



City of Morro Bay
595 Harbor Street
Morro Bay, CA 93442
(805) 772-6200
Online: morro-bay.ca.us

A VIEW FROM HARBOR STREET

January 14, 2016

Engaging in a New Year

By David Buckingham, City Manager



Hey, what year is it, really? We're just starting 2016, of course, but the City is halfway through our budget year, which runs from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the following. That means we have a ton of things already rolling that need lots of community input, and we are casting our eye on the fiscal year ahead as we prepare for 2016/17. Here's a sampling of what's going on and where we are hopeful our residents and business owners will engage.

Communication. First, get engaged with the City's key communication tools. This column is a good place to start. The City's new website www.morrobayca.gov features "Hot Topics", a great Calendar, and new "Service Requests" portal for you to help us know what's broke. The City's vibrant Facebook page at facebook.com/cityofmorrobay has nearly 3,000 followers and is the place we update you on what is happening – right now – in your hometown.

2016-2017 Objectives. The Council is holding three to four meetings in January and February to consider and then adopt specific 2016-2017 objectives for the staff, with community input, to accomplish in the year ahead. A first study session was held on January 12 and the next is schedule for 4 p.m. on January 26. This is the time and place for you to make sure the Council hears what is important to you! A current version of the draft objectives are on the website under hot topics (right on the front page of the site).

Styrofoam Ban. Following extensive Council, staff and Public Works Advisory Board outreach, the City Council is poised to enact a general ban on the sale of consumer Styrofoam products at their January 26 Council meeting. We'd love to hear from you on this subject, pro or con, and all comments received before that meeting will, as usual, be shared with the City Council.

General Plan / Local Coastal Plan (GP/LCP) Rewrite. After almost a year of preparation, we are moving out with a complete overhaul of the City's GP/LCP, the critical blueprints for the City's future that have not been updated in 20 to 25 years. The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is in place and a professional firm has been selected to help us complete this crucial project. Watch the website and Facebook for info on upcoming public outreach events

associated with this 2-year project. Using the “Notify Me” function on the website, you can sign up to receive an email copy of the agenda for all GPAC meetings.

Vision and Values. One of the first items the GP/LCP will address is the city’s vision and values statements. The Vision is a short, vivid description of what we want to be as a community. A sort of target for the future Morro Bay. Our Values statement reflects the core values we hold as a community. The Vision/Values process is crucial to setting the tone for the entire GP/LCP effort and we hope many residents and business owners make their voices heard.

Centennial Parkway and Embarcadero Promenade. We are in the stakeholder outreach phase of conceptual planning for two possible projects to further improve the resident and visitor experience in Morro Bay. One project envisions a revitalization of the Centennial Parkway from the top of Centennial Stairs down along the chess boards, across the Embarcadero, through the parking lot between the Libertine and Rose’s Landing, and to the bay. The other envisions widening the sidewalk on the harbor side of the Embarcadero by an additional eight feet or so, extending it into the existing lane of parallel parking. (Parking impacts, are of course, a key concern that is being evaluated as part of the outreach process) Following stakeholder outreach, the public will be invited to be active participants, with pens in hand, in a design and concept workshop to fine tune these broad concepts into project alternatives that, should the community demonstrate support, could eventually be approved by the City Council.

New Property Visioning. On Dec. 30, 2015 the City purchased two important properties between our Downtown and Embarcadero. Now, in addition to the large “Front Street” parking lot on the Embarcadero, the City also owns 781 Market Avenue, which houses DiStasio’s on the Bay Italian restaurant, and the parking lot at Market Avenue and Pacific Street. We are happy that in the near term DiStasio’s will continue to operate a great restaurant and wine bar, and that we have now opened a new 40-space public parking lot serving both Embarcadero and downtown businesses. In the months ahead, the City is looking forward to engaging the public on possible redevelopment ideas for those 2.3 vital city-center acres.

With so much going on, we need to hear from our residents and businesses even more than ever. Come help formulate our 2016/17 objectives, attend the various workshops, information and visioning sessions, reach out to staff, advisory board members and Council, and, as usual, you can contact me at dbuckingham@morrobayca.gov.

Note: This editorial first appeared in Bay News on January 14, 2016.