

CITY OF MORRO BAY
HARBOR ADVISORY BOARD
SYNOPSIS MINUTES

The regular meeting of the City of Morro Bay Harbor Advisory Board was held Thursday, September 6, 2007 at 7 PM in the Veteran's Hall, 209 Surf ST, Morro Bay, California.

I. ROLL CALL

Present	Members:	Rodger Anderson Ed Ewing Michele Leary Bill Luffee Lynn Meissen Jim Phillips
Absent	Staff:	Gene Doughty Rick Algert, Harbor Director Polly Curtis, Office Assistant

II. MINUTES

Mr. Phillips moved the August 2, 2007 Harbor Advisory Board minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Luffee and carried unanimously.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

IV-1. Presentation from the Ships to Reefs Organization on a Proposal to Designate an Artificial Reef Site in the Area of Morro Bay Harbor

Mr. Algert introduced Eleanore Rewerts, Vice President of Administration for the California Ships to Reefs Corporation. Ms. Rewerts offered the Board a PowerPoint presentation outlining the goals, benefits, and information on the California Ships to Reefs program. Ms. Rewerts emphasized the many economic and environmental benefits of sinking a vessel in the ocean for divers usage. She proposed a location near the Morro Bay Harbor as a possible site for this purpose, and requested support from the public and the Board.

Mr. Phillips asked how long the permitting process took before the Yukon vessel was sunk in San Diego Harbor. Ms. Rewerts responded the entire process took three years, and the Coastal Commission signed the permit two days before the Yukon was sunk. The Board asked for the location of the proposed site near Morro Bay, and Ms. Rewerts stated that Mr. Darby Neill took her out to the 10E Buoy, located one mile west and one mile north of Morro Rock, where the ocean bottom was sandy and perfect for their purposes. Discussion ensued regarding the best location, with several Board members stating their preference would be a location outside the Morro Bay city limits.

Mr. Luffee asked who pays to move a ship from its present location, such as San Francisco Bay to Morro Bay. Ms. Rewerts said the Ships to Reefs Corporation pays all costs to clean the vessel, "diverize" it, meaning cutting holes and removing cables, tow the vessel to the chosen site, set the explosives and sink the vessel. She said the money is acquired through fund raising efforts, grants, corporate sponsors.

Chairman Anderson opened discussion to the public. Mr. Kevin Winfield, manager of Subsea Tours, asked Mr. Algert the location of the City limits in the ocean. Mr. Algert said, roughly from Morro Creek to ¼ mile south of South Jetty, and approximately ¾ mile wide, and out three miles. Mr. Winfield said he believes it is best to go north out of the entrance, and the area around the 10E buoy at 120' with a sandy bottom might be a good location for diving on a sunken boat. He said it is a win-win situation, as it seems there is not a "worse-case scenario" in the project, and it might be beneficial to use this company to sink Morro Bay's growing fleet of derelict boats.

Ms. Rewerts concluded with a study showing approximately 400 divers in San Luis Obispo County, and a survey showing the response from 5,000 divers who stated they would dive in Morro Bay if there were a good shipwreck dive location. She said along with those divers, the dive charter companies would arrive to set up business, and she hoped local people would take advantage of this business opportunity first.

MOTION by Mr. Phillips: The Harbor Advisory Board supports the concept of Ships to Reefs organization to invest in sinking a ship outside the Morro Bay city limits by requesting Staff to draft a letter to City Council reflecting the Board's support. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Ewing and carried unanimously.

IV-2. 2020 Vision Priorities

Mr. Algert introduced Ms. Nancy Barta, who reviewed the process of the Follow-Up Committee and the 2020 Vision report. She said the goal is for the group to meet again, possibly in November, to discuss the priorities of the 2020 Vision report. She asked the Board to summarize their priorities from the current list of Vision Statements, which she would then take directly to the group for discussion.

The Board discussed the importance of the seven Vision Statements as put forth in the 2020 Vision report. Chairman Anderson emphasized the importance of maintenance of the Harbor entrance, which should be the highest priority because without that dredging, the harbor would silt in quickly and there would be no harbor. He stated the importance of maintaining and keeping the slips that are currently available in the harbor, because if they are gone it is virtually impossible due to permitting and regulations to create new slips.

The Board agreed by consensus to prioritize four of the Vision Statements in the following order:

- #1 – H1: Maintain a safe and healthy harbor.
- #2 – H7: Facilitate the establishment of an adequate vessel haul-out, boat yard and boat storage facility.
- #3 – H2: Maintain economically viable commercial and sport fishing industries in Morro Bay.
- #4 – H5: Support the use of Morro Bay by recreational boaters including sport fishers.

The Board had no strong opinion on the priority of the Vision Statements H3, H4, and H6.

IV-3. Boat Repair/Dry Storage Facility Development

Mr. Algert said the design group, RRM, has been hired to prepare a schematic that would have a small boat repair facility on the property owned by the City just north of the Morro Bay Power Plant (MBPP) intake structure, and to show a dry storage yard on the City owned property by Morro Creek. He said the settlement with MBPP did not transfer the middle section, shown on the map as Phase 2, and the power plant currently retains ownership, which would make this facility much more challenging. He discussed the idea that five spaces across from Coleman

Beach may be used for boat storage, as a starting place. Mr. Algert said he may not have relayed to City Council enough the importance of boating activities and facilities remaining in the harbor, and he will try to do so in the future. He said it is important to establish a dry storage here, and the designated site being discussed for dry storage is a good location. Mr. Algert asked the Board to wait for a couple of months before agendaizing this Item again to allow him to work with the Recreation & Parks Department and the Planning Department on other locations and options for the boat repair yard.

The Board discussed other issues such as zoning, relocating the skate park closer to Target Rock or to the Teen Center, and the issue that the Boardwalk road is now located directly through the planned boat yard. The Board also discussed the issue of stressing the importance of having boating facilities in Morro Bay.

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

V-1. Harbor Department Status Report

The fall 2007 Harbor Newsletter served as the Status Report. Topics in the Newsletter included:

Update on State Park Marina Project

Update on Harborwalk

Federal Salmon Disaster Assistance

C-MANC Meeting in Morro Bay

2007 Harbor Festival

Small Pollution Abatement Grant

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

None.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

October: State Park Marina Project
Lifeguard Stats

November: News Racks on Embarcadero

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM

Submitted by,

Polly Curtis
Harbor Department