



## **Minutes of Workshop Meeting of the Ventura Port District Board of Port Commissioners Held July 8, 2015**

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The Workshop Meeting of the Ventura Board of Port Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Jim Friedman at 11:21AM at the Ventura Port District Office located 1603 Anchors Way Drive, Ventura, CA 93001.

### **Commissioners Present:**

Jim Friedman, Chair  
Everard G. Ashworth, Vice Chair  
Gregory L. Carson  
Bruce E. Smith

### **Commissioners Absent:**

None

### **Port District Staff:**

Oscar Peña, General Manager  
John Higgins, Harbormaster  
Brian Pendleton, Business Operations Manager  
Joe Gonzalez, Facilities Manager  
Gloria Adkins, Accounting Manager  
Jennifer Talt-Lundin, Marketing Manager  
Robin Baer, Property Manager  
Frank Locklear, Marina Manager  
Richard Parsons, Consultant  
Jessica Rauch, Clerk of the Board

### **Legal Counsel:**

Timothy Gosney

### **AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER:** By Chair, Jim Friedman at 11:21AM.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** By Commissioner Ashworth.

**ROLL CALL:** All Commissioners were present.

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**ACTION:** Commissioner Ashworth moved, seconded by Commissioner Carson and carried by a vote of 4-0 to adopt the July 8, 2015 agenda.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of June 24, 2015 regular meeting were considered as follows:

**ACTION:** Commissioner Smith moved, seconded by Commissioner Ashworth and carried by a vote of 4-0 to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2015 regular meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**CLOSED SESSION REPORT:** Mr. Gosney stated that the Board met in closed session; discussed and reviewed only item 2c on the closed session agenda. Staff was given instructions as to how to proceed as appropriate and there was no action taken that is reportable under The Brown Act. After open session, it was announced that the Board would adjourn to closed session to discuss and review the other items on the closed session agenda and reconvene in open session for the closed session report.

**WORKSHOP TOPIC:**

**1) Ventura Harbor Shellfish Production Initiative**

**Recommended Action: Information.**

That the Board of Port Commissioners receive a presentation on the importance to initiate a program for bringing sustainably cultivated shellfish farms to Ventura Harbor and the Ventura Port District's grant application to support the Ventura Shellfish Enterprise.

Vice Chairman, Ev Ashworth has been the leader in creating the Ventura Shellfish Enterprise (VSE), a multi-party collaboration to initiate a program for bringing sustainably cultivated shellfish farms to Ventura Harbor. Vice Chairman Ashworth and his wife Brooke also worked diligently, with VSE and the Ventura Port District to submit a grant application to NOAA through the agency's Sea Grant Program. VSE seeks \$300,000 in Sea Grant funding over a two-year period for the permitting phase of this project. This grant will allow VSE to contract with qualified consultants to develop a permitting strategy and prepare all necessary permit application components, baseline studies and proposed permitting terms and conditions, including necessary mitigation and monitoring, plus the consumer education program.

The Ventura Port District supports the efforts of the VSE to develop sustainably cultivated shellfish farms as a potential of increasing production of domestic shellfish for sustainable food supply independence and is thankful for Vice Chairman Ashworth's efforts in making Ventura Harbor a destination for this project.

The following are the agencies and individuals that have joined together to form the Ventura Shellfish Enterprise and how they will be involved in the process:

Randy Lovell, State Aquaculture Coordinator from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife presented an overview of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's aquaculture initiative and the need for the VSE.

Doug Bush, General Manager and Partner of Cultured Abalone presented an overview of the VSE and the what, where, how, product and value.

Dr. Paul Olin, Aquaculture Specialist at Sea Grant presented an overview of the Sea Grant and a summary of the proposal.

The team from Dudek, Carey Fernandes, David Wickens, Matthew Valerio and Laurie Monarres presented an overview of the permitting paths, an analysis for offshore-state waters shellfish, and key issues that could occur with this project.

Dr. Ralph Imondi from Coastal Marina Biolabs reported on the outreach efforts for this project; the collaborative efforts with the group and coordination with California Department of Public

Health. He also discussed education and outreach activities, including eight workshops and working with the VPD marketing department on social media.

The Commission, staff and the public asked the following questions or made the following comments:

Commissioner Carson

1. Do we have a budget?
  - a. \$300,000 is being asked for and a portion of this funding would go to Dudek, Sea Grant and a law firm. The other agencies are donating their time. This is for a two year period.
2. Once issued parcel permits, is the group run as a non-profit, or do they oversee a for profit enterprise for part of this?
  - a. Ventura Port District will be the holder of the permits and it would be for profit.
3. What are the natural predators of mussels?
  - a. Rock fish, human theft, ducks and bloom toxins.
4. What is the time period for mussel maturity?
  - a. At Prince Edward Island, about 18-24 months. In Ventura area it should be less.

Commissioner Smith

1. This project is for 100, twenty acre parcels, or 2,000 acres, limited to state waters within 3 miles offshore (outer limit); what are the north and south limits of the project from Ventura? Underwater topography? When talking about the Santa Barbara Channel, what is the general area we are referring to?
  - a. Boundaries would be defined by the competitive uses for the space.
  - b. Underwater topography rocky bottom or sandy bottom play an important role.
  - c. Generally 15 miles north and south of Ventura, but it depends on operating cost of the operator.
2. Are we actually issuing underwater leases?
  - a. The Fish and Game Commission would issue leases to the Ventura Port District and the Ventura Port District would then sublease the growing areas.
3. Others besides Ventura Port District can be leaseholders from the State?
  - a. It would not be a monopoly; the District would be granted exclusive use of the parcels that are leased to it.
4. Commissioner Smith also wanted to reiterate that we should inform our elected officials about this project.

Commissioner Friedman

1. Are there any ecological impacts? For example, who is against this?
  - a. Agencies or people competing for the same space.
  - b. Activists that are concerned about marine mammals getting entangled in the equipment.
2. Are these mussels truly organic?
  - a. Yes, they filter algae from the ocean water.
3. Are there any elected representatives that are champions for this? Does it actually get involved with the political process or is this strictly a state agency process all dealt with administratively?
  - a. The joint assembly Resolution passed unanimously in both houses in support of shellfish culture. It is a relatively small industry, so it does not carry with it a whole lot of political capital except in specialized districts. The Chairman of the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Senator McGuire, is based in

Humboldt and is a supporter. The California Shellfish Initiative itself has support, but nothing has been asked of them.

4. Does the State generate revenue through these leases?
  - a. No, not a real revenue generator.

Harbormaster, John Higgins asked if the algae that was spoken of is also demoic acid? The algae is not demoic acid.

Bob Bartosh commented that he understands that Humboldt Bay Port District is a model for this. This is different because assuming Humboldt Bay has its fields within its jurisdiction; that may not be the case for Ventura Port District. He understands that the Port District has the authority to do that, but does the statute extend to law enforcement and to other things the Port District is required to do to get these leases.

Richard Parsons asked if Sea Otters are a concern. No there has not been a problem.

**ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION AT 12:45PM. Commissioner Carson departed prior to Closed Session.**

**RECONVENED IN OPEN SESSION AT 1:20PM.**

**CLOSED SESSION REPORT:** Mr. Gosney stated that the Board met in closed session; discussed and reviewed 1a, 2a, and 2b on the closed session agenda. Staff was given instructions as to how to proceed as appropriate and there was no action taken reportable under The Brown Act.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:25PM.



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Secretary