

CITY OF MORRO BAY
HARBOR ADVISORY BOARD
SYNOPSIS MINUTES

The regular meeting of the City of Morro Bay Harbor Advisory Board was held Thursday, June 3, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the Veteran's Hall, 209 Surf ST, Morro Bay, California.

I. ROLL CALL

Present:	Members:	Brett Cunningham Gene Doughty Michele Leary Bill Luffee Lynn Meissen Jim Phillips
	Absent:	Elaine Serda
	Staff:	Rick Algert, Harbor Director Polly Curtis, Office Assistant

II. MINUTES

Mr. Doughty moved the May 6, 2010 Harbor Advisory Board minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Luffee and carried unanimously.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jerry Gompers, Chief of Dredge Operations, Portland District of US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) reviewed the history of the Dredge Yaquina and the current operations in Morro Bay. He said the Yaquina first worked in Morro Bay in October 1990, and this time it will be here for 40 days dredging the entrance channel. The Yaquina is based on the Oregon Coast, but Morro Bay is a mainstay. He asked the Board for any questions. Ms. Meissen asked if the government ever abandoned a port or river job and stopped dredging. Mr. Gompers said the ACOE is ready to execute any project funded by Congress, but some projects are not fully funded. Mr. Cunningham asked about Morro Bay being a prioritized harbor for dredging and why is it a mainstay. Mr. Gompers said the Yaquina has always completed successful work in Morro Bay, and the funding of the work has consistently been approved by Congress.

Mr. Phillips asked about the crew schedules. Mr. Gompers said the Yaquina is working twenty-four hours, seven days a week, only stopping for fuel and crew change. There are two groups of 20 people who work two weeks on and two weeks off. He said they are civilians working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the crew often comes from maritime academies all the way from Maine and Massachusetts to California.

Mr. Algert said the Secretary of the Department of the Army administers the ACOE civil works program. He said in 1986 a trust fund tax for harbor maintenance was created, which charges a user tax on every imported cargo container, and almost one-billion dollars were collected last year. He said the amount spent last year on harbor maintenance was \$400 million; so not all of the harbor maintenance taxes collected are spent on their mandated uses.

Chairman Phillips thanked Mr. Gompers for his time and his presentation.

Ms. Wendy Rackov introduced herself and her husband Alan Rackov, who run the new business called Lost Isle Adventures. Ms. Rackov said they offer fun and educational tours of Morro Bay through the water. The 30' vessel is docked at Virg's Landing. Their tours present the history of Morro Rock and the bay, oysters, eel grass, unique birds, the importance of the estuary, sustainable seafood, snowy plovers, and the importance of the sandspit. They often stop on the sandspit if weather and tides permit.

Mr. Cunningham asked what information is given on the commercial fishing industry. Ms. Rackov said they talk about the Abalone Farm and the Ocean Rose, as well as Ms. Leary's boat the Rita G and slime eels. They talk about regulations, fishing areas, and the fact that the Morro Bay fishing fleet is not what it used to be, but she said they only discuss commercial fishing briefly. Mr. Cunningham suggested they talk with the Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization, or ask for something in writing from them in order to brief the community. Ms. Leary offered to join the Lost Isle Adventure cruise on an evening trip and talk about commercial fishing. Ms. Rackov said she would appreciate the contact and the information. She gave her phone number as 928-254-1089, and Mr. Rackov's phone number as 805-440-8170, saying the tours run seven days a week, and also a sunset cruise on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for one-hour tours. They hope to relocate to the fuel dock area at the foot of Beach Street soon.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

IV-1. Presentation on Eel Grass Mitigation Project

Mr. Algert said the company AIS Construction is under contract with the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the Navy Channel and Morro Channel, both of which have not been dredged in seven years. AIS is using an excavator barge and scows for the work. An eel grass survey was conducted and showed that the area designated as a federal navigation channel has been filled in quite a bit, and there was some eel grass in the area. Mr. Algert said there are two choices in that situation, either designate the area as a permanent No Dredging Area or replant the eel grass at 1.2 to 1 ratio. He said the decision was to replant eel grass, and he introduced Mr. Nick Tietje of AIS Construction.

Mr. Tietje said AIS has finished the job today of digging the area for eel grass replanting. He explained the details of the work of the excavator barge and dozers during the two-week-long job, moving approximately 8,000 yards. He said the scow and the tug left today, and the rest of the equipment will be moored in preparation for the next job. The La Encina, the all-electric dredge, will return around July 15th to begin dredging the infill from the winter storms. They will be using the near-shore disposal site.

The Board asked a few questions of Mr. Tietje, and then Chairman Phillips thanked him for his presentation.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

IV-2. Harbor Department Budget Presentation

Mr. Algert said the City Council will consider finalizing the budget at their June 14, 2010 meeting. He said the Harbor Fund revenue estimate is down, as he is anticipating lower collections on percent gross sales rents as well as reduced minimum rents of the lease sites. He said the expenses must match the revenues; so very little money will go toward capital improvements this year. Discussion by the Board.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

IV-3. Consideration of Starting Harbor Advisory Board Meetings at a Different Time

Discussion by the Board. The Board agreed by consensus to leave the current starting time of the Harbor Advisory Board meetings as 7:00 PM.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

IV-4. Cancellation of July 1, 2010 Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Cunningham moved to cancel the July 1, 2010 Harbor Advisory Board Meeting. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Luffee and carried unanimously.

V-1. Harbor Department Status Report

Mr. Algert said the Newsletter serves as the Status Report this month.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Mr. Luffee said the City Council was considering cancelling the broadcasting of all advisory board meetings due to budget constraints. He asked if there were a way to express the public concern to the council. Mr. Doughty said that without the broadcasts, most of the public would not know everything that is happening on the waterfront, and it is important to keep getting this information out to the public. Chairman Phillips agreed that it is a definite asset to the community to have these meetings televised.

Mr. Doughty showed slides of the Planning Commission's proposed floating dock replacement project in front of the Harbor Hut and Great American Fish Company; he recommended interested parties attend the June 21, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Leary said Kids at Sea begins soon, and to check online at kidsatsea.org to see the opening dates and schedules.

Chairman Phillips noted that Mr. Algert will be retiring on June 30th, and he thanked Mr. Algert for all of his contributions and hard work for the Harbor Department and the City of Morro Bay over the past twenty years. He said Mr. Algert has been a great asset to him and the public by his depth of knowledge regarding the harbor. He wished Mr. Algert well on his upcoming retirement. All members of the Board expressed their appreciation to Mr. Algert.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Aug: Harbor Department Reorganization

Dean Wendt Presentation, California Collaborative Fisheries Programs (SLOSEA)

Local Access Televising of Harbor Advisory Board Meetings

Sept: Boat Haul Out

Back Channel Dredging and State Park Marina

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Submitted by,

Polly Curtis
Harbor Department

