



Nancy Gardner

Council Member

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Newport Beach, California

City Contacts

City Hall
General Information
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Departments	644-
Administrative	3127
Building Dept	3275
City Clerk	3005
City Council	3004
City Manager	3001
Economic Dev	3225
General Services	3055
Graffiti Hotline	3333
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Mayor	3004
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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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SPEAKING OF MOORING FEES

We no sooner get one lifeguard issue out of the way (fewer personnel cuts than proposed but reorganization and reclassifications that result in about \$700,000 in savings plus the guards contributing a higher percentage to their pensions), then another looms. For many years we have kept lifeguard boats at the Harbor Patrol docks—close to the harbor mouth for quick access to the ocean beaches. We paid no fee. Now the county says we should pay a fee or get out. On the surface, that may seem reasonable, but here are some numbers: We pay \$6.3 million into County Service Area #26 which funds the county park system, none of which goes to the one county park in our city, the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve. (Our residents also generated \$52.8 million in property taxes for the county's general fund in '08-'09.) We benefit, however, from the Harbor Patrol, so let's say our park fees are our support for the Harbor Patrol. Again seems reasonable, but here are some more numbers: The county estimates that 40% of the Patrol's duties and costs are related to our harbor which comes to about \$5 million. This means the county is plus \$1.3 million from the city. One might think that would cover docking fees, but apparently not.

FURTHER CHANGES IN CITY STRUCTURE

In looking at ways to be more efficient, the city manager has carefully reviewed all the departments with the exception of the city clerk and the city attorney since those two positions, like the city manager, report directly to the council. It seemed timely to look at the city attorney's office for possible changes so the council asked David Hunt to provide a spectrum of choices which he did--from the model he embraces which is close to a full-service operation, to a purely contract operation which would have an outside law firm provide all services. The council was clear that we didn't like the latter option, but we did feel that a modulation of the current model was something to explore. That was not a direction that David wanted to pursue, and so we have mutually agreed to part ways. Fortunately, David will continue with us until a successor is named, and he has also offered to be available after that if we need his assistance on specific matters where his history with the city will be helpful. As a footnote, we will continue to look for efficiencies, but it is my belief that dollars should not be the only criteria we look at when considering changes.

DREDGING—OR MORE MONEY CONSIDERATIONS

The big expense in dredging is getting rid of the spoils. Some of it is suitable for beach disposal, some can be taken to LA3, the ocean disposal site, but some has contaminants that rule out beach or ocean disposal. In most cases, this means ground shipment to a hazardous waste site—\$\$\$—which is what makes the Rhine Channel project so fortuitous. The Port of Long Beach can use this third classification of spoils in its expansion, saving us a ton of money. In addition to the Rhine Channel project, we have \$2 million in federal funds for dredging this year, and we will focus on areas with problematic sand to take advantage of the Port for disposal. We have also told staff that if the Port can take more sand than we generate with the \$2 million to identify other sites with problematic spoils and make them part of the project. It may take some creative financial juggling since we don't have funds allocated for the additional dredging, but with the money we would save, it would be worth it.

REGULATIONS AND SCIENCE

Water quality is one of the major concerns of the city. A healthy bay and ocean are critical to our wellbeing, and we have never quibbled about spending money to deal with problems such as runoff. Examples: constructing a natural treatment system along Newport Blvd and hiring staff to insure that water quality BMPs (Best Management Practices) are followed. However, when we do spend money, we want to spend it wisely, and agencies often make this difficult with their one-size-fits-all mentality. The EPA is proposing changes in national recreational water quality standards. The problem is the changes ignore new findings that "high enterococci counts—in the absence of human sewage—can be due to natural sources and do not pose a health risk to swimmers." I am quoting from Jack Skinner's letter to the EPA. The EPA's response was essentially to ignore the new information, stating that "science does not permit us to recommend different, nationally applicable criteria values for different sources (e.g., gulls)." Apparently science does permit us to spend lots and lots of dollars on what could be a non-problem, leaving fewer of those dollars for real problems down the road.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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