

Lack of Harbor disclosure raises more questions than answers

September 22, 2023



At the Tuesday Crescent City Harbor Commission (CCHD) meeting, comptroller Thomas Zickergraf conducted his periodic power point presentation on Harbor finances. Zickergraf shared the current balance of the combined Harbor balances is \$509,118 as of mid-September. The figure represents an \$111,000 decrease from last year. Zickergraf reported \$324,000 is enroute to the CCHD on various grants but the CCHD is still missing the \$252,000 from Renewable Energy Capital (REC) and principal Alex Lemus from income derived from the ground-lease on the two closed harbor RV parks.

Understandably, the financial figures can be easily misunderstood but the failure to explain the problem to the public is troubling. The Harbor District is a public agency and it obligated to keep the public well-informed; that dynamic is absent

The Triplicate will continue to make clear, cogent information available to the public on these matters and public funds.

The Lemus group and the CCHD are apparently in a legal squabble on who pays who and how much. Unfortunately, the CCHD has been less than candid with keeping the public informed.

When it came time for public questions and comments, The Triplicate asked relevant questions about the status of this Closed Session item and it took a little more than the supposed three minute per questioner time frame. Commissioner Brian Stone interrupted the Triplicate's public inquiry and complained the questioning exceeded the 180 second discourse and was delaying the meeting's agenda, then proceeded to offer unwanted and superfluous information during Public Comments and superseded president Wes White's conducting of the meeting. The Stone rhetoric continued to personally single out The Triplicate's intent to clarify the status of many unanswered questions. The Triplicate asked the following questions before the Stone interruption:

When does the Commission plan to discuss the nature of the misunderstanding with Renewable Energy Capital? Harbormaster Tim Petrick attempted to answer this question but was cut off by Mr. Stone's interruption.

Have Harbor Attorneys Best, Best and Krieger been compensated for its unsuccessful defense of the Fashion Blacksmith arbitration hearing, last Spring?

Fashion Blacksmith awaits Superior Court certification of its \$1.2 million arbitration victory over the Harbor District.

Harbormaster Petrick finally disclosed to the public, the CCHD \$1 million liability policy (less the \$10,000 deductible) has paid the Best, Best and Kreiger and related consulting attorneys for its unsuccessful legal efforts, during the four day arbitration hearing.

None of these relevant financial facts were addressed during comptroller Zickergraff's power point.

The Harbor declined to reveal the fees derived to compensate the harbor's legal team from the harbor's insurance carrier.

Many other questions remain hidden in the dark corners of the long-standing item within the Closed Session closet. Questions include:

Will the Harbor fix the substandard Fashion Blacksmith building? Arbitrators ordered repairs on the building by September 30. No work has been conducted by the CCHD, to date and the seven percent penalty will now effectuate. The public has no knowledge on the Harbor's intent.

Will the Harbor continue its unsuccessful efforts to dredge the inner Harbor by October 31, as ordered by the Arbitration panel? Again, the public has no knowledge of Harbor intention.

Commissioner Stone apparently is more concerned with looking at his stop watch than addressing the public concerns with clear, concise and candid responses.

Commissioners meet Tuesday, October 2 at 2pm at 101 Citizens Dock Rd.