



Newport Mooring Association Update 2007 In Review

**Your continuing membership in the NMA provides representation for YOU.
2007 was a busy year as the Mooring Association represented its membership in:**

The Mooring Master Plan Subcommittee of the Harbor Commission

The MMPSC was established to study all aspects of the moorings, including alignment, fees, and administration. Members of the NMA board have made a strong and consistent showing at every meeting to represent the membership. New mooring boundaries have been approved that will preserve current uses of the bay while eliminating the major disruptions to the mooring fields that had originally been considered.

Transferability

The MMPSC is currently studying a proposal presented by the NMA to codify the mooring transfer process. Literally hundreds of hours of board members' time have been devoted to working with city staff, attending meetings, and writing the proposals. In addition, some association funds have been used to obtain legal council in the Board's effort to help protect and refine some of the positive and historic policies and procedure of the transferability process.

Grand Jury Investigation of the Moorings

Last winter an Orange County Grand Jury subcommittee investigated the way Newport's moorings were administered. The Grand Jury issued a report entitled Newport Harbor Moorings: Are They Held In The Public Trust Or For Private Profit? From the

beginning, the NMA board had been closely following the creation of this report, and was ready to assist city staff and the MMPSC in drafting the City's formal response to the Grand Jury.

Mooring Waiting List

The Grand Jury was also critical of the slow moving waiting list for moorings. Again with the assistance of the NMA, proposed changes have been forwarded that would improve public access to vacant moorings through long-term rentals. The list will also be brought up to date, and the expectation of a free mooring by those on the list will be eliminated.

Harbor Fee Study

Have you noticed that your mooring fees have remained the same for many years? Thank your NMA. Several years ago the city committed to no new increases until a harbor-wide fee study was initiated. Recently, however, the city hired three separate consulting groups to study costs and revenue sources associated with the harbor.

To date, two of the reports have been received and carefully studied by the NMA. Significant increases in all harbor fees, including those of the moorings, have been proposed. The NMA board is committed to a reasonable cost sharing among all harbor users, but will resist any attempts to unfairly burden the mooring permit holders because they are perceived as "easy targets".

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**NMA
Annual Meeting
Set for
March 5, 2008
6 pm
Harbor Master's Office**

**Keep the
NMA strong!**

**Renew your NMA membership now with this form.
Maintain your representation for 2008!**

Your \$25 helps protect your interests. The NMA board members, who are mooring holders like yourself, voluntarily represent the Mooring permit holders at City, County, and other meetings. Please help them help you.

YES! I support the NMA. Please accept my check for \$25, one year's dues. Below is my information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____ Mooring #: _____

Email (Important!): _____

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 is the collection of ordinances regulating activities within the harbor, and it is currently under review. The NMA consistently participates in the process by providing input, particularly in areas where the code impacts mooring users. The revised code was presented to the city council for study and approval on January 8.

Public Piers & Dinghy Docks

Have you noticed the longer time limits allowed for tie-ups at the public piers? Thank your NMA. Now we're going forward with a proposal to add additional tie-up space at selected public piers with high demand. \$135,000 in funding has been approved by the city council to study, design, and implement the plan. Though much work remains to transform concept into reality, the NMA will follow it through.

American Legion / 15th Street Pump-Out Dock

Almost three years ago the city decided the dedicated pump-out dock at the American Legion was unsafe and moved the pump itself to the already crowded 15th Street Public Dock. Losing a facility that served such a large mooring area was simply unacceptable to the NMA. We closely participated with city staff to file a grant request to the Department of Boating and Waterways for funding to rebuild the facility. The funding was approved almost two years ago. Until recently, permit hurdles have delayed the start of construction, and there are still critical issues to be worked out that could cause further delay. However, the NMA board is committed to seeing this project

through, no matter how long it takes!

Taxes

Many boat owners saw large increases in their 2007 vessel property tax bills. The Orange County Assessor's office claimed it was only bringing assessed vessel values back in line with reality. Did you know that a percentage of the unsecured property tax, such as that from boats, is returned to the city in which the property is kept? In Newport Beach, with many thousands of vessels, that dollar amount is substantial and will proportionately increase due to the revised taxes. The money from boat taxes that the city receives goes into the general fund, and is not specifically earmarked to benefit the harbor. The NMA believes that this money should go toward harbor improvements.

Harbor Dredging

Within the harbor there are many areas where there is simply not enough depth to safely navigate at low tide. The harbor needs to be dredged. The Harbor Commission is the chief proponent of this sorely needed maintenance, and although this is a federally created and maintained harbor, they have learned that federal funds are unlikely to be granted. Therefore, the city is considering the idea of finding and providing its own funds, and it is estimated that 10 to 20 million dollars will be needed. It may be possible to redirect the vessel tax revenue from the city's general fund. Additionally, a wide variety of self-funding options are being considered and upward pressure on harbor related fees is likely.

A More Productive Pump-out in Newport

An unbelievable amount of effort has gone into reinstating the American Legion pump-out dock, and we're hopeful it will happen soon.

In the meantime, the Harbor Resources Department has asked if we will help get the word out on a related issue...unauthorized pump station "modifications" at the 15th Street public dock. Someone (perhaps more than one) is cutting part of the rubber end off of the suction nozzle. Harbor Resources keeps replacing them, and they keep getting "modified".

The rubber ends used on all of the harbor's pump stations have a rudimentary one-way valve cast into them that tends to snag larger "things" getting drawn from the holding tank. Some folks may feel that removing this obstructing valve helps make for a freer flow, and therefore a less troublesome pump out experience. Others are complaining to the city that the modified suction nozzle no longer makes a proper vacuum seal to their deck fitting.

Here's a suggestion: Check to see if your deck waste fitting has the commonly used 1½" female pipe threads. If it does, you're in luck because you can take advantage of a better way to pump out. The suction hose nozzle may be temporarily uncoupled from the rubber end by opening the silver cam-lock levers right below the elbow. What's left is a female cam-lock coupler that will clamp securely to an available male cam-lock fitting that can be screwed into your deck fitting when pumping out. All of the newer pump stations throughout the harbor have this capability.

Now, instead of standing there cussing while forcing that rubber end into your waste fitting to try to get a good seal (or while unplugging the rubber one-way valve, if it still has one), you can simply clamp the suction cam-lock to your deck fitting and step away. You will have a solid seal, and a full 1½" connection with no obstructions to catch stuff. As a result, your holding tank will empty in about half the usual time, with far less muss and fuss.

The NMA is supporting a pilot program to make these male cam-lock fittings easily available. For a limited time Harbor Resources (644-3043) will have some, and we'll also bring them to the upcoming annual meeting. Give one a try and you'll agree...modification is no longer necessary!

