chairs for each functional area at the current meeting, allowing Commissioners time to review the objectives further, and returning at the next meeting to finalize assignments and incorporate any additional feedback or objectives.

Chair Beer indicated support for this approach and asked for input from the remaining Commissioners regarding tentative adoption and assignment of chairs, with final action to occur at a subsequent meeting.

Commissioner Yahn raised a concern regarding timing, noting that some Commissioners would be departing within approximately two months. He asked whether assignments should be made now and later reassigned, or deferred until the start of the next fiscal year.

Chair Beer noted that some Commissioners would be renewing their terms while others would be departing. He suggested that assignments could proceed with the understanding that new Commissioners could assume roles as needed. He recommended proceeding with assignments to maintain momentum, noting that updating the objectives is overdue and that assignments can be modified later if necessary.

Chair Beer noted that there was general consensus among the Commissioners regarding the approach to assignments and proceeded to invite public comment on the item.

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Mr. Leverenz expressed appreciation for the revised format of the objectives, stating that it represents an improvement over the previous version. He referenced the earlier resolution adopted by the Commission, noting that it included seven changes, and stated that not all of those changes were discussed during the staff presentation. He requested that, if a motion for reconsideration arises, the Commission consider reviewing those items again, including a provision allowing appeals within 14 days, which he indicated he would prefer to avoid. He expressed concern that the proposed 2026 goals and objectives do not include reference to restroom facilities, noting that this topic had been included in the 2024 objectives but was removed. He reiterated his prior comments regarding the importance of clean water and the role of restroom access in achieving that goal. He recommended that restroom-related objectives be reinstated, acknowledging that implementation may be complex but stating that complete removal of the topic is inconsistent with the Commission’s stated goals of improving water quality.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

Chair Beer returned discussion to the Commission and requested volunteers to serve as chairs for each functional area.

Vice Chair Marston volunteered to serve as chair for Functional Area 1, harbor regulations and operational readiness.

Secretary Scully volunteered to serve as chair for Functional Area 2, harbor infrastructure, public access, and capital planning.

Chair Beer requested volunteers for Functional Area 3, harbor financial sustainability, and receiving no immediate volunteers, deferred assignment temporarily.

Chair Beer suggested that, based on background and expertise, Commissioner Miller serve as chair for Functional Area 4, harbor safety and modernization.

Commissioner Miller accepted the assignment.

Commissioner Svrcek volunteered to serve as chair for Functional Area 5, interagency coordination and policy alignment.

Chair Beer returned to Functional Area 3 and assigned that area to Commissioner Williams, noting that the Commissioner could provide input at a future meeting. He confirmed general agreement among the Commission regarding the assignments.

Harbormaster Blank stated that comments and suggestions from the Commission would be incorporated and that a final version of the objectives would be brought back for formal adoption at the next meeting.

Chair Beer stated that the item would be formally agendaized for consideration at the next meeting.

Secretary Scully encouraged Commissioners to submit any additional proposed objectives to the ad hoc committee.

Vice Chair Marston inquired whether matters related to State Lands would be captured within the functional areas.

Chair Beer responded that such matters could fall within multiple functional areas, depending on the nature of the issue, including regulatory, infrastructure, or coordination categories.

Commissioner Miller noted that, during prior ad hoc discussions, tidelands considerations were intended to be captured within the financial sustainability functional area, emphasizing the importance of maintaining focus on long-term tidelands management. He suggested that additional clarity could be provided regarding placement of tidelands-related objectives.

Chair Beer acknowledged the comment and indicated openness to refining the language, noting that the appropriate functional area may become clearer as specific issues arise.

#### **6.4 Ad Hoc Committee Updates**

##### **Recommendation:**

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

##### **Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Svrcek and Yahn (05-10-2023)**

Commissioner Yahn reported that he had met with several stakeholders associated with the ferry ownership and stated that funding has progressed favorably, with more than \$10 million secured. He noted that final vessel designs have not yet been completed but that sufficient funding is available to begin submitting reimbursement requests under a grant program. He stated that the funding is expected to support a full rebuild of the ferry vessels as well as installation of electrical charging infrastructure. He further indicated that the project has received support through coordination between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California Air Resources Board (CARB) and that stakeholders are in a strong position moving forward. He suggested that the Commission consider whether to discontinue the ad hoc committee, noting that the project is progressing well, but also acknowledged that ongoing monitoring may still be beneficial.

Secretary Scully stated that, while the topic had been previously discussed, it may be appropriate to retain the ad hoc committee in order to continue receiving updates on vessel design, construction

timelines, and project progress. He noted that the item does not require significant time and remains of interest to the Commission.

Commissioner Yahn expressed agreement with retaining the ad hoc committee for continued monitoring.

Chair Beer inquired whether the grant funding, estimated at approximately \$10 to \$11 million, would fully cover the costs of constructing the vessels and installing charging stations, or whether additional private funding would be required.

Commissioner Yahn stated that the intent is for the grant funding to cover the full project cost, although final costs remain uncertain due to the absence of finalized vessel designs. He noted that the funding amount may be adjusted if project costs increase, subject to further requests to the State. He concluded that, while some uncertainty remains, the project is moving in a positive direction.

#### General Plan Harbor & Bay Element Update Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Marston, and Yahn (10-09-2024)

Chair Beer stated that this item was previously reviewed.

Chair Beer opened public comments. Seeing none, Chair Beer closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

### **6.5 Harbor Commission 2024 Objectives**

#### **Recommendation:**

1. Find this action exempt from 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 physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

#### Conduct annual review of Title 17 and recommend updates to City Council where necessary (Commissioner Yahn)

Chair Beer declared this objective completed with unanimous approval from the dais.

#### Collaborate with the Water Quality/Coastal Tidelands Committee to partner on areas within the Harbor that both Commission/Committees intersect (Commissioners: Svrcek, Scully)

Commissioner Svrcek reported on attendance at a recent water quality meeting and provided an update on the Newport Bay trash interceptor's performance during the 2025–2026 storm season. He stated that approximately 62 tons of debris were collected during that period and noted that an estimated 70% to 75% of the material consisted of natural debris such as shrubs, branches, and vegetation. He reported that staff discussed operational insights gained during the storm season, including that debris collection activity significantly increases during rainfall events and that the system experiences substantial demand during peak flows. He stated that efforts are underway to improve operational efficiency and enhance data collection to better understand the sources and composition of debris entering the system. He described the types of debris collected, noting that the most common items included plastic bottles, Styrofoam, bottle caps, and plastic bags. He also stated that larger items, including a mattress, tires, and wheels, were recovered. He further reported that an Artificial Intelligence (AI) camera system has been installed to improve analysis of debris.

Commissioner Svrcek observed that, based on his personal experience in the harbor during the rainy season, there has been a noticeable improvement in water conditions, with reduced visible debris. He

stated that the interceptor project appears to be progressing effectively and contributing to improved water quality. He inquired about who was the champion of the project.

Harbormaster Blank responded that the interceptor project was originally spearheaded by a former Mayor Duffy Duffield, with former Mayor Diane Dixon securing funding for its implementation, and noted that their collaboration was instrumental in the project's development.

Commissioner Svrcek acknowledged the information and reiterated that the project is moving in a positive direction.

Continue with the participation of businesses, nonprofits, and the Harbor Department with a Newport Harbor Safety Committee to promote best practices and address safety issues on the water (Commissioner: Scully).

Secretary Scully presented an overview of a proposed rental safety program, noting that the concept had been discussed at a prior meeting and referred to the Safety Committee for further development. He stated that there had been general agreement among Commissioners to explore the concept and that the presentation was intended to confirm direction and solicit feedback from the Commission and Harbor Master. He explained that, under California law, rental customers are exempt from obtaining a California Boater Safety Card, resulting in many inexperienced users operating vessels in Newport Harbor without standardized safety training. He emphasized that Newport Harbor is a high-traffic and complex environment, presenting challenges such as navigating mooring fields, interacting with ferry and commercial vessel right-of-way, managing wind and current conditions, and ensuring safe operation of paddleboards and other small craft. He further noted recurring issues involving inexperienced users requiring assistance and a lack of knowledge regarding speed limits and emergency procedures.

Secretary Scully proposed development of a short, Newport Harbor-specific safety video, approximately five to ten minutes in length, covering navigation rules, mooring field awareness, ferry traffic, personal flotation device usage, currents, wind conditions, and emergency procedures. He suggested incorporating a brief assessment component, such as an eight- to ten-question quiz, with a time-stamped completion record that rental operators could verify prior to vessel use. He also proposed that the program be delivered through existing City tools, such as a harbor application or QR code, with the goal of maintaining simplicity and minimizing cost.

Secretary Scully outlined next steps, including evaluation of feasibility, potential City Council funding for production and implementation, and development of detailed scope and requirements by the Safety Committee. He stated that staff engagement would be necessary to assess feasibility and that input and cooperation from rental operators would be critical to ensure program effectiveness and acceptance. He indicated that further coordination with the Harbormaster would occur to determine whether the City would support and fund the program, and that updates would be provided to the Commission as the concept progresses.

Secretary Scully described anticipated benefits, including improved safety awareness among rental users, enhanced liability protection for operators through documented training, establishment of a consistent harbor-wide safety standard, and no direct production costs for rental operators if funded by the City. He emphasized that the program would supplement, rather than replace, existing in-person safety briefings and would contribute to improved safety practices and professional standards within the harbor.

Chair: The Chair acknowledged the presentation and expressed appreciation for the proposal.

Commissioner Svrcek expressed support for the proposed rental safety program and inquired whether separate safety presentations or assessments would be developed for different types of vessels, such as paddleboards, personal watercraft, and motorized boats.

Secretary Scully responded that the program scope has not yet been finalized and that further discussion with the Harbor Master and staff is needed. He indicated that options include a general safety program applicable to all users or segmented content tailored to specific vessel types, and that these considerations will be evaluated during program development.

Commissioner Yahn inquired about the anticipated cost of producing and implementing the safety program, including video production and potential integration with existing City technology to enable testing and verification.

Secretary Scully stated that cost estimates are not yet available and noted that feasibility will depend on whether the program can be integrated into existing City systems. He described a potential delivery method involving QR code access to online content and verification mechanisms.

Commissioner Yahn commented that the cost is likely to be minimal relative to the anticipated safety benefits and expressed support for further development of the program.

Review Harbor Department responsibilities, evaluate the Department's readiness and effectiveness to deliver Harbor services as necessary for normal operations and during emergencies and make recommendations as determined necessary (Commissioner: Scully, Williams).

No update.

Work with City Staff on an update of the market Rent to be charged for onshore and offshore moorings (Commissioner: Williams, Beer).

No update.

Support staff in all efforts related to the dredge completion of the Federal Navigation channels in addition to the upcoming agency renewals of Regional General Permit (RGP54) shallow water dredging permit. (Commissioners: Cunningham, Svrcek)

No update.

Chair Beer opened public comments. Seeing none, Chair Beer closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

#### **6.6 Harbormaster Update – March 2026 Activities**

##### **Recommendation:**

- 1) 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
- 2) Receive and file.

Public Works Manager Chris Miller reported that the dredging project is progressing well and is currently ahead of schedule by approximately five weeks. He explained that the contractor recently dredged the central portion of the access channel from the anchorage area to Marina Park to expedite delivery of dredged material to the Port of Long Beach prior to the June 1 deadline. He stated that dredging in the Marina Park area to 19th Street is expected to be substantially completed by mid-April, with minor cleanup work to follow.

Public Works Manager Miller stated that, once disposal of material at the Port of Long Beach is complete, work will shift to other areas, including the yacht anchorage area. He noted that approximately 55 moorings in that area were removed to facilitate dredging operations and acknowledged the Harbor Department's efforts in coordinating mooring relocation and removal, describing it as a complex and challenging process. He reported successful coordination with the Newport Harbor Yacht Club's Baldwin Cup Race, explaining that the mooring field has been fully cleared in advance of the event. He stated that

dredging of the area is expected to begin shortly after the race concludes, following survey work, and estimated that dredging in that area could take approximately five to six weeks.

Public Works Manager Miller indicated that the contractor will return to complete dredging of the access channel to final grade at a later time, noting that this work is not subject to the same time constraints as material disposal at the Port of Long Beach. He stated that the overall project is expected to continue through approximately mid-September, subject to conditions. He expressed confidence in the project's progress and coordination efforts, noting strong collaboration with Harbor Department staff and local sailing and recreational groups. He concluded by stating that the project is expected to proceed successfully through the summer months and offered to answer questions.

Commissioner Srvcek inquired whether the dredging project was progressing ahead of schedule and asked for the estimated completion date for the overall project.

Public Works Manager Miller responded that the project is progressing ahead of schedule and is anticipated to be completed around mid-September.

Secretary Scully asked whether dredging at the Balboa Yacht Basin had been completed.

Public Works Manager Miller confirmed that dredging at the Balboa Yacht Basin is complete and stated that City Council is expected to approve a Notice of Completion in the coming weeks, noting that work concluded in early February.

Secretary Scully inquired about the status of dredging in the Linda Isle area.

Public Works Manager Miller reported that dredging at Linda Isle is ongoing, with significant progress made in the inner lagoon area and current work occurring in front of residential properties.

Secretary Scully asked whether property owners are requesting dredging at their individual homes in conjunction with the project.

Public Works Manager Miller responded that no such requests are being incorporated into the project and clarified that the Linda Isle work is a separate project, with efforts focused on designated project areas.

Commissioner Miller commended the staff on the project's progress and indicated no further questions.

Vice Chair Marston inquired how staff verifies that dredging has reached the required design depth at specific locations.

Public Works Manager Miller explained that verification is conducted through bathymetric and side-scan surveys. He stated that the contractor performs preliminary surveys during the work, and once a section is complete, the Army Corps of Engineers conducts independent surveys. He noted that project managers compare the results to determine compliance and calculate payment quantities based on cubic yardage.

Vice Chair Marston inquired about the capacity of dredging barges used in the project.

Public Works Manager Miller responded that the barges, or scows, have a nominal capacity of approximately 3,000 cubic yards but are typically loaded to about 2,400 cubic yards depending on material characteristics. He reported that approximately 86 scows have been delivered to the Port of Long Beach, totaling around 160,000 cubic yards, and that approximately 125 scows have been used overall to date.

Chair Beer calculated that the total project may require slightly over 400 scows based on an estimated total volume of approximately 900,000 cubic yards and acknowledged the project's progress.

Harbormaster Blank proceeded with the Harbor Master's report for March, organized by categories of clean, safe, and well-enjoyed harbor operations, along with additional updates and statistics. He reported that three training sessions were conducted for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers, coordinated through the Fire Department. He stated that approximately 30 volunteers were trained in the operation of the trash rover, including deployment procedures and use of equipment such as containment booms, absorbent booms, and liquid separation attachments. He noted that the trash rover can be utilized in emergency spill response situations and that trained volunteers may also assist with routine debris collection when available. He reported that the Harbor Department has assumed responsibility for maintenance of all trash skimmers. He explained that while a contractor continues to provide support for major components and repairs, staff now conducts weekly inspections and performs routine maintenance on the four skimmers.

Harbormaster Blank stated that Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Goldfarb would be presenting at a statewide conference on derelict vessels and indicated that a similar presentation would be provided to the Commission at a future meeting to address policies and procedures related to abandoned and derelict vessels within the harbor. He reported that a long-standing impounded vessel was successfully removed from the harbor after extended efforts to resolve ownership and responsibility issues. He described an incident in which a Harbor Safety Officer identified a submerged motorcycle near the Newport Boulevard Bridge. He reported that the motorcycle was recovered using appropriate equipment, transported to impound, and remains unclaimed due to the absence of identifying information, despite coordination with the Police Department.

Harbormaster Blank reported that a Management Analyst Cynthia Shintaku secured an additional \$9,600 in grant funding through the Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Exchange Program (SAVE) program allocation. He explained that the funds became available from a prior recipient and will be used to support removal of abandoned and surrendered vessels within the harbor.

Harbormaster Blank reported that a case of trespassing and unpermitted liveaboard activity was addressed involving a vessel located in the A field. He stated that complaints were received from nearby residents and harbor users regarding individuals living aboard the vessel without authorization. He explained that the permittee did not hold a liveaboard permit and was unaware of the situation. He advised that in coordination with the permittee, the vessel was relocated to a more visible location to allow for monitoring, and the trespass was resolved without further incident. He reported that a sunken tender attached to a mooring adjacent to its registered owner's permit was recovered. He stated that the unauthorized attachment of the vessel to another individual's mooring was addressed with the irresponsible vessel owner.

Harbormaster Blank provided updates related to harbor safety activities, reporting that multiple becalmed vessels associated with the Recreation and Senior Services (RSS) sailing program at Marina Park were assisted. He also noted that several distressed paddleboarders were returned safely to their points of embarkation. He stated that additional patrols were conducted during severe weather events in March, including both Harbor Department personnel and contracted services, with an emphasis on after-hours monitoring. He reported that a disabled sailing vessel experiencing engine failure while attempting to exit the harbor was assisted back to its mooring. He noted that the vessel's commercial towing service was unavailable at the time of need. He stated that, although the vessel exceeded the size typically handled by Harbor Department towing operations, the response demonstrated the Department's capability to safely assist a vessel of approximately 40 to 45 feet and 45,000 pounds under favorable conditions.

Harbormaster Blank reported participation in a regional tsunami partners meeting hosted at Marina Park by the City of Newport Beach. He stated that agencies from across the Orange County watershed attended and that the discussion highlighted the challenges faced by inland jurisdictions in managing traffic flow during a tsunami evacuation. He noted that cities including Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, and portions of Irvine discussed the need to accommodate evacuation traffic moving through their jurisdictions from coastal areas such as the peninsula, Balboa Island, and other low-lying regions. He reported an enforcement incident involving a rental vessel that had been beached in an area

occupied by swimmers. He stated that operation of motorized vessels within 100 feet of swimmers is prohibited and that the rental operator was advised of the violation and educated on applicable safety requirements.

Harbormaster Blank reported ongoing efforts to improve enforcement of time limits at public docks. He stated that plaques have been installed at each cleat on public docks to uniquely identify tie-up locations, enabling more accurate documentation and enforcement through photographic and video evidence. He reported that fishing and public signage at the Balboa Marina public dock was vandalized in early March. He stated that replacement signage has been ordered and partially installed, with total replacement costs of \$553.71, excluding shipping and staff labor. He indicated that efforts are underway to obtain video footage from nearby cameras to identify responsible individuals and pursue restitution.

Harbormaster Blank reported that a large fender that had fallen from a charter vessel was successfully retrieved and returned to the vessel. He noted that the recovery effort was completed efficiently and was received positively by the vessel's crew. He stated that continued outreach and education efforts have been conducted regarding proper use of public docks, including guidance on appropriate locations and time limits for docking.

Harbormaster Blank reported that a permitted raft-up event occurred in the West Anchorage in mid-March. He stated that the event was well organized, with strong communication from participants regarding vessel counts and sizes, and that attendance has grown in popularity over time. He indicated that the event proceeded successfully and that participants appeared to enjoy both on-water and onshore activities. He noted that Harbor Department personnel continued to provide wayfinding assistance to rental customers throughout the reporting period.

Harbormaster Blank reported that a stakeholder meeting related to State Lands Commission direction on rates and fees, previously scheduled for April 21 at the Oasis facility, has been rescheduled. He emphasized that the meeting will not take place on April 21 and stated that a new date is being considered for late May, with public notice to be provided once finalized. He announced that a small vessel auction will be held on April 22 at Marina Park, consisting of impounded items such as paddleboards and kayaks. He reported that the Harbor Department provided significant support for the dredging project, including relocation of more than 80 moorings, as well as adjustments to aids to navigation. He stated that several new maps were issued and noted an increase in permitted business activity within the harbor.

Harbormaster Blank highlighted efforts by the Deputy Harbormaster to encourage compliance with licensing and permitting requirements, resulting in increased issuance of permits and related materials. He reported that the Deputy Harbor Master was recognized by the California National Guard for leadership and collaboration in navigation and emergency preparedness training efforts. He noted that the recognition included presentation of a plaque from the commanding officer.

Harbormaster Blank introduced an "amusing call of the month," noting that it was received in person during a recreational activity. He reported an incident involving a mariner returning from an ocean regatta conducted in fog conditions who expressed concern regarding the lack of visual and sound signals when attempting to reenter the harbor under low-visibility conditions. He stated that the individual questioned why such signals were not activated. He explained that these signals may be activated by any mariner with a legitimate need and provided instruction on how to identify and utilize such signals through proper chart reading when entering Newport Harbor or other harbors where the Coast Guard maintains signals.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the Harbor Department responded to 2,317 calls for service in March, of which 2,156 were mapped. He noted that activity was concentrated in areas including South Bayfront, North Bayfront, the Balboa Peninsula, Lido, the West Anchorage, and around Newport Island. He provided an update on the harbor amenity map, stating that usage remains consistent with prior years and that a revised version has been developed with improved graphics and enhanced geographic information system data to increase usability.

Harbormaster Blank reported on permitting activity for 2026 through the end of March, including issuance of 13 marine activity permits, of which five were new and eight were renewals. He also noted 21 harbor event permits, five small harbor operator registrations, eight Rhine Wharf utilizations, and 20 mooring permit transfers. He stated that, compared to the prior year, permitting activity is generally ahead of pace, with the exception of harbor event permits, which are slightly behind. He indicated that other categories, including Rhine Wharf utilization and marine activity permits, have increased relative to the previous year. He reported on utilization of the West Anchorage, noting that use was concentrated during the middle portion of the month, while severe weather conditions at the beginning and end of the month resulted in reduced activity.

Harbormaster Blank clarified a prior public comment regarding the use of the acronym "CDP," stating that the "P" denotes "permit" rather than "requirement." He explained that, while the boat show was permitted to utilize up to 12 piles for temporary dock construction, the organizers elected instead to use helical anchors and dynamic tackle systems for securing the docks.

Chair Beer opened public comments. Seeing none, Chair Beer closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

#### **7. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION**

None.

#### **8. MATTERS WHICH COMMISSIONERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)**

Commissioner Miller reported that the Ben Carlson event is scheduled for mid-September, with races occurring during the week and the primary fundraising event taking place on Saturday, September 19, concluding at Newport Pier at approximately 2:30 p.m. He noted that harbor activity is impacted by weekly training sessions held on Wednesday evenings leading up to the event. He stated that he and another Commissioner attended the event the previous year and described it as a positive and well-regarded community event for the City. He further indicated that he has been asked to assume a coordinating role for the event.

Commissioner Miller requested an update regarding previously gathered information on the Grand Canal and indicated that the matter is important for further review, regardless of whether it requires formal agendaing.

Chair Beer further elaborated and requested that staff prepare and propose a potential amendment to Municipal Code Section 17.35.030 to allow either one platform and one mooring or two moorings. He asked that staff provide supporting background on existing conditions, including current configurations in the Grand Canal, and an analysis of potential benefits associated with the proposed amendment.

Harbormaster Blank acknowledged the request and indicated that the information and proposed amendment would be developed and brought back to the Commission for consideration.

#### **10. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 5 p.m.**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

#### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business coming before the Harbor Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.