



City of Morro Bay
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A VIEW FROM HARBOR STREET

October 28, 2015

Looking Back and Ahead – We Need Your Participation

By David Buckingham, City Manager



What in the world has the City been up to? What are you thinking about next? The answers to those questions, and more, will be featured at a specially formatted regular meeting of the Morro Bay City Council on November 10.

One purpose of the meeting is for the community to review what we accomplished this year, and to look ahead to items coming in the months ahead. Here's a quick preview of the meeting:

First, Mayor Irons will provide an overview - putting the past year, and the year ahead, in context. The City Staff will then provide an update on City Goals, the budget, and recommendations made by the Management Partners review. The meeting will end with an update on all the primary ways the City is communicating with our residents – including a roll-out of our new website and new community interaction platform – My Morro Bay.

City Goals: Last February the City Council refined our 10 City Goals, and approved more than 70 specific objectives for this fiscal year – July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. Many have been accomplished, and many others remain in progress. We'll review what's been done, what's coming up, and have a discussion on the pace of change.

Budget: This section will be a quick look – good news – at how City finances ended fiscal year 2014/15, and a brief update on the first quarter of 2015/16.

Management Partners: In May the City received the Management Partners Organization Study, which included 65 recommendations to improve City performance. We will briefly review what's been done, what hasn't, and what's next.

Communicating in the community: From the introduction of this column in the Bay News to a Facebook page with 10 times more reach than we had six months ago, the City has refined many of the tools we use to communicate effectively with our residents, businesses and visitors. We'll end this unique council meeting with a review of how best, and how best not, to communicate with your local government.

Join us in person, watch on Channel 20, livestream online (link on our City website home page morro-bay.ca.us) or tape delayed on YouTube for what we hope will be an informative and useful check-up with the City.

Speaking of communicating with the community and our Council Goals – we are kicking off an exciting public input and concept planning effort for two particular council objectives this year.

Objectives 7a and 7b under the goal to Improve Public Spaces include these two ideas for which continued robust community input is much desired:

- The Downtown Link (7a) is a concept to better link the Embarcadero with the Downtown by redesigning the Centennial Parkway from Market Street near Dorn's, down the stairway, across the parkway between the chessboard and the public bathroom and potentially across the Embarcadero to the small parking lot at the edge of the bay.
- The Embarcadero Promenade (7b) is a concept to widen the sidewalk on the west (bay) side of the Embarcadero from the existing 5-6 feet to more like 13-15 feet, providing a wide promenade perhaps more welcoming to resident walkers and visitors seeking a safer and more pleasant experience along our wonderful waterfront.

While these ideas were borne from input received from residents and business owners, a far more robust public engagement process is essential. We are starting this outreach in mid-November, beginning with stakeholder interviews, and culminating with public concept design workshops at which our residents will put marker to paper to help put the many great ideas out there into conceptual designs that reflect the interest and will of the community.

These publically generated designs will then continue through our normal public process, including Planning Commission, Recreation & Parks Commission and Public Works Advisory Board, before finally being considered as revitalization efforts by the City Council.

As noted, public input in this process is critical, both during stakeholder interviews and in the public design workshop. If you would like to participate in this process, either as a stakeholder (interested resident, local/adjacent business, advocacy group, etc) please contact Scot Graham, Community Development Manager, at sgraham@morro-bay.ca.us.

Finally, please consider attending the special "Goals Update" Council Meeting on November 10 in the Vet's Hall, and, as always, I'd love to hear from you directly at dbuckingham@morro-bay.ca.us.

Note: This editorial first appeared in Bay News on October 28, 2015.