



City of Morro Bay
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A VIEW FROM HARBOR STREET

December 9, 2015

Help Steer Your City

By David Buckingham, City Manager



Public input and engagement is essential, both on specific issues and more broadly to help steer the direction of the City each year, and for many years to come.

As we all begin to focus on the upcoming holidays, there are a few items to be aware of, and think about, that will be on the front burner in the new year. These include development of the City's 2016-2017 Goals and Objectives, and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) informational seminar on the proposed Marine Sanctuary.

Goals and Objectives: In January 2015 the City - Council, staff and public - went through a deliberate process to refine our City Goals and to develop specific, annual City Objectives supporting each of those goals. Those objectives were then front and center in the budget process as we developed a budget designed in part to accomplish as many of those objectives as possible.

This was a successful approach and the City Council recently adopted this process as part of our Strategic Planning Framework. As detailed in that planning framework, it's time again for our residents to partner with staff and Council to develop objectives for the 2016-2017 budget year, which runs from July 1, 2016 through June 2017.

Here's a quick outline of the process:

- In January the City Council holds several study sessions to begin to develop our 2016/17 Objectives. These study sessions will include input from Council, staff, advisory boards and, crucially, our residents.
- In February, the Council will refine and then adopt our 2016/17 Objectives.
- In March and April the staff begins to outline the 2016/17 budget.
- In May and June the Council leads a public process that results in an adopted budget.

What is really important is this whole process starts in January as the council receives staff, advisory board and resident input on objectives for the upcoming year. We need your input! What do you want to see your City accomplish in 2016-17? Here's what you can do:

First, think about our City Goals and what specific objectives, related to a specific goal, that you'd like to see us accomplish. Some of our Goals include: Improve Streets, Improve City Infrastructure, Facilities and Public Spaces, Support Economic Development, Enhance Quality of Life and Improve City Operations. You can find all 10 Goals, and the City's 2015/16 objectives at morrobayca.gov/goals.

Second, give us your input and participate in the process. We want to get as much input as possible as we all work together to steer the City's future and you can send me an email at dbuckingham@morrobayca.gov, or mail/drop off a note for me at City Hall, 595 Harbor St., Morro Bay, CA, 93442.

Then choose to participate in the process in January and February at the City Council study sessions and Council meetings. There are two study sessions scheduled for 4 p.m. January 12 and 26, in the Vet's Memorial Hall.

We do hope you'll make your voice heard because we are definitely listening. And, speaking of listening and learning, there is an important opportunity in early January to learn more about the proposed national marine sanctuary.

On January 6 representatives from NOAA will be in Morro Bay to present on, and then answer questions about, the proposed Chumash Historical National Marine Sanctuary. This session, hosted by NOAA, is less an advocacy event than it is a question and answer period as we all work to better understand the pros and cons of a national marine sanctuary in the waters off Morro Bay.

NOAA will also have experts on hand manning information tables on various particular areas of interest from fishing to the environment to onshore business impacts. It takes place at 6 p.m. in Vet's Hall.

We are hopeful that residents and others interested in deepening their understanding of marine sanctuaries will be able to attend.

So, two important opportunities in early January for you to learn and help set the direction for your city. Send us your input on 2016/17 Goals and Objectives now, participate in the Council study sessions, and, come on out on January 6 to learn more about marine sanctuaries and where Morro Bay is in this process.

Note: This editorial first appeared in Bay News on December 9, 2015.