City Hall Notes

From the desk of
Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing
November 5, 2009

1. **Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Community Meetings.** There were two community meetings last week, one on Tuesday night and another on Wednesday night, regarding the MLPA process for the northern California coast from Alder Creek to the Oregon border. Both meetings had over 60 participants. While most local participants are dissatisfied with the process for designating Marine Protected Areas in our coastal waters, there seems to be a sense of resignation and a consensus that we should work towards defining a "community-based array" in coordination with regional efforts in Humboldt and Del Norte counties. Another MLPA community meeting will be held this Wednesday, November 4th at 6:00 p.m. at Fort Bragg Town Hall.

2. **Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Revenues Decline.** The 2008/09 fiscal year-end total TOT amounted to $1,487,420 which represents a decrease of 4.47% from the prior year. This amount is about $37,600 (2.4%) less than budgeted TOT projections. In FY 2008/09, 1st and 2nd quarter revenues were close to projected amounts, however 3rd quarter (January-March) receipts declined by more than 10.7%, and 4th quarter (April-June) receipts declined by 6.5%. Receipts for the 1st quarter of FY 2009/10 were reported in October and within the next couple of weeks we should be able to tell how much the weak economy affected lodging revenues this summer.

3. **Update on Coastal Trail & Parkland Purchase Transaction.** Staff and attorneys from the City, Georgia-Pacific, State Coastal Conservancy, and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) have been conferring regularly regarding the land use covenants that will be recorded on the deeds for the Coastal Trail & Parkland property to ensure that its future use conforms to the level of clean-up that was performed. The covenants are necessary because certain portions of the property were cleaned up to a standard appropriate for "recreational" uses rather than unrestricted, residential uses. We are fine-tuning the language and the covenants will be recorded on the deeds prior to DTSC's issuance of a completion letter for the clean-up. We still appear to be on track for the property to convey to the City by December 31, 2009 as planned.

4. **Pomo Bluffs Park.** Go take a walk on the new trail extension at Pomo Bluffs Park. It is located in an easement on the bluff in front of the trailer park property and connects to Main Street at the Cliff House Restaurant. It's a beautiful addition to the scenic blufftop park!

5. **New Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) Needed at Police Department.** The Police Department is equipped with a UPS unit that provides a smooth transition from the power grid to an emergency backup generator during a power outage. This is necessary to ensure that computer servers housing sensitive law enforcement data are not subject to data corruption or loss. The UPS unit is a key component of the power system in the building and consequences of failure include potential disruption of both police operations and the City's Emergency Operation Center (EOC). The existing unit has been in operation since the Police Department building opened 14 years ago. While the $23,000 cost for a replacement UPS unit was not identified in the 2009-10 Budget, the Police Department will defer some of the maintenance projects identified in the Building Maintenance & Repair Internal Service Fund in order to purchase the replacement unit.

6. **Energy Performance Contracting.** Councilmember Jere Melo orchestrated a very informative meeting last week with Kelly Fergusson, a representative of Siemens Building Technologies, Inc. Ms. Fergusson explained how "energy performance contracting" can work as a financing mechanism for clean energy projects in the City. Essentially, a performance contracting project involves a capital lease for installation of equipment which is then paid for over time with funds that are recovered due to energy savings. Initially Siemens proposes to prepare a utility data analysis with benchmarking and then to complete a feasibility study. If the City then decides to pursue the project, the financial criteria for proceeding would be defined, a detailed energy audit would be prepared, and a proposal with detailed financials would be prepared and presented to the Council. We will bring more information to the Council regarding the process at the December 14 Council meeting. Ms. Fergusson has been invited to attend that meeting as well.

7. **NOAA Weather Station.** Staff from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently visited Fort Bragg and met with the Director of Public Works to identify a location for NOAA to install, operate and maintain an observing platform to evaluate weather in the north coast area. Dr. Clark King with NOAA proposes to use a small area near the Municipal Laboratory at the Wastewater Treatment Facility to establish the observing platform. District staff evaluated the location and has no problem with what is proposed as it will have no impact on treatment operations.

8. **Veteran's Day Holiday.** City offices will be closed on Wednesday, November 11th for the Veteran's Day holiday.