

The Week That Was^{TW2}

October 16 – October 19, 2023



1. Receive a Link to This TW2 Update via Email

If you would like to automatically receive City email updates and news, including the link to this weekly update (TW2), please

click: https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001MMYPftnVV-XfWIFIVkYmFfdswwm47Db1a_pfeHLb72UxglCTm5uPcyECVbwMP7mT4rHAah1rhc7ve2v6wWafANscoXEVFajeStWUONdfH8w%3D. A link to the TW2 is also included each week in the City's Community Newsletter, which is sent via text message (Nixle) on Thursday afternoons. To sign up for Nixle text 92651 to 888-777.

2. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan on Track

City staff, in collaboration with a working group consisting of members from the Environmental Sustainability and Emergency Disaster Preparedness Committee, is reviewing the initial findings of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. The group remains committed to delivering the report to the City Council as scheduled, in September 2024.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend an open house on November 14 at the Laguna Beach Susi Q and Community Center, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The open house will include a brief overview of the project followed by an interactive breakout session where residents can provide their feedback and insight.

3. October Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting

The Environmental Sustainability Committee convened on October 16. During this session, the Committee was presented with information by OC Solar, a non-profit organization dedicated to aiding residents in the installation of solar panel systems. The committee also conducted a review of the subcommittee's work plans for 2024, as the City Council's tentative plan is to consider the Environmental Sustainability Committee's proposed work plan during its meeting on December 12, 2023.

4. Brown Act Training to be Scheduled

I am coordinating with City Attorney Megan Garibaldi to conduct near-term open-meeting law (commonly referred to as "Ralph M. Brown Act") training to all members of City Commissions, Committees, and City staff that support them. As the City Council knows, compliance with the Brown Act is not discretionary, as it is State law. The Brown Act is critical to the City's core purpose as it ensures that the public has complete knowledge of the activities of the City's decision-makers and an opportunity to participate in those decisions.

5. Minor Fuel Modification Work Occurring in Hand Crew Treated Zones

Due to a significant increase in rainfall this year, including above-average precipitation during the summer months, the City is undertaking additional work in the hand-treated fuel modification zones. This work may involve selective use of synthetic herbicides in accordance with the treatment protocol approved by the California Coastal Commission. Residents will receive advance notification and have the option to decline the use of synthetic herbicides on their property.

Furthermore, the City's staff is actively investigating an alternative treatment protocol and is tentatively scheduled to present their findings in January 2024.

6. Opportunity for Public Input Regarding New City Manager Recruitment

As the City of Laguna Beach begins its search for a new City Manager, the City Council wants to ensure the public has an opportunity to provide feedback about the most important qualities potential candidates should possess. The City's executive search firm, Ralph Andersen & Associates, has facilitated an online public survey regarding the City Manager recruitment. The survey is now available for the public at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FZTN7V7>. The survey will be open until Friday, November 10, 2023.

Survey feedback will be taken into careful consideration during the candidate selection and interview process. This survey is confidential. Only Ralph Andersen & Associates' staff will review survey responses. Only aggregated results will be made available for the City Council's use in the recruitment process.

7. Patrol Activity

On Thursday October 12, 2023, at 2100 hours, officers responded to Pavilions grocery store in reference to a robbery which just occurred. The suspects stole approximately 25 cans of whipped cream and were confronted in the parking lot by an on-duty and off-duty employees. A struggle ensued over the basket of stolen ideas and the suspect fled the scene. The whipped cream was recovered by the employees and a report was taken.

On Thursday, October 12, 2023, at 2149 hours, officers responded to the Sandpiper for a felony battery regarding a male suspect who had been punched and rendered unconscious. The male victim was seen arguing with Sandpiper bouncers outside the establishment, when an unknown suspect pushed the victim who then hit his head. Further investigation is underway.

On Friday October 13, 2023, at 1001 hours responded to Chabad Jewish Center after they had received a threatening email. The email was sent to our partners at Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center (OCIAC) for further investigation and determined the suspect is currently living in Michigan. OCIAC helped facilitate the information to a partnered Intelligence Center, MIOC, for further investigation.

Officers conducted several patrol checks of the Chabad Center due to the national "day of reckoning" threat made by Hamas leaders.

On Saturday, October 14, 2023, LBPD Detectives and School Resource Officers followed up on a school shooting threat received that morning on Snapchat. Detectives contacted

two 13-year-old Laguna Beach siblings and their mother. The students received the original Snapchat from their friend in Arizona. They claimed it is an ongoing joke with a student in Arizona and the photo/threat was part of that joke. There is no threat to Laguna Beach schools and law enforcement is following up with the student in Arizona.

8. Financial Year-end Close and Implementation of New GASB Pronouncement

The Finance Division continues to work on the fiscal year 2022-23 financial year-end close process, including the implementation of a new Governmental Accounting Standards Board pronouncement, GASB 96. Under this new pronouncement, subscription-based information technology arrangements (SBITAs), which are contractual arrangements in which a government entity subscribes to a software, platform, or other information technology service on an ongoing basis, are recorded as right-to-use IT subscription assets and corresponding subscription liabilities.

9. Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET)

Park Ranger De La Torre has completed her two-month Field Training Program and started as a solo Park Ranger. Park Ranger Zenk will start on October 30. There is one more vacancy to fill; we have two Park Ranger applicants in the background stage.

Our Community Services Officer (CSO) Section is working on Halloween events during the month of October.

10. Body Worn Cameras

This week, the PD started its new Body Worn Camera (BWC) rollout. It is anticipated it will take two weeks until the transition from our current BWC is complete. Special thanks to those PD and IT staff who have been working on this important project for more than a year.

11. Ordinance Relating to Prohibition Against Breaching the Aliso Creek Berm

The proposed ordinance prohibiting breaching the Aliso Creek Berm has been removed from the October 24 City Council agenda, allowing staff additional time to review enforcement measures associated with the ordinance. The ordinance will be presented to the City Council at a future meeting.

12. Employee Trainings

On Tuesday, Human Resources hosted two sessions of “Customer Service in the Public Sector” to 31 employees across several City departments. Offering exceptional customer service – internally and externally – is a core organizational value. Thus, we conduct this course focusing on establishing and building positive relationships for optimal customer interactions. This valuable training will be offered to employees again in November.

On Wednesday, Human Resources hosted Leadership 101 training of 24 employees across several City departments. This was the third class of a 4-part series. This week's concepts covered Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Wellness. The next and final class will be held in mid-November. The training continues to be well received by participating employees.

13. Woods Cove Assessment District Balloting Underway

Assessment Ballots for the Woods Cove Underground Utility Assessment District project will be mailed out on Friday, October 20. Affected property owners are encouraged to vote on the project and return their ballots to the City Clerk's office prior to the City Council public hearing to tally the votes on Tuesday, December 12. Project Manager Pierre Sawaya will be working with the assessment district project block captains to inform residents about the project and maximize the number of ballots returned.

14. USDA Selects Laguna Beach to Receive \$100,000 Urban Forestry Grant

Earlier this week, the Public Works Department was notified that the City of Laguna Beach was selected by the US Department of Agriculture to receive a \$100,000 Urban Forestry Grant as part of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. In June 2023, City Arborist Matthew Barker submitted a competitive grant application to request funding for one or more citywide urban forestry management tools, including Tree Canopy Analysis, Updated Tree Asset Inventory, and Tree Planting Site Analysis.

15. Park Avenue Utility Undergrounding Vault Placement

This week the City's contractor, Asplundh Construction, completed installation of three large electrical vaults on Park Avenue as part of the Park Avenue Utility Undergrounding project. The precast vaults are 14' long, 7' wide, and placed approximately 15' deep. The precast vaults were placed by a crane and then backfilled with slurry cement, road base and temporary pavement. The staging and implementation of the work required full closure of Park Avenue with detour routes through the adjacent neighborhoods. No further full closures or detours are planned for the project; however, there will be intermittent temporary closures with flaggers directing traffic through the corridor. Project Manager Alpha Santos coordinated with the school district and adjacent neighborhood to help minimize traffic impacts from the project, which is scheduled to complete construction by January 2024.

16. Moss Street Beach Access Project Update

The City's contractor, Wright Construction, began work on the Moss Street Beach Access Improvements earlier this week. One of the first major components of the project will be to construct a cofferdam (caisson) at beach level, which creates a dry working environment for the contractor at the base of the stairway. Based on the tide charts, the contractor has identified next Friday, October 27, as the best day to safely construct the cofferdam. The work includes having a large crane positioned at the top of the stairs, lowering large concrete blocks to beach level and securing them together with steel beams. Depending on the tide, the work is planned to begin late Friday morning and extend to approximately 9 p.m., with work involving heavy machinery to be completed prior to 6 p.m. The remaining work will include the use of hand tools to secure the concrete blocks in place and site cleanup. The City's Project Manager, Ulises Escalona has notified the adjacent resident of the extended work hours and staff will be monitoring the work through that evening.

17. Irvine Bowl Tennis Courts

The two Irvine Bowl tennis courts located adjacent to the Festival of Arts grounds will reopen on Monday, October 23, following completion of necessary maintenance and resurfacing.

18. Aliso Beach Parking Lot – TUP for Caltrans Project

The Planning Commission considered approval of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) and a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) to install a remote construction staging area for a Caltrans sidewalk construction project. The staging area is located within the existing Aliso Beach east parking lot on the inland side of Coast Highway and will be secured with a temporary chain link fence. The TUP and CDP will allow a staging area from November 2, 2023, to January 31, 2026, with hiatuses between Memorial Day and Labor Day of each active permit year, during which the site will be vacated. The Commission reviewed the project and the CEQA Notice of Exemption and after deliberation voted unanimously to conditionally approve the project.

19. Aliso Creek Plaza – Shared Parking Plan for Coffee Shop

The Planning Commission considered approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow a reduction from parking space requirements in association with a new coffee shop through a revised shared parking plan. A CUP is required for a reduction in parking space requirements. The coffee shop is permitted by right within the C-N zone. The approval of the shared parking plan will allow the coffee shop to comply with parking requirements. The Commission reviewed the project and the CEQA Notice of Exemption and following deliberation voted unanimously to conditionally approve the project.

20. Code Amendment – Appeal Procedures

At the request of staff, the Planning Commission tabled this item to allow time for the City Attorney to review the proposed Ordinance. This item will be re-noticed prior to Planning Commission review.

21. Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Local Coastal Program Amendment and General Plan Amendment – Inclusionary Housing

The Planning Commission received a progress report from staff concerning the development of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Local Coastal Program Amendment and General Plan Amendment. The ordinance would amend the Laguna Beach Municipal Code to include new provisions related to inclusionary housing. The amendments would also modify the General Plan's Housing Element Policy HE-2.4 related to inclusionary housing. The Commission provided comments and suggested revisions to the draft ordinance.

22. Upcoming Notable Community Events (of which staff is aware)

- Wednesday, October 25: Laguna Beach Parent's Club/LBPD Downtown Halloween Walk at 4:00 p.m. Starting at Main Beach
- Friday, October 27: Spook-tacular Splash & Cinema Event from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Laguna Beach High School/Community Pool
- Tuesday, October 31: Preschool Trick or Treat from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Community and Susi Q Center
- Saturday, November 11: VFW Veteran's Day Celebration at 11:00 a.m. at Monument Point in Heisler Park
- Tuesday, November 14: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Open House from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Community and Susi Q Center
- Friday, December 1: Hospitality Night from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Downtown Laguna Beach

Sean Joyce

Interim City Manager