
Opinion: The Crescent City Harbor has Another Problem?

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Now, Mother Nature seems to have taken a hand in the ongoing saga plaguing the commissioners of the Crescent City Harbor in the form of another tsunami, three in the past couple of decades. Another million dollars of damage to the “Tsunami” proof rebuilt harbor. What now? Can the five-member commission put away their knives long enough to do something constructive? It does not appear so.

When harbor commissioners Annie Nehmer, Dan Schmidt, and John Evans were elected to serve as commissioners for Crescent City at the harbor, a new reality was to take place transforming the harbor from a corrupt, financially-strapped, and dysfunctional place into something to be proud of. Eight months in and clearly anything but is the record thus far.

Staggering debt, moribund economic development, infrastructure disrepair, infighting amongst commissioners, mounting legal issues and expenses, and a commission stuck in limbo. Thus far nothing to right the harbor’s sinking ship and yet a new crisis has landed in the form of another Tsunami. No help from FEMA is forthcoming. Will the state of California help? Only time will tell, something the harbor really doesn’t have much of. Will the commission finally come together and work to put its house in order? Recent action by the Commission does not give the community much hope this will happen.

Granted some of the problems the current commission faces are not of their making. Those issues were the legacy they have inherited from past commissions and staff. Making the situation more acute by creating yet more problems is not a way to turn the page on dysfunction. Commissioners Nehmer and Schmidt, the past is speaking to you.

It is left for Commissioners Nehmer and Schmidt to either leave the sandbox or get to work to make something positive happen at the harbor, nothing less. Clearly neither has the intent to do so. As such, wasted months of internal wrangling, legal circuses, and zero solutions are likely to doom the harbor's chances at a renaissance. Where has true leadership gone in Del Norte County?

Commissioner Nehmer's appalling and destructive behavior has wasted three months of critical time vital to the beginning of economic development pivotal to the resurrection of the harbor's teetering financial situation. Any further rebellious behavior on her part may complete the harbor's demise. Commissioner Schmidt's problems are less clear, but equally damaging.

Recovering from the Alex Lemus solar power debacle, the Fashion Blacksmith law suit loss award, and the loan for the 2015 tsunami reconstruction of the harbor are large enough hills to climb. Allegations brought by the Grand Jury, Nehmer's lawfare and other lawsuits of Brown Act violations, financial mismanagement, coupled with the harbormaster spectacle has resulted in very little progress by the commission to move the needle going forward for the harbor. If this harbor is to survive, the current chaos needs to cease immediately. It is on the backs of the currently elected commissioners to generate solutions and quit with the recriminations. Time to put away petty differences and work towards a few solutions before this commission goes the way of the dinosaurs.

Wasted time with no progress, now coupled with a "new" crisis in the form of Mother Nature's awesome ability to gain attention should wake the commission up to the task at hand. If not, the recalcitrants on the commission seriously need to reconsider why they sit on the commission in the first place. The commission makes the decisions to solve problems facing the harbor, not its staff. Staff is there to carry out the commission's directions. Thus far the commissioners' actions have shown they have not lived up to the importance of their role.

The question now becomes, will Mother Nature's statement to the commission change its dysfunction into the direction necessary to result in something positive for our harbor? Commissioners must remember they represent the will of the community and Mother Nature or not the community has charged each and every one of them with the task of recreating a functional and successful Crescent City Harbor.