

Do the same thing and expect different results?

October 17, 2024



Another Crescent City Harbor Commission meeting and it seems like no one is home. With three meetings remaining for three of the commissioners, they seem unable to relinquish the reins. Business as usual at the October 1, 2024 meeting, clueless thinking that things, now that the Harbormaster has resigned, were very different, or were they?

A quick change of horses and Assistant Harbormaster Mike Radermaker is in the “cat bird seat.” Nothing to see here folks. It’s not like the previous Harbormaster did anything wrong, illegal, different, or otherwise, did he? So say the Crescent City Harbor Commission, the Grand Jury, the Harbor Controller, the Commission’s attorney. Not even so much as a whistleblower among the staff to complete the “white washing” of former Harbormaster Tim Petrick’s activities.

So, what’s next? Apparently, the commission is on to bigger and better things. The final draft of the Harbor’s strategic plan, a Grand Jury response, collecting pennies from that devious public utility, Pacific Power, and a draft of a fireworks ordinance. Complete avoidance of the “elephant in the room,” the Harbor’s desperate financial condition.

It seems that someone has informed the Harbor Commission that Commercial Fishing is suffering issues of its own and it no longer can support the harbor in the style it is accustomed to living. Of course, living

within your means is not something that any government agency is prone to do. There is always “magic money” to tap.

Grant funding, aka, the taxpayer is normally the first to feel the bite, then a local ballot measure, followed at last resort by some dubious developer making promises he does not intend to keep. Clearly the harbor, lugging around its massive debt, a seasonal tourist economy, and a flagging commercial fishing industry is not the first choice for some deep pockets legitimate developer. The Lemus effect anybody?

I’m not sure where the new Commission will look to change the dynamic in the harbor’s long-term future. Austerity is one term that comes to mind. Generating a more welcoming position for local businesses to flourish in the harbor. Getting the two RV parks back up and running, in-house if necessary. Unfortunately, most of what would change the financial picture requires money, which the harbor does not have.

So, let’s see what we’ve got to work with. The local tourist trade in the harbor will require something for the tourists to do. Plenty of outdoors activities, but something must be provided for those that don’t like to be rained on, blown at, or otherwise inconvenienced by the weather. The harbor currently is in short supply of activities that fall into that category. More places to eat, shop, and be entertained would be the first step. No grand fantasies as past commissions have been prone to do. Little steps first to get things rolling. Add some in innovated way of keeping tourists here for longer than a few days and get the two empty RV parks up and running. Make sure that the local population is encouraged to come to the harbor to participate in activities and events that can be organized and staged in the harbor to attract weekend trade first before working towards longer stays... Finally, plenty of advertising when this all comes together. Then, most important, get your financial house in order, clean up your infrastructure issues beginning with Citizens Dock and inner vessel harbor dredging.

Likely, the current commission will be unable to change course, but maybe, just maybe, the new combination of commissioners will find the light by not doing the same things over again.

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