

## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT

### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** September 19, 2019  
**To:** Harbor Commission  
**From:** Brian J. Bosse, Acting Waterfront Director  
**Subject:** Director's Report

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#### COUNCIL ACTIONS

- Council adopted amendments to various Sections of Title 17 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code pertaining to protection of the Santa Barbara Harbor and the issuance of slip and liveaboard permits.
- Council approved the assignment of Lease Agreement No. 25,436 from Mr. Andrew Taylor, d.b.a. Blue Water Hunter, to Jethro Acosta for the 878 square foot retail store located at 117-D Harbor Way.

#### MARITIME TRAGEDY

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Labor Day Monday, the dive vessel *Conception*, home-ported at Sea Landing, burned and sank at Platts Harbor, on the north side of Santa Cruz Island. Thirty-four of 39 people aboard perished in the accident, making it the worst maritime disaster in our region's history.

At this writing, all but one of the deceased has been recovered from the ocean or removed from the burned-out vessel, which lies on the seafloor in about 60 feet of water. As weather permits it will be towed to shore—likely Port Hueneme—where investigators will continue looking into what caused the disaster.

Response to this tragic event began with a frantic 3:30 a.m. Mayday call from the *Conception*. Santa Barbara Harbor Patrol, Ventura Harbor Patrol, Ventura County firefighters, Channel Islands Harbor Patrol, Coast Guard, and Vessel Assist responded to the dive boat. Fully engulfed in flames, however, and burning so violently, firefighters could not get close enough to get foam or water on it. Bravely, the captain of the Vessel Assist boat *Retriever* approached the *Conception* in very shallow water, threw a grappling hook on it, and towed it to deeper water, where firefighters then attempted to knock down the blaze.

Following the event, a dozen-plus local, state, and federal agencies coordinated to identify victims, contact and support grieving families, conduct extensive searches of the accident site, remove remaining bodies from the burned-out craft, provide counseling for first responders, and vigorously investigate the cause of this tragedy. On Friday evening, September 6<sup>th</sup>, a vigil was held at Chase Palm Park, where family, friends,

loved ones, and community members gathered to mourn and remember together. It was a solemn, but beautiful, event.

Staff will continue to update the Commission on this tragedy as it unfolds.

#### **TENTATIVE AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE OCTOBER MEETING**

- Commercial Fisherman Subcommittee Update
- Underground Storage Tank Project Update

Prepared by: Brian J. Bosse, Acting Waterfront Director