

CITY OF MORRO BAY
HARBOR ADVISORY BOARD
SYNOPSIS MINUTES

The regular meeting of the City of Morro Bay Harbor Advisory Board was held Thursday, April 6, 2006 at 7 P.M. in the Veteran's Hall, 209 Surf ST, Morro Bay, California.

I. ROLL CALL

Present

Members: Rodger Anderson
Mandy Davis
Ed Ewing
Gene Doughty
Don Lockwood
Lynn Meissen
Jim Phillips

Staff: Rick Algert, Harbor Director
Susan Lichtenbaum, Business Coordinator

II. MINUTES

Mr. Anderson moved the April 6, 2006 Harbor Advisory Board minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Phillips and carried unanimously.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. ACTION ITEMS

IV-1. MLPA Act Implementation Status Report And Recommendation To The City Council To Support Package #1 At The Fish And Game Commission Meetings

Mr. Algert briefed the Board on the MLPA process. Following the December Harbor Advisory Board meeting's presentation on the MLPA by Kirk Sturm there were several more meetings of the Central Coast Regional Stakeholders Group (CCRSG) to formulate potential plans for MPAs in the Central Coast area. There was a meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) in Morro Bay in February 2006 and 5 potential MPA packages were presented to the BRTF for review. Following the February meeting the BRTF created a separate "staff" package that was added to the existing proposed packages and presented at the BRTF meeting held in Seaside March of 2006. The BRTF recommended the "staff" package as the proposed alternative to the Fish and Game Department. In May the BRTF will meet with the Fish & Game Commission (FGC) to discuss the various alternatives and the FGC will adopt an implementation plan later this year. Mr. Algert noted that many CCRSG members were disappointed in the BRTF's creation of a new package without public or stakeholder input. Mr. Algert said, as a member of the CCRSG, and having participated in over a years' worth of meetings, he is proposing the Board recommend that the City Council support Package 1 (considered the Fishermen/Public Access Package) to the FGC for adoption. Mr. Algert said that Package 1 meets the guidelines set by the Science Advisory Team while minimizing the socio-economic impacts to fishermen and the general public. Packages 2R and 3R implement more restrictions than required.

Chairman Lockwood asked what the designation of SMR in the back bay means in terms of public access, fishing and boating. Mr. Algert said a State Marine Reserve indicates no fishing at all. Chairman Lockwood asked about other uses; boating, kayaking. Mr. Algert said those should be allowed. Mr. Doughty said he wanted to know what the various designations meant. Mr. Algert reviewed the three main designations; State Marine Reserve, State Marine Park and State Marine Conservation Area.

Mr. Doughty said he is still concerned about the designation of the far south of the bay as a SMR because Cuesta by the Sea is the main bay access for all of Los Osos for small boats, kayaks, canoes, windsurfers, and fishermen. He thinks that designation could be too restrictive. Mr. Algert stressed that Package 1 is the least restrictive and many compromises were made to ensure compliance with all the requirements.

Chairman Lockwood asked what the SMRMA (State Marine Recreational Management Area) means. Mr. Algert said he thinks it is a recreational area with constraints, but specifically excludes waterfowl regulations, which will be determined by the Fish and Game Commission.

Mr. Ewing said that Package 1 was developed by commercial and recreational fishermen and a scientist over many months. They reviewed all the habitat maps and presented a proposal that meets the requirements and maintains fishing as much as possible. Mr. Ewing noted some of the other proposals eliminate much of the local fishing grounds and would have a huge impact on the community.

Ms. Meissen said it is difficult to support a package when there is no clear definition of the various areas as to restricted and specific uses allowed. Chairman Lockwood agreed and said he is also concerned there does not appear to be any sunset clause on the MLPA, and that once designated there is no set time for review to see if the MPAs are working and to decide whether or not to continue the program.

Mr. Anderson said he went to the BRTF meetings in Morro Bay and was very frustrated by the BRTF's dismissal of the proposals. He added much has been done to limit fishing and certain types of fishing gear and that maintaining as much fishing as possible within the requirements of the MLPA is important to the Morro Bay community. Mr. Anderson agreed that if time is not critical it would be beneficial to have more information.

Ms. Davis noted that she provided information on the effectiveness of MPA's in other areas of the United States. She agreed the decision on which package to support should be put off until there is more information on the various designations. Ms. Davis asked if Mr. Algert is recommending that the Board go against the BRTF recommendation of Package 3. Mr. Algert said yes. Ms. Davis noted that there is evidence that larger areas of reserves are more effective and in the long-run would benefit the species and the fishermen.

Mr. Phillips asked what the NRDC is. Ms. Davis said it is the Natural Resources Defense Council. Mr. Phillips said he would like time to read the information Ms. Davis provided in its entirety. Ms. Davis said if the Board reviews this again in May, there will be time.

Mr. Ewing pointed out that the NRDC is a biased organization; he stressed the need for peer science reviews. Mr. Ewing noted that the only true Marine Reserve in the area, Big Creek in Big Sur, has not been properly monitored to see what the results have been.

Mr. Phillips expressed concern that the 4 designations are not clear as to their restrictions and as to how they are implemented under each package. Mr. Algert said he can provide that information and that it is available on-line as well.

Mr. Algert noted that Port San Luis Harbor Commission took action to support Package 1 and that the City of Monterey will be taking action on this as well. Mr. Anderson said he felt that the BRTF recommendation potentially leaves out the stakeholders who have the highest interest in preserving the environment so that fishing stays viable. Ms. Davis stated the MLPA was

enacted to address fishing and other human impacts and not pollution issues. Mr. Algert noted there were three acts that ultimately set up the MLPA from 1998-2000 and while the main goal was to set up a network of Marine Protected Areas, there is also a focus on eco-system based management which should include pollution and other watershed impacts.

Motion: Mr. Ewing moved that the Harbor Advisory Board ask the City Council to send a letter to Fish & Game recommending support for implementing Package 1. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

Ms. Davis said she refrained from making some comments based on the assumption this would be continued to the next meeting. Chairman Lockwood said that time is critical. Mr. Doughty said he still has concerns regarding the SMR designation in Morro Bay.

Ms. Meissen offered an amendment to request that the City Council hold off from sending the letter until a later date when the Board's questions are resolved. Mr. Ewing and Mr. Anderson accepted the amendment. The amended motion passed with Ms. Davis voting No.

Mr. Algert stated he will bring additional information in for the May meeting. Chairman Lockwood suggested Boardmembers also look at the website in the interval.

IV-2. Assessment of Current Harbor Services and Development of a Harbor Strategic Plan – Continued

Mr. Algert stated this item was continued from the March meeting to request that the Board formulate a letter to the City Council or ask the Council to write a letter rather than having the Harbor Director write the letter as that would have more impact with the City Council. Chairman Lockwood suggested setting up a sub-committee to work on the letter and asked for volunteers in addition to himself. Ms. Davis and Mr. Doughty volunteered to serve with Chairman Lockwood. The subcommittee will have a letter for the Board to review at the May meeting.

IV-3. Green Cities Declaration: Urban Environmental Accords

Mr. Algert stated this item was referred to the Board by the City Council with the request that the Board review the document and recommend 3 actions to the City Council. Mr. Doughty said he felt only Item #19 relates to the Harbor. Mr. Ewing said much of the items are already being done: recycling, parks, tree planting, etc. Ms. Davis said she cross-referenced the document to the City's 2020 Vision Report and would recommend Items #5, #17 and #21. Mr. Anderson said he felt the report is too broad and the City would do better to focus on specific goals that relate to this community. He agreed with Mr. Ewing that the City is already accomplishing a lot in terms of lowering water usage, recycling, etc. Mr. Phillips said the City is doing a good job in terms of conservation of energy. In terms of the document, he feels that population control would have the most impact on preserving the environment. Mr. Ewing said he would not recommend any of the actions without a cost analysis as the City's budget is tight and much work is needed for infrastructure repair. Chairman Lockwood suggested adding a bike path connecting North & South Morro Bay in front of Morro Dunes Trailer Park area.

Motion: Mr. Ewing moved that the Harbor Advisory Board make no recommendation to the City Council. There was no second to the motion.

Motion: Mr. Doughty moved the Harbor Advisory Board recommend Item #14, bio-diesel to the City Council. The motion was seconded by Ms. Davis and passed with Ms. Meissen and Mr. Ewing voting No.

Motion: Ms. Davis moved the Harbor Advisory Board recommend Item #21, wastewater treatment, to the City Council. The motion was seconded by Ms. Meissen and passed with Mr. Ewing voting No.

Motion: Chairman Lockwood moved the Harbor Advisory Board recommend the City Council consider the action of adding a bike path from North to South Morro Bay. Mr. Algert said that was not on the agenda and therefore could not be acted on.

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

V-1. Harbor Department Status Report

Mr. Algert and Ms. Lichtenbaum briefed the Board on the following issues:

C-MANC – Washington D.C.

Fishing Heritage Group Fisheries Forum of March 31, 2006

Harborwalk Project

Salmon Season

Back Bay Issues

Snowy Plover Nesting

Blessing of the Fleet

SLO-SEA MEETING

Future Agenda Items

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Mr. Anderson said that State Parks will be placing some signage on the State Beaches regarding rip currents, asked if the City could check with them, and try to have something in place on the City Beach before next winter.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

May 2006: FY06-07 Budget
Recommendation to the City Council to Support Package #1 at the Fish And Game Commission Meetings Regarding Implementation of the MLPA
Assessment of Current Harbor Services and Development of a Harbor Strategic Plan – Continued

June 2006: Beach Signage
Cancellation of 7/6/06 Meeting

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Submitted by,

Susan Lichtenbaum
Harbor Department