

The Week That Was^{TW2}

March 11 –March 15, 2024



1. **Laguna Canyon Road – Public Survey**

This week, the Public Works & Utilities Department launched the public survey for the Laguna Canyon Road: Protect and Connect project to gather feedback from a broad spectrum of interested parties. The survey is available at the following link, [Laguna Canyon Road Survey](#). This is the first step in the public engagement process for the project. Ensuring meaningful public engagement throughout this project will be critical to ensure proposed improvements are reflective of community priorities and concerns. The proposed project originates in part from the 2015 Laguna Canyon Task Force Final Report focusing on utility undergrounding, bicycle safety, pedestrian safety, and maintaining the rural characteristics of Laguna Canyon. Additional project details are available on the project website, lagunabeachcity.net/LCR. Any project related questions can be directed to Assistant Director of Public Works, Tom Perez, at tperez@lagunabeachcity.net

2. **Sidewalk Repair on Aster Street**

This week, the Public Works & Utilities Department removed and replaced 2 lifted sidewalk panels along Aster Street. This type of concrete repair has historically been outsourced to a contractor. Roots from a City tree had lifted these sidewalk panels, creating a potential hazard to pedestrians. The work involved saw-cutting and removing the existing concrete panels, setting the wood forms, pouring the concrete in place, and applying a broom finish. Affected residences were notified in advance. The work was performed by Street Maintenance Division staff members Tom Sanchez, Rick Weiers, Jose Torres, and Ray Nieto, and coordinated by Maintenance Supervisor Todd Henry.

3. **HVAC Unit Replacement for 911 Server Room**

This week, the Facility Maintenance Division of the Public Works & Utilities Department coordinated the removal and replacement of a HVAC unit serving the 911 Server Room of the Police Department. The HVAC unit is located on the roof of City Hall and required the use of a crane to remove the defective equipment and install a new unit. The work was coordinated in advance with Police Department staff and performed in a single day to minimize disruption to Police Department operations. The work was coordinated by Maintenance Supervisor Wayne Chintala.

4. **Public Works Maintenance Team Meeting**

On Wednesday, March 13, the Public Works & Utilities Department conducted an “All Hands” meeting at the Corporation Yard with staff from the various maintenance divisions of the department. The meeting included a welcome message from Acting Director of Public Works & Utilities Mark Trestik, operational updates from Deputy Directors Richard Gonzales and Reza Jafari, and a training discussion for field staff focused on “1st Amendment Auditors” led by Police Sergeant Darrel Short.

5. Community Pool Renovation and/or New Pool Construction Slated

On Tuesday, March 12, the City Council reviewed alternatives for a future community pool facility. Options under consideration included joint use of a 50-meter pool planned by the Laguna Beach Unified School District at the existing site across from Laguna Beach High School or construction of a new 25-meter pool at an alternate site that would be built, operated, and maintained by the City. Following considerable public input the City Council deliberated the options and determined to not contribute toward design and construction of the District's approved 50-meter pool and to instead include in the City's Facilities Master Plan (Plan) construction of a 25-meter City-owned and operated community pool at a site to be included. Further, the City Council deemed pursuit of this objective as the highest capital project priority within the Plan.

6. Jeremy Frimond Promoted to Assistant City Manager

I am pleased to announce the promotion of Assistant to the City Manager Jeremy Frimond to the position of Assistant City Manager. Jeremy has served Laguna Beach in a variety of capacities for nearly 19 years. A product of Laguna, he was previously appointed to the City Manager's Office via Ocean Lifeguard (8 years), Marine Protection Officer (5 years), Senior Management Analysts (1 year), Assistant to the City Manager/Special Projects Manager (nearly 2 years). Jeremy earned a Bachelor of Science at UC Santa Barbara and a Master of Public Administration degree from Cal State Long Beach. However, he is most proud of the education he received throughout his 12 years of education in Laguna Public schools.

Jeremy will continue to play an important role contributing to a wide variety of City Council priority policy initiatives, including artist living, affordable housing, solar panel assessment, climate action and adaptation plan, and a plethora of special high-priority assignments that arise regularly.

7. New Recruitments

The recruitment for Director of Community Development is now open and accepting applications. To view the recruitment brochure, please [click here](#). Other employment opportunities include Accounting Technician, and part-time, seasonal Pool Cashier, Pool Lifeguard and Swim Instructor Aide.

8. Southern California Edison (SCE) Utility Pole Replacement

On Monday, March 18, SCE plans to resume work to replace five utility poles in the open space north of Park Avenue between Canyon Acres Drive and Bern Court. The work is expected to take up to two weeks and will be monitored by SCE biologists for construction impacts. In January, unpermitted grading work was stopped to allow SCE to apply for an emergency Coastal Development Permit from the City. After the work is complete, SCE has agreed to obtain a full Coastal Development Permit complete with restoration plans.

9. Mobile Mental Health (BeWell) February Statistics Available Online

The February 2024 report for the City's mobile mental health and substance abuse program is available on the City's website ([click here to access the webpage](#)). The program contacted 89 unique clients in February.

10. Fiber Optic Construction By City Hall

On Friday, March 22, Crown Castle will install a redundant fiber optic cabling system that will service City Hall, along Forest Avenue in front of City Hall. For more information, please contact Michael Pham, Engineering Technician, at 949-497-0360 or mpham@lagunabeachcity.net.

11. City Sponsored Legislation Related to Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units (SB 1055) Withdrawn from the Legislature

On October 24, 2023, the City Council appointed Mayor Pro Tem Rounaghi and Councilmember Orgill to work with staff and state legislators to develop state legislation to incentivize municipalities to approve affordable housing, thereby enabling a return to ministerial approval of 16-foot height limits on attached accessory dwelling units. In partnership with Senator Min, Senate Bill 1055 was introduced in Sacramento in February. However, in light of anticipated opposition, the bill was subsequently withdrawn by Senator Min this week.

12. 2023 Housing Element Annual Progress Report

City Council reviewed and approved the 2023 Housing Element Annual Progress Report (2023 APR) on March 12, 2024. City staff subsequently submitted the 2023 APR to the California Department of Housing and Community Development and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

13. Microgrid Resiliency (Solar Panel Assessment) Available on City's Website

During its Annual Planning Workshop on January 19, 2024, the City Council identified the installation of solar panels on City facilities as a primary objective for staff to focus on in 2024. In accordance with this directive, staff will present the findings of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan's Microgrid Study at the upcoming City Council meeting scheduled for March 26, 2024. The report will encompass conceptual layouts and a detailed analysis of direct purchase cost estimates for four City locations. A copy of the staff report and microgrid study can be accessed on the City's website, specifically on the [agenda page for the March 29, 2024 meeting](#).

14. Open Space Conservation Element Update

Staff from the Community Development Department's Planning Division completed the kick-off meeting with consultants to commence habitat mapping efforts necessary for updating the Open Space Conservation Element. In mid-April, drones are scheduled to fly over open space areas to obtain aerial photography to assist with habitat mapping. The drones will not interfere with bird-nesting or affect wildlife in the area. These efforts are being overseen by Principal Planner Martina Caron.

15. Design Review Board March 14 Meeting Recap

The Design Review Board met on March 14, 2024. Staff from the Community Development Department presenting items at the meeting included Associate Planners Daniel Latham, Garrett Wank, and Kata Kazama; Contract Planner Nick Lagura; Senior Planners Heather Steven and Chris Dominguez; and Planning Manager Amber Dobson served as the staff liaison. Nine applications were noticed; two applications were continued, and one application was tabled. Below is a summary of the six public hearing items considered:

- 271 High Dr – The Board approved a new upper-level addition, landscaping, deck, and spa.
- 613 Catalina St – The Board approved a new upper level addition, landscaping, exterior remodel, and a revocable encroachment permit for a fence within the Goff Street right-of-way.
- 31042 Aliso Circle – The Board approved a new upper-level addition, landscaping, and deck expansion.
- 1478 Glenneyre St – The Board had previously heard the project and had recommended changes. The applicant incorporated those changes, and the Board approved the revised project consisting of an addition, grading, decks and landscaping.
- 1526 Morningside Dr – The Board had previously considered the project and had recommended changes. The applicant modified the project; the Board considered the revisions to the new single-family home on a vacant lot and approved the project with additional conditions to amend the interior and exterior lighting and limit the height of the landscaping.
- 32051 Coast Hwy – The Board had previously the project and had recommended changes. The Board approved the project consisting of demolition of an existing single-family home and construction of a new single-family home, with an added condition that a portion of the roof be moved back two feet to provide view equity for adjacent neighbors.

Sean Joyce

Interim City Manager