

City Council Chambers upgrades get underway as meetings move to Senior Center

Starting this week, construction for the Audio Visual, Broadcast Production, and Infrastructure Upgrades of Council Chambers and First Floor Meeting Rooms has begun.

All meetings previously scheduled in the Council Chambers, City Council, Planning and Parks commissions will now take place at the Costa Mesa Senior Center located at 695 W. 19th St.

Throughout the duration of the project the Council Chambers and Conference Room 1C/video editing room behind the Chambers will not be available for use. Conference Room 1A will also be affected by the renovation, however it is anticipated that Conference Room 1A will only be offline for a couple of short duration periods.

Additionally, in order for contractors to carry out the renovation, five to six parking spaces adjacent to the east entrance of the Council Chambers will be used for construction staging; and portable sanitary facilities will be set up at the southeast corner of the parking lot next to Vanguard University's current construction.

Fire academy recruits train for live fire techniques

Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue recruits continue to progress in their academy training. Recently, the academy cadre was led by Captain Joe Noceti and the recruits trained with live fire. Recruits learned about fire behavior, fire attack principles and the dangers of attacking a fire.

Some of the recruits had eyes as wide as saucers as this was their first time attacking a fire in a controlled environment.

City asks legislature to halt proposal that cripples local government review

Mayor Steve Mensinger, on behalf of the City Council, has sent a sharply worded letter to two high ranking legislative leaders announcing the city's opposition to a proposal by Gov. Jerry Brown that would eliminate city regulations and review of specific affordable housing developments.

The city is asking Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian, chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee and state Sen. Richard Roth, chair of the Senate Budget Subcommittee, to put the brakes on any legislative action that would pass the governor's proposal, saying it undermines local government and public engagement and will increase the public's distrust of government.

“The City of Costa Mesa is supportive of efforts to increase affordable housing opportunities for California’s residents, especially in Orange County,” Mayor Mensinger wrote. “However, your proposed language to streamline affordable housing weakens the ability for local governments to review or approve projects in their communities.”

To see the full text of the letter [click here](#).

City files public nuisance complaint and asks court to take action against New Harbor Inn

The City of Costa Mesa filed a public nuisance complaint against the New Harbor Inn, a rare civil abatement move that, if successful, will bring the blighted and crime-infested motel on Harbor Boulevard under court control.

“As we saw with a recent stabbing at a local motel, these establishments continue to be a detriment to our community and are havens for prostitutes, drug users and other criminal elements,” said Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger. “By taking this action against this public nuisance, the City Council is trying to eliminate the unlawful use of the property.”

Since 2010, the New Harbor Inn generated nearly 1,800 calls for service and it is a known locale for drug storage and sales and multiple narcotics arrests. The motel is the source for a disproportionate amount of police calls.

[Click here to see a copy of the complaint.](#)

In addition to the criminal activity, inspections at the New Harbor Inn have turned up multiple code violations over the years including substandard property maintenance and health, life and safety violations.

In March of 2014, 79 violations were found in 33 rooms and in August of 2012, the property received fire code violations after it was discovered that 30 rooms had no smoke detectors, there were improper exits, non-operational fire extinguishers and fire hazards caused by extension cords.

According to the complaint filed in Orange County Superior Court Central Division, the city is asking for myriad remedies enforceable by the court including but not limited to:

- Shutting down the hotel temporarily or permanently.
- Appointing a receiver or court officer to take over operations and assume management and control of the property.
- Requiring the property owner to comply with existing law and completely revamp its business procedures, hire armed security guards and improve lighting and other areas of concern.

Recently, the city and Costa Mesa law enforcement have had to increase enforcement efforts on motel operators whose properties have multiple calls for service and are the venue for criminal activity such as drug use and sales and prostitution.

In a unanimous vote, the city council voted in closed session to take this legal action against the New Harbor Inn. If the court grants the city's request to shut down, or place a court-appointed receiver over the New Harbor Inn, that would be a major victory for residents and business owners who regularly have to deal with the criminal activity.

“Costa Mesa works hard to encourage and support our local businesses and residents,” Mayor Mensinger said. “But this drastic intervention is necessary given the pattern and practice of bad business operations.”