

Beleaguered Harbor Commission Mired in an Ocean of Debt, Dysfunction and Restraining Orders

May 25, 2024



In its Mission Statement, “The Crescent City Harbor District (CCHD) provides sustainable marine and shore-based commercial, economic, educational and recreational opportunities for the benefit of the community.” Along the journey to meet this lofty goal, the CCHD has managed to upset several Harbor tenants, vessel owners who moor their boats in the Harbor and at least two commissioners who’ve very publicly expressed concerns over Harbor operations and finances.

The latest imbroglio involves a Bayside RV resident (who shall remain anonymous) and Harbormaster Tim Petrick who filed a Workplace Violence Restraining Order against the tenant April 5.

The language used by the tenant at recent meetings at the public speaker dais and within publicly-released emails was unquestionably coarse. Sensing a hostile tone in those missives involving language that promises “... to take you down...” the Harbormaster took the next step and requested CCHD legal counsel

intervention, coming to Court and requesting a Workplace Violence Restraining Order against the tenant. The Harbor's Sacramento law firm, Best, Best and Krieger dispatched attorney Kyler Rayden from its Riverside County office to appear before Superior Court Judge Darren McElfresh to plead for the Restraining Order, only to have the matter continued to a later date. The question must be asked, Is this latest action by the Harbormaster an overreach? What's lost here is the legal expenditure of flying the attorney from Southern California to Arcata, a car rental, hotel and hourly legal rate to handle a matter many would consider frivolous. No weapons allegations were levied against the Bayside resident.

The Request for the Order was dismissed WITHOUT prejudice (may be refiled), April 29. Harbormaster Petrick has not disclosed the public costs for this extreme legal action but in an environment of questionable cash flow challenges, one can only wonder how the CCHD spends precious taxpayer funds. The above legal action was not disclosed via the public agenda and commissioners were not aware of the Work Force Violence Restraining Order (WVRO). Harbormaster Petrick responded, "...threats were made in regard to my personal safety. The District take (sic) the safety of Staff, residents and visitors seriously. At this time the Harbor has done enough to make the point and threats are not protected speech and the WVRO has been withdrawn without prejudice. I have not yet received billing in the matter."

A separate Temporary Restraining Order was filed involving CCHD president Harry Adams and Commissioner Brian Stone. The District is not involved with this civil matter, according to Harbormaster Petrick; nonetheless, these matters distract from serving the mission of the Crescent City Harbor District.

Two disgruntled commissioners, Brian Stone and Gerhard Weber, have and continue to express serious concerns about continued Harbor sustainability.

At the recent Harbor meeting, Stone shared his analysis of a grim future for Harbor viability. Commissioner Stone contends the Board has not been totally transparent on several issues and lamented. "If the Board had not bought out the Fashion Blacksmith lease for \$2.6 million, the Harbor would not be in the situation that it is in. I abstained from the vote (4-0-1) because I knew that we (CCHD) did not have the revenue stream to afford \$375,000 over the next 13 years."

Stone continued, "I do not believe that Harbor staff can generate the needed revenue from the administration from the federal and state grant programs."

Stone contends total Harbor debt is just under \$10.4 million with annual payments of \$807,000. "The Harbor is losing \$65,000 monthly. CCHD reserves will be out of money in five to seven months without a cash infusion."

Stone disclosed his comments after receiving a letter from CCHD attorneys any statements he makes are as an individual, not reflective of Harbor District sentiment. (Section 2.5(1) of the Harbor By-Laws.

Commissioner Weber also expressed his frustration in receiving timely financial records. As a member of the Harbor Ad Hoc Committee on Finances, Weber states he was excluded from email communication allowing

him to report cash flow deficiencies to the five member Commission. Weber expressed his unhappiness with attempting to suggest budget revisions in an effort to maintain cash flow liquidity.

The Harbor Commission meets again Tuesday, May 21 at 2pm, in the Conference Room on Citizens Dock Rd.