

# Latest ruling on needle exchange proposal is another victory for Costa Mesa and the county

San Diego Superior Court Judge Joel R. Wohlfeil ruled on Friday Oct. 25, that the Orange County Needle Exchange Program and the State of California cannot operate a mobile needle exchange program in Costa Mesa and other cities in the county unless the state's California Department of Public Health complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This is a great victory for Costa Mesa residents, visitors and businesses, whose safety would have been put at risk with operation of a mobile needle exchange program.

"Protecting the public health includes complying with CEQA," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "Evidence of more than 200,000 needles in the public space creates an environmental hazard not analyzed by the state. It's unfortunate that local entities had to expend taxpayer funds to force compliance with laws intended to protect the public. This is similar to the state's sober living home rubber stamp licensing. We need better oversight from these state agencies."

The most recent ruling comes nearly one year after the Superior Court for the County of San Diego issued a preliminary injunction against both the Orange County Needle Exchange Program and the California Department of Public Health.

It was in July of 2018 that the state Department of Public Health granted the Orange County Needle Exchange Program the right to distribute needles in Costa Mesa on 17th Street, from the intersection of Whittier Avenue and west to the edge of

the city boundary at the Banning Ranch property each Wednesday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The state also granted the group the right to operate needle exchange programs in the City of Orange, Anaheim and Santa Ana.

In response to those approvals, the Costa Mesa City Council voted unanimously to pursue legal action and joined those three cities and the County of Orange to seek a temporary restraining order/temporary injunction and to put a halt to the approved mobile needle exchange program.

The Orange County Needle Exchange Program had previously operated a needle exchange program at the Santa Ana Civic Center but that operation was shut down by city officials who revoked OCNEP's permit after a massive increase in needle litter that posed a threat to public safety. Several people were pricked by discarded needles, including members of the Santa Ana Police Department. The city of Costa Mesa received written and photographic evidence of the needle litter.

Prior to the state's approval of the needle exchange program, the Costa Mesa Police Department and the City Attorney's Office submitted evidence and statements to state officials that chronicled the substantial risks to public health the program presents to the Costa Mesa community and asked that the application be denied.

[Click here to see the city's responses.](#)

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# **City wins coveted Helen Putnam award from League of California Cities for SMART Camp program**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison accepted the Helen Putnam Award for Excellence CCS Partnership Intergovernmental Collaboration Award for the summer SMART Camp program from the League of California Cities at its annual conference in Long Beach.

“We are very honored to receive this prestigious Helen Putnam Award from the League of California Cities,” City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. “The camp has touched the lives of thousands of youth and provided the opportunity to enrich their lives . We thank the Costa Mesa City Council and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District board for their support of this joint venture.”

The 2019 SMART Camp served approximately 490 participants. Approximately 266 participants registered for the sports session, and 94 participants registered for the music and 127 kids in the arts sessions.

Registration indicates that students from 4th grade through 8th grade in multiple elementary and middle schools across Costa Mesa participate in the camp.

The SMART Camp program demonstrates an innovative and replicable example of collaboration amongst the City, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, and other partners to bring important services to children and families.

“With our SMART Camp, we create summer jobs for young coaches and teachers who participate,” Mayor Katrina Foley said. “We

provide free summer camps for students in fourth through eighth grade that benefit all families regardless of income and reduce the likelihood of at-risk teen conduct during summer. Engaging students and keeping them active through our SMART Camps benefit the entire community while fostering creativity, critical thinking, logic and communication skills; and in the long run developing well-rounded citizens.”

SMART Camp typically lasts for four weeks from early July to August. Students are introduced to a variety of athletic sports (aquatics, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, softball, tennis, volleyball and wrestling), music, and art programs (visual 2D, 3D, and acting).

Kirk Bauermeister, Newport-Mesa School District’s Executive Director of Secondary Education and a former principal and coach, said the program has been invaluable.

“The partnership with the city has turned into a collaborative effort between the City of Costa Mesa and the school district,” he said. “This summer, district teachers and coaches will work with close to 1,000 kids from the City of Costa Mesa. Our high school coaches and high school players help out at the camp for community service hours and because of that the youth of Costa Mesa have a high-quality summer sports camp. The variety of sports offerings means many students are exposed to new sports as well.”

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## **City Council Seeks Applicants For At-Large Planning**

# Commission Seat

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking interested individuals from the community to serve an at-large seat on the Planning Commission. All applicants must be a registered voter in Costa Mesa.

**Planning Commission** – The Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month and advises on planning, land use, and development matters.

The Commission has the authority to review: 1) regulations pertaining to the future growth, development, and beautification of the City with respect to public and private projects; 2) consistency with municipal plans to ensure that future growth and development do not impede upon sanitation, public utilities, and transportation facilities; 3) the location and design of proposed buildings, structures or works; and, 4) the design and improvement of proposed subdivisions of land.

The Commission is the final decision-making body for certain discretionary land-use approvals such as design review, conditional use permits, and land divisions. The Commission also functions as an advisory body to the City Council for Zoning and General Plan amendments. The appointed term will expire February 2021. Applicants must be a registered voter in Costa Mesa.

**Application Process** – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website (<http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply>).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; faxed to (714) 754-4942; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov); or hand-delivered to the City

Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. The deadline is 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 8, 2019. The appointment is tentatively scheduled for the Nov. 19, 2019 City Council meeting.

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## **Support of city's homeless outreach efforts nets Sgt. Clint Dieball the City Manager Leadership Award**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Police Sgt. Clint Dieball with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly employee Meet and Greet on Oct. 3.

"As someone who grew up in and attended schools in Costa Mesa, Sgt. Dieball epitomizes what it means to serve your community," Farrell Harrison said. "We are so fortunate to have someone like Clint with his vast knowledge and experience in policing as well as his exemplary leadership skills. I'm proud to present him with this award."

Currently, Sgt. Dieball is the Community Policing Unit supervisor overseeing three officers and six park rangers. This team supports the mission of the city's homeless outreach programs, and vigorously enforces quality of life issues in Costa Mesa.

Since the beginning of the year, Sgt. Dieball's team of CPU officers and park rangers have taken over 1,000 enforcement actions, and have participated in countless outreach encounters with our other city team members and worked closely

with the city's Public Services team.

Dieball joined the Costa Mesa Police Department family in July, 1996 as a Patrol Officer.

Dieball is a product of Costa Mesa, having grown up here since 1978. He attended Sonora Elementary, Davis Junior Intermediate and Costa Mesa High School. He also attended Orange Coast College before transferring to the University of Southern California in 1991, and later graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Public Policy and Management.

Dieball was assigned to the South Coast Plaza Detail in 1998, where he and his team were responsible for investigating shoplifting, fraud cases, internal thefts, identity thefts, burglaries and robberies in the South Coast Plaza and South Coast Metro retail districts.

In 2000, Dieball was assigned to the Detective Bureau and worked all aspects of investigations, from property crimes to auto theft and crimes against persons; including domestic violence cases and homicide investigations.

During his time in the Detective Bureau, Dieball went back to school in 2003 and obtained his Master's Degree in Public Administration with a minor in Public Finance, at National University in Costa Mesa.

In 2006, Dieball was promoted to Corporal and became a Field Training Officer, before his promotion to Sergeant in 2008. In 2014, as a Patrol Sergeant, he was asked and accepted an opportunity to work as the Administrative Sergeant as a collateral duty.

In 2015, Dieball became the full time Administrative Sergeant, with responsibilities including the schedule for all of Patrol, the Field Training Program, Sergeants at Arms for City Council meetings and the police facility. During this time, the police department saw the largest increase in new officers

entering the Field Training Program in two decades.

City Manager Farrell Harrison also welcomed several new employees to the Costa Mesa team.

Dasni Ahangama is a new Intern working in the Development Services Department. Nicolas Johnstone is a new Lifeguard working at the Downtown Recreation Center.

In the Police Department, Geren Anders is a new police officer, Lindsey Olson is a new Crime Scene Investigation Supervisor and Lizbeth Ramirez is a new Community Services Specialist

Steven Wang is the new Assistant Engineer working in the Public Services Department.

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## **City Council seeks applicants for District 3 Planning Commission seat**

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking interested individuals from the District 3 community to serve on the Planning Commission. All applicants must be a registered voter in District 3.

**Planning Commission** – The Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month and advises on planning, land use, and development matters.

The Commission has the authority to review: 1) regulations pertaining to the future growth, development, and beautification of the City with respect to public and private

projects; 2) consistency with municipal plans to ensure that future growth and development do not impede upon sanitation, public utilities, and transportation facilities; 3) the location and design of proposed buildings, structures or works; and, 4) the design and improvement of proposed subdivisions of land.

The Commission is the final decision-making body for certain discretionary land-use approvals such as design review, conditional use permits, and land divisions. The Commission also functions as an advisory body to the City Council for Zoning and General Plan amendments. The vacancy is due to the recent resignation of a member. The appointed term will expire February 2023. Applicants must be a registered voter in District 3.

**Application Process** – Residents from District 3 who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website (<http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply>).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; faxed to (714) 754-4942; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov); or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. The deadline is **5 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019**. The appointment is tentatively scheduled for the Oct. 15, 2019 City Council meeting.

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# Costa Mesa's Shelter Model Successfully Houses the Homeless

As the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter nears six months of operation, its unique model has successfully transitioned 18 clients from homelessness into permanent housing.

And that's not all. Six additional clients will be opening the door to a new home and a new future by late October.

"Costa Mesa is leading the way with a successful shelter model that helps those experiencing homelessness find housing," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "Earlier this year, the City Council took a courageous step to create a Bridge Shelter. It was the humane and right thing to do and the result has been a significant improvement to our community and neighborhoods."

Since its opening on April 5, the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter has been providing shelter and case management services for up to 50 individuals daily.

Clients at the Bridge Shelter have ranged from college students to senior citizens and are from all walks of life including those who have lost everything, have a mental health diagnosis, suffer from addiction or need temporary shelter to get back on their feet.

One of the clients who was successfully housed is Gerald, a 59-year-old Orange County native who has spent most of his life in mental hospitals or living on the streets. Unable to get consistent treatment or access to medication, Gerald unfortunately became a casualty of the system.

After entering the Bridge Shelter, case managers helped stabilize his condition until the proper mental health

placement was found. He is now in permanent supportive housing where he is finally receiving proper medical and mental health services.

Gerald was a beneficiary of Costa Mesa's "Housing First" philosophy, which establishes a Housing Plan aimed towards securing permanent housing to end homelessness for all clients.

To carry out the "Housing First" philosophy, the City adopted an operating model where expert shelter operator Mercy House works alongside the City's client case management staff for optimal results.

"This unique model, which separates day-to-day shelter operations from client case management, has undoubtedly been the catalyst to our success," City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. "The numbers speak for themselves. Many cities throughout the county, and even the state, are looking to Costa Mesa for advice on how to address the root causes of homelessness while enforcing their anti-camping ordinances."

A key part of the hybrid model is the expectation that each client at the Bridge Shelter is required to meet with their case manager no less than once per week. If they are not following through on the steps of their Housing Plan they run the risk of being exited from the shelter. Fortunately, many clients are exceeding those expectations and meet with their case manager 2-5 times per week, resulting in better outcomes.

Since April, more than 130 individuals, including 11 veterans, have received services from the Bridge Shelter. City case managers have assisted those clients with nearly 1,500 linkages to healthcare, County resources, social services, job connections, legal services, mental health resources, transportation and other services.

By embarking on this plan, the Costa Mesa Police Department was permitted to reintroduce enforcement of the City's anti-

camping ordinances on public property. The City was also able to settle with the plaintiffs in the OC Catholic Worker lawsuit that was filed when the County of Orange cleared the Santa Ana River homeless encampments.

“I am proud of the City Council and City staff for all the work they have done to create this successful Bridge Shelter,” Farrell Harrison said. “Our City Council’s unanimous call to action to address homelessness in the City is money well spent. We still have more work to do, but we are definitely on the right track. I look forward to the opening of our permanent facility next spring and helping more clients end the cycle of homelessness.”

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## **Being kind nets local Costa Mesa High school student the Mayor’s Award**

At the Tuesday Sept. 3 City Council meeting, Mayor Katrina Foley presented Costa Mesa High School student Rebekah Robeck with the Mayor’s Award to honor her for being the founder of the Let’s Be Kind movement that has taken off throughout the school district.



Rebekah started the movement by sharing 200 slices of pizza to her Costa Mesa Middle School classmates.

[Click here to learn about her organization.](#)

“Tonight we are very honored to recognize Rebekah,” Mayor Foley said. “She has raised more than \$9,000 to purchase 2,100 Let’s Be Kind T- shirts for every student, faculty, and staff member on both Costa Mesa Middle School and High School campuses. The program has since spread to several other campuses in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District and is projected to reach more than 20,000 students across more than 30 campuses this year.”

For more about Rebekah watch the video below.

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**It’s better to be ‘Prepared,**

# **not Scared, ' when it comes to emergencies**

As part of National Preparedness Month, the City of Costa Mesa will be sharing tips, videos and ideas on how to prepare for an emergency over the city's website and the city and public safety social media channels.

This year's theme is "Prepared, not Scared," and the city will link to resources from ReadyOC, AlertOC and the federal site Ready.gov to help the public prepare and stay informed of emergencies.

Costa Mesa and the entire county are prone to many disasters, including earthquakes, wildfires, landslides, flooding, terrorism, gas or chemical leaks, and more.

Download the free ReadyOC app to make a family emergency plan and get a checklist for what to put in your emergency kit. AlertOC is an emergency notification system that keeps Costa Mesa and all Orange County community members informed of immediate natural threats to the community.

Stay one step ahead of emergencies by signing up for AlertOC today.

For more information, please visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website Ready.gov

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## **Judge issues another ruling**

# **in support of Costa Mesa's group home laws**

In yet another victory for the City of Costa Mesa, Federal Judge James Selna denied a motion for a preliminary injunction against the city's group home ordinances filed by sober living home operator SoCal Recovery.

"This is just one more affirmation that we as a City Council have done the right thing for our residents to protect both patients and our residents from unscrupulous operators," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "Our law has withstood major challenges so far and we will continue to enforce it vigorously. It has become a model for other communities to follow."

The City's laws, passed beginning in 2014, regulate sober living home operators in single family neighborhoods, limiting the number of residents to six or fewer and maintaining a 650-foot buffer between non-licensed sober living homes. The laws also regulate sober living home operators in multi-family zones, requiring a separation requirement to avoid converting neighborhoods into institutional-like settings. The City implemented the laws to protect the entire community from operators of unlicensed facilities which exposed residents to dangerous conditions and created public nuisance concerns.

SoCal Recovery is a for-profit corporation that operates sober living residences in Costa Mesa, including properties located at 783 Hudson Ave., 208 Cecil Place, 175 E. 21st St., and 157 Del Mar Ave. SoCal Recovery does not currently operate any State- licensed or certified residential care facilities in Orange County.

SoCal Recovery asked the city to alter its application of the ordinances to allow the organization to operate its sober living facilities. That request was denied. After having its

request to operate denied by the city, SoCal Recovery filed suit against the city in July of 2018, alleging the city's group home ordinances violate the Fair Housing Act.

The latest ruling by Judge Selna follows on the heels of his ruling in July and a jury's unanimous verdict in December of 2018 that rejected a challenge to the city's group home ordinance by Yellowstone LLC.

Yellowstone, along with another sober living home operator and an industry trade group, alleged that the city's ordinances are discriminatory and violate the Fair Housing Act.

In the SoCal Recovery case, the city was represented by the law firms of Everett Dorey, LLP and Jones & Mayer.

In the Yellowstone court case, the City of Costa Mesa was represented by lead trial attorney Jennifer Keller of Keller/Anderle LLP.

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## **Street sweeping to be postponed for one week due to Labor Day holiday**

Due to the observation of the Labor Day holiday on Monday, there will be no residential street sweeping Sept. 2 through Sept. 6, 2019.

This coincides with the Costa Mesa Sanitary District, which also observes this holiday by pushing trash collection back one day.

This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with

trash cans making it impossible for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job. There should be no parking citations issued during this time.

Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule the week of Sept. 9.

In lieu of sweeping streets, the following are a list of task that clean streets operators will be conducting next week.

- City wide alley street sweeping
- Sweeping of park parking lots and other city owned facilities
- Accident call outs and special request
- Night route sweeping on all arterial streets

For more information, residents can call the city's street sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated with this information.

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## **Bridge Shelter Success: Shirley's story**

Shirley is a Bridge Shelter senior client who previously wound up on the streets after a divorce where she found herself having to solve her medical problems and ward off criminals all on her own.

After years of living without a home, Shirley eventually entered the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter.

It wasn't an easy entry at first. Shirley twice decided to leave the facility because she wasn't yet ready to move forward with her housing plan; but, the shelter's outreach and

in-reach workers had compassion for her and convinced her not to give up hope for a life inside.

Fortunately for Shirley, she was recommended for a voucher by the Orange County Housing Authority (OCHA) and her case manager was able to collect the rest of her documentation to turn into OCHA for her housing voucher.

She is now retrieving and completing the necessary paperwork to get her housing voucher and has sent the documents to OCHA.

Only by stabilizing this client through the availability of a shelter bed and a coordinated and compassionate approach to case management, will he/she be able to complete her housing plan.

Shirley's story is just one illustration of how the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter staff team is going above and beyond to get clients onto a path of hope.

For more information about Costa Mesa's efforts to end homelessness, please visit our website at [www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness](http://www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness).

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## **State legislature unanimously votes to name portion of 55 Freeway after Capt. Mike Kreza**

On Monday, Aug. 26, the California State Senate approved Resolution SCR 21 to name a portion of the 55 Freeway after Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Captain Mike Kreza, who was fatally

struck by a vehicle while riding his bike off duty in November of 2018.

The freeway will be named the Costa Mesa Fire Captain Michael Kreza Memorial Highway from 19<sup>th</sup> Street in Costa Mesa to MacArthur Boulevard.

“Fire Captain ‘Ironman’ Mike Kreza will always be in our hearts and now his memory will be imprinted within the gateway to the community for which he loved and served for 18 years,” Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “The Costa Mesa fire family is grateful for this incredibly special tribute to Captain Kreza, an honor we will all treasure, most notably his wife Shanna and their daughters Kaylie, Layla, and Audrey.”

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley also expressed her gratitude for the honor.

“It is so fitting that there will now be a memorial highway that runs through our city bearing the name of Capt. Mike Kreza,” Mayor Foley said. “He was a distinguished Costa Mesa firefighter and much-loved family man, whose character, integrity, and singular commitment to Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue earned him the respect and admiration of his fellow firefighters, the members of the greater Costa Mesa community and the countless other individuals whose lives he touched.”



SCR 21 was first introduced by Orange County state Senators Patricia Bates and John Moorlach, and Assembly Members Bill Brough and Cottie Petrie-Norris were the principal co-authors in the state Assembly. SCR 21 passed both houses unanimously and has gained widespread support statewide, starting at home with the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department, the Costa Mesa Firefighters Association, the City of Costa Mesa, California Professional Firefighters, and the California Fire Chiefs Association.

Once SCR 21 is officially chaptered, the installation process will be discussed and steps to move forward will be set into motion.