



CHANNEL ISLANDS HARBOR
Ventura County Harbor Department

Mark Sandoval
Director

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December 9, 2019

Rene Aiu
Harbor and Beach Community Alliance
(via e-mail)

Dear Ms. Aiu:

I am writing in response to a letter you sent to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors on December 8, 2019. While we will continue to have different viewpoints regarding what is best for the Fisherman's Wharf parcel, I have always hoped that there would at least be honesty when we state our respective positions. It is simply untrue that the Harbor Department deviated from its normal search practice for a developer at that parcel, as you state in your letter. We have supplied you and your organization with two Requests for Qualifications which were publicly distributed, one in 2004 and one in 2012, including the substantial distribution lists utilized.

I have attached a page from each of those RFQs, which belies the HBCA's contention that the Harbor Department was seeking only apartment developers. I trust that this puts an end to this mis-information.

As you and most everyone involved with this project know, this project has been delayed because of political threats by the opponents to stop this project, despite the fact that the Oxnard City Manager and Planning Director supported the project in 2015 and early 2016, and the fact that the City has included a residential component for this location in its own 2030 General Plan, which was passed by the City Council in 2011.

It is no secret that Oxnard is facing a substantial budget shortfall and a significant shortage of housing units, two problems which could be improved by this development. In addition, as I stated at the recent City Council hearing, this project would enable the redevelopment of a decaying retail center, improve public access and commercial fishing, and enhance environmental justice by creating a waterfront environment which is open and inviting to those City and Ventura County residents not lucky enough to live by the Harbor.

The "Strawberry Village" proposed project you reference is definitely intriguing, and a project worth evaluating for the Harbor or elsewhere in Oxnard. I have been attempting to meet or at least speak at length with Mr. Stelter since August, but that has yet to happen because of the challenging logistics. I reached out to him again after his latest submittal, and will include Oxnard officials when company representatives next visit our City.

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Among other facets of that development proposal, their estimate of a million visitors a year will create challenges anywhere in the City, but the proposal is definitely worthy of further discussion.

As always, I stand open and available to discuss any topic of your choosing related to the Channel Islands Harbor.

Sincerely,



Mark Sandoval
Harbor Director

:MS
ATTACHMENTS

Cc: Supervisor John Zaragoza (via e-mail)
Supervisor Steve Bennett (via e-mail)
Supervisor Linda Parks (via e-mail)
Supervisor Kelly Long (via e-mail)
Supervisor Bob Huber (via e-mail)
Oxnard Mayor Tim Flynn (via e-mail)
Oxnard City Council (via e-mail)
Ventura County CEO Michael Powers (via e-mail)
Alex Nguyen, Oxnard City Manager (via e-mail)
Leroy Smith, Ventura County Counsel (via e-mail)
Jack Ainsworth, California Coastal Commission (via e-mail)

Section 3 – The Development Opportunity

POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR FISHERMAN'S WHARF

The County has two separate but interrelated policy objectives for the property: (1) near-term restoration of a "normal" level of operation at the center, most likely involving renovation and retenancing; and (2) long-term redevelopment as a destination retail center, likely including the rebuilding or expansion of the improvements. The County is open to various approaches to accomplishing these goals, but with the awareness of the length of time likely to be required to process plans for redevelopment and any footprint increases.

Three options considered by the County are: (1) to make cosmetic renovations to the existing improvements allowing retenancing and some repositioning in the near-term, with a plan for long-term redevelopment; (2) rebuild immediately within the existing footprint; and (3) to embark on a redevelopment and expansion program immediately. A key consideration in strategy is that any expansion in the existing improvements will require obtaining the requisite entitlements which include at least a change in the Public Works Plan certified by the California Coastal Commission, which controls development in the Channel Islands Harbor.

Should the lessee opt for near-term renovation and long-term redevelopment, the County is open to suggestions for solutions to the lessee's problem in recovering costs for short-term improvements.

EXPANSION POTENTIAL

Eventual expansion of Fisherman's Wharf has been mentioned by many developers interested in the parcel as a key solution to redevelop the parcel, since its current size may be insufficient to accomplish significant redevelopment. The only site that would be possible for expansion purposes is the adjacent site, comprising the parcels that serve as the County's launch ramp facility (not including the Small Boat Marina parking lot). The potential expansion site abuts Fisherman's Wharf, and is about nine acres. A portion of the site may be able to be used without relocating the current launch ramp. Expansion may be highly desirable from the point of view of revenue, however, policy and other considerations may present challenges to the entitlement process necessary to implement this approach. See Exhibit B which outlines the current Fisherman's Wharf and adjacent launch ramp parking lot parcels.

As discussed earlier, the County's primary long-term goal is the transformation of Fisherman's Wharf into a destination for retail and dining, to be a catalyst for activity throughout the Harbor.

ENTITIES GRANTING ENTITLEMENTS

Control over the redevelopment and expansion of Fisherman's Wharf is held by several entities. Land use is controlled by the Channel Islands Public Works Plan, as certified by the California Coastal Commission in 1986 and implemented by Ventura County. This plan governs issues such as zoning, density, design, ingress and egress.

Section 3 – The Development Opportunity

Policy Objectives for Fisherman's Wharf

The County has two separate but interrelated policy objectives for the property: (1) near-term maintenance of operations at the Wharf; and (2) long-term redevelopment as a destination retail center, which may include the inclusion of rental housing and/or size expansion. The County anticipates that planning to accomplish replacement of the facility will begin immediately after approval of the short-term lease.

Expansion Potential

Expansion of Fisherman's Wharf has been mentioned by many developers interested in the parcel as a key solution to redevelop the parcel, since its current size may be insufficient to accomplish significant redevelopment. The only site that would be possible for expansion purposes is the adjacent site, consisting of a small portion of the parking area for the County's boat launch facility. While the launch ramp is being prepared for replacement, with construction scheduled to begin in late 2012, there is a portion of the launch ramp parking not being improved or replaced because of the large size of the facility. The potential expansion site abuts Fisherman's Wharf, and could increase the total parcel size to between 10 and 11 acres. See Exhibit B which outlines the current Fisherman's Wharf and adjacent launch ramp parking lot parcels.

As discussed earlier, the County's primary long-term goal is the transformation of Fisherman's Wharf into a destination for retail and dining and if entitled, mixed-use (retail/residential) to be a catalyst for activity throughout the Harbor.

Entities Granting Entitlements

Control over the redevelopment and expansion of Fisherman's Wharf is held by several entities. Land use is controlled by the Channel Islands Public Works Plan, as certified and amended, last certified by the California Coastal Commission in December 2008 and implemented by Ventura County. This plan governs issues such as zoning and density. An additional amendment to the Public Works Plan is likely to be required for this proposed project.