



Nancy Gardner

Council Member

Newsletter: September 2010

Newport Beach, California

City Contacts

City Hall

General Information

644-3309

Departments

644-

Administrative	3127
Building Dept	3275
City Clerk	3005
City Council	3004
City Manager	3000
Economic Dev	3225
General Services	3055
Graffiti Hotline	3333
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Mayor	3004
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Senior Services	3151
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Utilities	3011
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Emergency Services

Emergency	9-1-1
Fire Dept	633-3104
Police Dept	644-3717

Libraries

CdM	644-3075
Main	717-3800
Mariners	717-3838
Balboa	644-3076

Oasis Senior Center

644-3244

Post Office

CdM	673-2989
Main	640-4663

COUNCIL MEMBER

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NEW ZONING CODE

Since the General Plan was passed, many minds have been working on bringing the zoning code into line with the general plan's new policies. A big bump in the road occurred with the residential section where it was proposed to ditch floor area limits (FAL) in favor of open air space. I found the idea of open air space very exciting because if every home has mandates for open air space, we have solved the JWA problem (No, you may not fly over my 35x65 sf of air space!). Of course my interpretation was completely wrong. What the phrase meant was that there would be a requirement for a specified square footage of cutouts – porches, balconies, whatever. Once a house met that criteria, along with the height and setbacks, then it could be built with no reference to square footage. This was supposed to simplify things. Community outreach showed a great deal of confusion, and even when there was understanding, a significant lack of support for this new approach, and so it looks like we'll be reverting to our current FAL.

FEES

Over the last year the council has looked at special events and the best approach for the city to take. One conclusion was that more city costs should be recaptured, even for charitable events. Nobody seemed to object to this move—until their particular event was hit with higher fees. It was sort of like with the civic center. “Yes, you should bring down the costs, but no! You should not cut my particular part of the project.” In this case it's been, “Yes, you should be fiscally responsible and raise fees. What, you mean me?” Nobody wants to dampen the enthusiasm for these events, but since city funds are everyone's funds, and because right now there is a lesser amount, this new approach is necessary.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

This is a two-way process; please don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas and opinions.

ENFORCEMENT CONCERNS

Code enforcement draws a lot of complaints. There are those (usually the cited) who compare city code enforcement staff to storm troopers. Others question whether we have any enforcement at all. Our enforcement is primarily complaint-based. If a code enforcement officer notices milky runoff from a construction site, he/she doesn't wait for some passerby to complain. He goes to the source and handles it. Same with building inspectors. If they're driving to a site and along the way they see construction occurring without permits, they'll red-tag the project until necessary permits are obtained. However, staff doesn't peek into windows or over fences looking for transgressions, so if you have a bootleg unit and none of your neighbors know or care, you're probably home free. In case you feel there is a code violation and you want it attended to, the number to call is 644-3215.

THE SILLY SEASON, OR I-I-I

Yes, another election. Does it seem like we have them every other month? Be prepared for the onslaught of mailers, some of which will rival the best novels (meaning a lot of fiction), robocalls (which automatically disqualify a candidate for me), and signs on all the public rights of way where they are not supposed to be and where staff often has to risk life and limb to remove them. Also be prepared for an enormous overuse of the first person pronoun. It is one of the unfortunate aspects of running for office that you have to use the “I” word a lot, and since language affects thought, this may explain some things.

SOME EXCITING SUMMER READING

If you haven't seen the latest (July/August) copy of Storm Water, The Journal of Surface Water Quality Professionals, run to the nearest newsstand, or more likely, the web, for an article by our own Jack Skinner and city employee John Kappeler which describes their simple but interesting experiment on gutters and biofilms. On the off chance that this isn't at the top of your reading list, the significant thread is that certain tests for recreational water quality may give results that overestimate the health threat to swimmers. If this is substantiated by further testing, it could well change the way we test for water quality.