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March 5, 2021

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California Coastal Commission

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Delivered by email to SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov

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Allan Beek

Subject: Public Comment on March 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 12a:
Application 5-07-370-A2 (Orange County Parks, Newport Beach)
1901 Bayside Drive in Newport Beach, CA

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Dear Coastal Commissioners and Staff:

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SPON, founded in 1974, is a non-profit public education organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the environmental and residential qualities of Newport Beach. In that capacity, the issue of access to the subject property is an important mix with the use of this key site and we write this letter to raise concerns regarding staff's recommendations concerning this project.

The site is a crucial public access point to Newport Harbor, and provides residents and visitors alike with several unique low-cost or no-cost recreational amenities. The coastal amenities at this beach and bay setting are quite limited.

Our concerns with the staff report begin with the suggestion of reductions in public access to the site, which is limited now, and will negatively affect that access. For this reason, please don't approve the application without first addressing the following issues.



A 501(c)(3) non-profit public education organization working to protect and preserve the residential and environmental qualities of Newport Beach.

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The Commission should not permit the elimination of the site's existing visitor dock. Members of the public use this dock to load and unload from vessels, use the site's public restrooms, use one of the already limited guest docks and obtain safety and weather information from the Harbor Patrol. The alternative "visitor slip" proposed by staff would be less accessible for people and boats, and it would not fully mitigate the loss of public access caused by closing larger portions of the visitor dock.

The Commission should not permit the applicant's reduction of dinghy dock hours from a 72-hour limit to 6:00 am - 10:00 pm. There are many reasons a harbor user might need to dock a small boat outside of daytime hours. For example, fishers, live aboard and visiting mariners, moored close by, use these same services. The suggestion made by staff in their report of matching the dinghy dock hours with that of the beach, does not make sense as the two uses are dissimilar, and the guest slips and pump-out station don't have this unwanted regulation.

The Commission should keep the existing paved walkway and add the accessible mats with more thoughtful placement. As the mats require first cost and maintenance, the paths can be limited and more sensitive to sharing the area on an already small beach. The existing walkway is well delineated and provides convenient and prime access to this part of the site. Staff is also proposing the addition of small water craft storage. This will further take up beach space. Permitting further reduction of the beach while eliminating existing public walkway does not make sense or promote the keeping of exiting public access.



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In conclusion, the Commission need not promote more special harbor-side use while granting limitations within the application. The land around Newport Harbor is a highly developed, and this public space is limited. Please do not consider the proposed limitations to this site or our public access to the harbor, enjoyed for many years.

We look forward to an outcome that reflects the space limitation and access concerns of Newport Beach when this matter is heard.

Sincerely,

Bruce Bartram

SPON President



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