



Nancy Gardner

Council Member

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Newport Beach, California

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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
Graffiti Hotline	3333
Harbor Resources	3034
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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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PLANNING SESSION

The council's annual planning session is set for January 12. This is where we set out our priorities for the year. The format is similar to a council meeting: We get to talk a lot, the public not as much (or at least not for as long), but there are opportunities to suggest priorities and also to comment on various proposals as they are discussed. Among the issues that might make the list is one that we didn't get around to last year, our urban forest. The session starts at 8:30 am at the Oasis and should finish before noon.

WEST NEWPORT FACILITIES

A topic that may come up at the planning session: a review of West Newport facilities. There was a time when everything was over on the peninsula—our economy, our population, our government. As we began to develop the area on the other side of the bay, everything gradually shifted, and if you look at what has been constructed over the past few decades, the majority is on east side of the bay. Public buildings? The main library and Mariner's branch, the Oasis, the new civic center. Public parks? Bonita Canyon, Bonita Creek, Coastal Ridge. Seeing all this, West Newport has felt a little bit like the poor step child, but this is changing. Sunset Ridge Park will provide much-needed playing fields for that side of town. Marina Park will provide new resources including a visitors' marina. But as they say on all those TV ads, "Wait. There's more!" Here's a potential scenario: General Services (now combined into Municipal Operations) shifts to the Utilities yard on 16th Street. This frees up the General Services property on Superior where a new Police headquarters could go, freeing up the property on Santa Barbara. Then, the city recently purchased a piece of property on Monrovia. This could be the site of a new community center (think Newport Coast), freeing up the site of the current sagging community center on 15th. The nice thing about this scenario—the two vacant properties both have value for other uses, so long-term leases could provide a respectable income stream for the city. Anyway, a good topic for discussion.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Another issue that's sure to be discussed at some point this year is the changing role of the fire department. Firefighting is a critical need. We have seen enough wild fires in this area to know that, but thanks to increasingly effective building codes, there are fewer houses catching fire. More and more of the department's time is spent responding to other emergencies which has implications in terms of equipment replacement, etc., and I look forward to suggestions of how we adapt to these changes.

A ROAD LESS TAKEN

During the emotional discussion on increasing residential pier rates, I got a number of emails from residents stating that they agreed with the proposal to raise the rates to fair market value, but they didn't want to speak publicly because they either had friends who had piers or they didn't want to get caught in the cross fire. Then along comes John Heffernan. I think the term maverick must have been coined for John. Whether on the council or off, he has always marched to his own beat, whatever the consequences. John felt all of the raises were justified and said so in a letter to the DP. A boat owner himself, John certainly knew that he wasn't going to have a whole lot of people buying drinks for him at the yacht club, but that didn't deter him. Hats off to someone who sets his course and sails it, regardless of the weather.

THE NEW CIVIC CENTER

I think Robert Burns had us in mind for our initial meeting in the new council chambers, the *gang oft a'glee* part, at least. We proved the old theater adage, bad dress rehearsal, good performance, only in reverse. The new electronic voting system that worked beautifully in our practice session went on the blink that night, so we went old school and raised our hands. The chairs were comfortable but so low that all of the shorter council members (okay, me) could barely see over the dais, but all this can be fixed, and overall the reaction from the public was most favorable. Staff won't move over for a while, but all council meetings will be in the new chambers.

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