



Newport Beach Women's Democratic Club

**Advocating for Democratic Values
in Newport Beach and neighboring communities**

PO Box 11761 | Newport Beach, CA 92658
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NBWDC Governmental Activism Committee Report

By Kathleen Andrews, Committee Chair

Newport Beach City Council Recap - December 10, 2019



[City Council meeting agendas and videos are located here.](#)

Kathy's Commentary

My notes from tonight's city council meeting are below my signature line. The main order of business was to elect the new mayor and mayor pro Tem. Our new mayor is former Mayor Pro Tem Will O'Neill, and he's announced that this year is The Year of the Volunteer.

Oral Reports from City Council on Committee Activities

Councilmember **Herdman** reports that the American Public Works Society gave an award for the Bayside Drive beautification project; he attended the awards ceremony.

Outgoing Mayor **Dixon** reports that December 4th there was a meeting on General Plan Committee and recommending a committee to develop a housing element. More than 400 cities in the state have consternation, but specifically Newport Beach is required to come up with approximately 5,000 low-income housing units, and that is stymying a General Plan update, and adding Environmental Justice and Transportation Circulation chapters in the General Plan. The units will be a challenge and will transform the city. Will need to review the plan for developing the General Plan update. Will be two more General Plan Workshops December 11th and 12th. She encourages people to attend.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead*



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Public Comments on Consent Calendar:

Jim Moser comments that council has noticed an error in the Paramedic Subscription program that businesses can pay into. He suggests that a study session be scheduled, because the major error has not been brought to the public's attention. Mayor calls the fire chief up to comment. Proposal was that the number of people employed by the business be reduced to 150, to be able to use the subscription program. Error had to do with where/to whom the injury occurred (Jim, the mayor, and the fire chief all spoke fast). Council moved on. Entire docket on the consent calendar passes 7 to 0.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items.

Cory Ferguson, a captain for JSX, who has been flying out of John Wayne Airport for decades. JSX is one of the newest operators at the airport, and has one of the quietest planes. Showed two graphs of noise signatures/footprints of the most-used aircraft has 38x versus the noise of the new Embraer aircraft during takeoff.

Two residents comment on the development in front of the City Council, on Ocean Boulevard on China Cove. Developer has offered \$50,000 to the city. Was approved by the Planning Commission, citizens complained, on appeal with Coastal Commission. Council hadn't asked to have the plan raised for their review, so now they have no opportunity to review. Dixon asked city staff to explain the \$50,000: the developer offered the money to the city to help with offsetting changes that the city would need to make. The offer had been made in October of this year, long after the Coastal Commission and Planning Commission had made decisions. Now that it's under Coastal Commission review, City has no more input.

Council Re-Organization:

Mayor Pro-Tem **O'Neill**: Time to recognize and thank outgoing Mayor Dixon for her service. She received a plaque on behalf of Supervisor Michelle Steele, by a Mr. Whittaker, for her work on the airport, homeless, and so forth. Dixon comments on how good a friend Steele is for the City of Newport Beach.

O'Neill listed many accomplishments the city made during her tenure (2019), and presented her with a mounted gavel.



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Outgoing Mayor **Dixon's** remarks: thanking the soon-to-be-mayor O'Neill, and that her main goal was to re-instill collegiality among the council, and that was achieved. Several ad Hoc committees were started this year to address pressing community needs. Re-structured Aviation Committee, balanced city budget, AAA credit rating, aggressive pay-down of pension deficit, saving the city \$115 million dollars in interest payments; rigorous fiscal responsibility; sculpture garden doing well; continual improvement in infrastructure; thanked city's staff to go above and beyond expectations; added one police officer; crime has been reduced, she's proud of their resourcefulness in reducing cold cases; improvements to parks and roadways also improve public safety; thank city manager Grace for leading her staff with graceful rigor.

Election of Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem:

Mayoral Nominations: **Duffield** nominates Will O'Neill, then nominations for mayor were closed, and there was no public discussion, and voting was unanimous, then lots of cheering from fans who were in the audience.

Nominations for Mayor Pro Tem: Dixon nominates Councilmember **Avery**, then nominations were closed, and voting was unanimous.

Seating on the dais was changed based on councilmember seniority. City Council then posed for photo in front of flags and returned to their new seating arrangement.

O'Neill then thanked the city and his colleagues, and his family. His overarching goals for the coming year: first getting the fundamentals right: funding for fire station, training of staff. Pavement replacement, renewed emphasis on parks and a renewed relationship with schools, funding pensions, addressing housing dictates from the state — council cohesion, and addressing homelessness, be vigilant of unfounded mandates. Recognizes volunteers at Oasis Senior Center who call homebound seniors. His year will be The Year of the Volunteer, recognizing how the city runs on good intentions.

O'Neill recognizes a 97-year old ukulele player, **Tony Cappa**, who led the Ukulele Singers and Strummers at Oasis, e.g. performing at the Oasis talent show, for his years of service to the City and the Oasis Sr. Center. Mr. Cappa says the group is the oldest organized ukulele group in the United States. They are there every Monday from 1 to 2:30, and they serve lunch.

Adjournment by Councilmember **Brenner** in memory of long-time Newport Beach resident Kay Sandland.