

**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT**

**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** May 20, 2010  
**To:** Harbor Commission  
**From:** John N. Bridley, Waterfront Director  
**Subject:** **Outdoors Santa Barbara Visitor Center Agreement**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Harbor Commission consider and recommend to Council approval of a five-year Co-Sponsorship Agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Park Service, and the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, for the continued operation of the Outdoors Santa Barbara Visitor Center located on the fourth floor of the Waterfront Center Building.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (A branch of NOAA), National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service have operated the Outdoors Santa Barbara Visitor Center ("Visitor Center") on the fourth floor of the Waterfront Center building since January 1999. The Visitor Center provides information about the Channel Islands National Park, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and the Los Padres National Forest. The 324 square foot interior space and 200 square foot deck on the fourth floor provide outstanding views of the harbor, local mountains, and Channel Islands.

The three Federal agencies (Co-Sponsors) installed amenities including viewing telescopes, educational signage, wall murals, and a ceramic tile depiction of the Chumash legend of a rainbow bridge between the mainland and the Channel Islands. In addition to the exhibits, National Park Service docents staffed the site and provided information about the Channel Islands and Los Padres National Forest and how to access them. In the initial three-year agreement, the Waterfront Department partially subsidized staffing of the Visitor Center in the amount of \$13,700/year. The subsidy was gradually phased out between 2002 and 2007.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Visitor Center agreement expired in January 2007 and the US Forest Service discontinued its involvement in the program. The Santa Barbara Maritime Museum stepped in and began providing and scheduling docents to staff the Visitor Center.

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The basic terms of the proposed agreement are as follows:

**Term:** Five years from the date of Council approval;

**Rent:** N/A;

**Subsidy:** N/A;

**Hours of operation:** 10am-5pm, six days per week;

**Termination clause:** Any party may terminate the agreement upon 60 days written notice.

The Visitor Center stocks reference material including information on hiking, animals, plants, Chumash history, and maps of the islands and the surrounding area. Information is also available on the Harbor and Wharf merchants. A computer is available to search through various web sites and links providing information about the City, its history, waterfront businesses and additional information about the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, the National Park Service and the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum.

Action DEP 5.2g in the Harbor Master Plan (pg 132) states “the following types of uses shall be provided in the Harbor Commercial Area... Consider allowing public use of the third floor cupola of the Naval Reserve Building.” Approximately 18,000 people visited the Outdoors Santa Barbara Visitor Center between July 2008 and March 2010.

All other business terms and conditions are identical to the previous agreement. A copy of the agreement is available for review at the Waterfront Department.

Prepared by: Scott Riedman, Waterfront Business Manager

Attachment: Site Plan