



Nancy Gardner

Council Member

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Newport Beach, California

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PRIORITIES

The council spent a Saturday morning looking at priorities for the coming year. We started with a review of last year's, and all but about three were underway or completed which was nice to see. New on the list for this year--a test program to get runoff removed from Little Corona beach, a review of our water master plan, opening Lower Castaways for public use, figuring out what to do with the Coyote Canyon landfill, looking for more sites for dog parks and investing more in our urban forest. As for the water master plan, I'm hoping we'll consider the viability of artificial turf for some of our playing fields and also tiered water rates.

LOCAL COASTAL PLAN

One of the goals of the Coastal Commission is for every coastal city to have a certified LCP. That would dramatically reduce the number of coastal development permits that the CCC handles, freeing up staff for all its other functions. The advantage for the city is that our residents would no longer face the daunting task of moving a project through the CCC but would deal with the city--still daunting, often, but closer to home, faster, cheaper. So win win, right? You should know by now that nothing is ever that simple. In our initial draft, we are asking to maintain the categorical exclusion areas. These are areas in the coastal zone but exempt from CCC control by an earlier agreement (parts of Irvine Terrace, Corona del Mar, Balboa Island). Because of that agreement, residents in those areas deal only with the city. If CEs were eliminated, those residents would still deal with the city, but they would now be subject to appeal to the CCC, a new and probably not very welcome wrinkle. The other potentially sticky area is the coastal canyons, Buck Gully and Morning Canyon. CCC staff has indicated they would like to see more restrictions on what can be built and where. If we're very lucky, we'll keep the categorical exclusions and current policies for the canyons. If losing those are the price of the LCP, then we have to weigh relief for some versus pain to others and try to figure out the greater benefit.

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BLACKBALL

The working group will be presenting its recommendation to the PB&R Commission to create some new all-day, board surfing beaches and to increase access at the Wedge for boards and bodyboards. Having been accused of fiendishly plotting behind the scenes against board surfers, I'm wondering what my anonymous accusers conclude from this. That they were wrong? More likely they'll just think I'm a lousy plotter. Meanwhile, body surfers, swimmers and body boarders may feel the working group's proposal tips too far in favor of boards and will make their argument to PB&R. The commission's recommendation will then come to council.

THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOKSTORE AND HENRY ADAMS

I love the Friends book store, partly because I love used books. You never know what surprise is going to jump out. It may be an address inside the cover which leaves one wondering how this particular book got from Skowhegan, Maine, to Newport Beach. Marginalia begs to be considered, or a piece of paper may drop out with a puzzling note. There's a sense of history and other lives. The other part I like about the bookstore is that it's compact. You go to your section (Literature), and it's been edited, so to speak, by what people have donated. Sometimes, there's nothing of interest, but often I find a book that I somehow never got around to, and there it is, pleading to be adopted. That is how I came to read at last The Education of Henry Adams, a most enjoyable work focusing primarily on the political landscape of the second half of the nineteenth century. He states, apropos of politicians of that era, "The effect of power and publicity on all men is the aggravation of self, a sort of tumor that ends by killing the victim's sympathies; a diseased appetite, like a passion for drink or perverted tastes; one can scarcely use expressions too strong to describe the violence of egotism it stimulates." I'm glad that in the twenty-first century people are immune to all that.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Don't hesitate to contact me with ideas and opinions.