



600 S.E. BAY BOULEVARD NEWPORT, OREGON 97365 PHONE (541) 265-7758 FAX (541) 265-4235 www.portofnewport.com

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CONTACT: Paula Miranda
(541) 265-7758

Port Commission talks log yard permit and aquarium expansion

(NEWPORT, OR) – Prompted to either ask for an extension to the building permit for a log yard at the International Terminal or allow the permit to expire, the Port of Newport Commission voted unanimously to authorize General Manager Paula Miranda to seek the six-month extension.

The project, which dates back to 2015 and was never constructed, was the subject of extensive conversation at the Port’s regular meeting in September. City of Newport officials had explained at the time that state building codes require that work commence by a certain date or the permit be terminated. Miranda used the past month to discuss the issue with various stakeholders, including some state legislators and others with a keen interest in the International Terminal. She updated the Port Commission on her efforts at Tuesday’s monthly meeting.

“You never know what’s going to happen in six months,” the general manager explained. “I think the economics of a log yard aren’t quite there but we are making good headway with communications. I don’t want to give the idea that we are not open for business. Another 180 days will put us in a position that we’ll know better which way we are going,” Miranda said. The general manager indicated she has been meeting with a variety of individuals on possible business opportunities for the International Terminal.

In previous correspondence, the city had indicated that the Port would need to provide specifics about the plan in order to obtain the extension. Without an actual project to move on, the Port will have to outline its situation for city building officials.

“We can only be honest and say we don’t have a project but we are pursuing businesses and we’d like to keep it open for another 180 days and see what happens. If at the end of that time we don’t have anything on the horizon, then we terminate the permit, get our SDCs back and move forward with whatever opportunities may come up,” she noted.

SDCs, or system development charges, are monies paid to the city as part of the building permit. If the project does not move forward, the Port will receive a refund of its SDCs.

After some discussion, Commissioner Jim Burke made the motion to “have staff work with the city on a possible extension of the building permit for another 180 days and should no project become feasible for the use of this permit during that period, then staff would terminate the permit and request the refund of SDCs.” The motion received unanimous approval.



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Port Commissioners also received an update from Oregon Coast Aquarium CEO Carrie Lewis on the upcoming renovation project at the 27-year-old Aquarium.

Lewis provided a slide presentation outlining the different phases of the project and the improvements that will be made to ticketing areas, entry points, landscaping, amphitheater and more.

Since the Aquarium is partially located on Port property, the Commission authorized General Manager Miranda to draft and submit a letter providing consent to the Aquarium as they move forward with the renovation project.

The annual calendar, goal setting, and the general manager's six-month review were also scheduled at Tuesday's meeting. To listen to the full audio of the meeting, visit portofnewport.com and click on "commission meetings."

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