

## Newport Beach Commission 2024 Annual Report to City Council

### Meetings:

The Commission held twelve meetings during 2024, including two in December due to HVAC issues at the Recreation Department

### Commission Members

Richard Klaffky – Chair thru 12/1/2024

Mark Fitzgerald – Vice Chair, Chair commencing 12/1/2025

Aly Oakley (Secretary) – acting secretary and Vice Chair as of 12/1/2025

Demetri Damaskos

Scott Skuncik

Roan-William Iribarren

Nick Zambotta

### Commission Areas of Concern and Action

#### - Demolition of Carousel and Snack Bar Buildings

The 2024 New Year at Easton's was marked by clean-up operations from a series of storms in December of 2023. As previously identified by the Commission, the expenses associated with post-storm clean-up are born largely by the DPW as "unplanned expense". However, many remediation efforts WITHIN the Beach infrastructure (Bath House, beach ramp and restroom damage) come out of either the Beach's annual operation budget or insurance claims. These events impact Beach Operations Budgets, leaving the possibility of improving or upgrading existing amenities beyond the capabilities of current funding levels. Insurance covers some, but not all damage at the Beach. The denial of some claims resulted in the two newly-damaged ramps to the Beach being closed and alternative access methods had to be created, further eroding Beach budgets. Any upgrades or improvements must be applied for during the city's Capital Improvements Projects planning.

In February, 2024, a decision was made by the City to demolish both the Carousel and Snack Bar Buildings. This was contrary to the recommendation by the Beach Commission that the Carousel Building be disposed of in one season, with the snack bar to follow 2-3 seasons later. The city's opposition stemmed from the desire to pay for only one demolition set-up and disposal session. The result was a scramble by the Beach Staff to find accommodation for the Beach Staff including Hotel Spaces for the Lifeguards. The first option, to use the Bath House facilities, was met with opposition by the few owners of the Bath Houses who did not want to share the resources with the Beach Staff. There was considerable public comment/confusion/upset at the process, as communications were "after the fact" and the rapidly changing plan and incremental disclosure only added to the work of the Beach Staff to ensure a beach operation for 2024. A pivot was then made to the Rotunda Building for the Beach Staff. Unfortunately, due to timing and limited resources, there was limited conditioning done to that space and the Beach Staff occupied sub-optimal space for the season. The Beach Staff made the best of the situation, and the

Beach Commission issued a Letter of Commendation for their resiliency and resourcefulness in keeping Beach operations at a near “normal” level.

Demolition did not commence until May with concern that the Public would be near the site beginning on Memorial Day and the Commission urged haste in getting any hazardous portions of the demolition done by then. The city agreed with this and organized the plan accordingly. April thru June saw the Beach staff scrambling to put out an RFP for food services and condition the Rotunda space for Beach Staff occupation. The final award of the food service contract was awarded to one bidder, solely based on that Bidder submitting the only compliant bid, a key feature of which was the presence of on-site Management who could respond to changing conditions during the demolition.

- **Beach Nourishment-**

This topic continues to be the focus of the future of the Beach. Without it, and the associated improvements to the Boardwalk Wall, the beach will be in constant jeopardy from storms and King Tides.. The City continues to engage its contractor in Engineering and Analysis projects. The Beach Commission will continue to seek the output of these projects and provide recommendations.

- **King’s Park-**

The Commission is pleased to see that King’s Park and Beach will benefit from Projects in 2025-2026 associated with Resiliency and Sustainability, as the Seawall and Beach there continue to degrade and erode and the new projects are eagerly anticipated.

- **People’s Beach-**

There were several incidents where Police needed to be summoned to restore order. With no Beach staff present, policing and maintenance is performed only after public complaints. The Commission is unsure as to its roles and responsibilities at this site.

- **Sea Wall Repair-**

- The sea wall along Memorial Boulevard bordering Easton’s Beach is in serious disrepair. Representatives of the Commission have pointed out safety risks at the many impaired sections and requested that the city address these concerns. Representatives of the City have responded that Memorial Boulevard is a state road and that the wall is not a city asset. Commission representatives later inquired of the DOT but were told that the construction of the wall pre-dates the DOT itself, is therefor not owned by DOT and repairs are not DOT responsibility. The Commission continues to reach out to Local, State and Federal agencies to keep Seawall sustainment in the minds of officials.

- The wall is from the 1880s-1890s in some parts.
- The Commission believe’s that they have contacted all Local and State parties that could be responsible. At present, none take ownership so no maintenance or improvement activities are anticipated.

Respectfully Submitted  
Newport Beach Commission  
January, 2025