

October 18, 2016

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Recap of Port Commission/City Council Work Session

The work session held on October 17, 2016 seemed to be a good step forward for everyone involved. It was good to have all the Council and most of the Commission present. One of the topics of discussed was harbor construction priorities.

Concerns over soil stability forced the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to shift the harbor basin closer to Hotel Hill. This obviously increased costs and left the project with a rock outcropping on the west side of the harbor that will be expensive to remove. This and the cost of rock removal for the drive down dock are putting pressure on the project's contingency fund.

If all of the features, which were planned for the harbor can't be completed within the budget, it becomes important to prioritize them and ensure there is a functioning harbor put into use. The Port Commission was questioned about their priorities for the new harbor. They unanimously supported completing all of the in-water work that needs to be done and then looked at the remaining projects. The projects are listed below, as ranked by five of the commission members:

- 1 Bilge Water Treatment Building/System
- 2 Drive Down Float
- 3 Harbor Operations Building/Restrooms
- 4 East Restrooms
- 5 Vessel Launching Ramp
- 6 Washdown Pads
- 7 Fish Cleaning Station
- 8 West Restroom

Four Commission members supported build out of the in-water portion as designed and completion of the top three items on the list above. They are uncomfortable moving forward with the launch ramp and the supporting elements without a clear waterfront master plan. It appeared that the Council also supported this approach at the work session.

The timeline for constructing the new harbor was accelerated at the beginning of the project partly with the way it was approved and funded by the USACE. There are several waterfront properties controlled by the City that should be included in an overall master plan, before further construction progresses.

There have been many good ideas brought forward for use of the existing harbor, the new harbor and Sea Otter. Lisa Von Bargaen has mentioned the old Willard property as a potential site for a boat launch ramp. It makes good sense to defer construction of the launch ramp and associated structures until the Council and Committee can approve a plan for use of all these properties. Without an approved plan, once construction of the launch ramp is completed, future options for best use of the land will be limited and expensive to implement.