

# Hueneme Pilot

## The Hometown Newspaper for Channel Islands Harbor the Beach Communities and Port Hueneme

### ***Commission rejects launch ramp plan***

By Loran Lewis  
Hueneme Pilot

Opponents of a Channel Islands Harbor Department plan to rehabilitate the launch ramp next to Fisherman's Wharf off Victoria Avenue are celebrating a decision by the California Coastal Commission not to approve the proposal at a Dec. 9 meeting in San Francisco.

"The harbor belongs to the people," Vickie Finan, president of the local Beacon Foundation, said. "It doesn't belong to the County of Ventura; it doesn't belong to developers. This belongs to the people."

The Beacon Foundation and others were concerned with the department's plan that would reconfigure the launch ramp but also eliminate or move about 245 trees and reduce parking spaces in the 11-acre property. Finan spoke before the commission at its hearing.

The commission, in a 10-0 vote with two abstentions, voted to reject a Notice of Impending Development for the property near Victoria and Channel Islands Boulevard. Instead, commissioners suggested the plan would require the filing of a more detailed Public Works Project application.

In her comments to the commission, county Harbor Department director Lynn Krieger said: "The point today is we have a launch ramp that badly needs replacing. We believe a NOID is appropriate because it is replacing a public facility.

Krieger said the plans for reconstructing the ramp began in 2002.

In addition to reconstructing the ramp, the plan called for improving restroom facilities and upgrading the pedestrian walkway. The proposal also eliminated between 35 and 50 parking spaces, reducing green space, eliminating the Victoria Avenue entrance and removing the trees.

Opponents saw the proposal as an attempt to renovate the property for a new development in the current Fisherman Wharf. Waterfront-Channel Islands Harbor LLC has leased the Wharf property for the mixed-use development of 800 housing units and commercial retail shops and restaurants.

Finan and others who wrote and spoke to the commission, argued that the proposal was meant to accommodate the development more than simply

renovate the launch ramp. Those arguments apparently persuaded the commission.

“This area does need to be reconditioned,” said Sara Wan, a public member of the commission from Malibu. “But unfortunately, this proposal does a lot more than it purports to do. It really requires a denial (of the NOID) and probably a PWP amendment.”

Wan said the elimination of the Victoria entrance would make it more difficult for the public to use the northern section of the lot. She also questioned the reduction of parking spaces, reduction of grassy area and the loss of the trees.

“There must be another vision, another plan down the road,” Commissioner Patrick Kruer of LaJolla said. “That is a concern to me. I have a concern about closing an access and removing the trees.”

Central Coast Commissioner Mark Stone of Santa Cruz added: “It’s changing so much ... it shows there is a lot more going on here. The removal of the trees was never explained.”

Finan said the county would still have the option of repairing the launch ramp at its existing location or filing another plan.

“At least there is one level of government in the state of California that, if given the right information, will do the right thing,” Finan said. “The harbor is the largest asset of the county and so much is being mothballed for the benefit of others and not the county.”

She added, “The county would like to use the quickest process possible to eliminate the protections (for the public). That didn’t happen because the Coastal Commission was paying attention and saw that this was taking the upper portion of the parking lot, and this was an application that would have allowed it to be used for some other purpose.”