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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Port Dock 7 slated for inspection by engineers

A thorough inspection by an outside engineering team is in the works for Port Dock 7 following a unanimous vote by Port of Newport Commission at its monthly meeting on Tuesday.

After sustaining considerable damage and the loss of roughly 66 feet of dock last winter, Port Dock 7 has been the subject of continued discussion by Port staff and commissioners. An expert appraisal of the degradation of the dock is necessary for multiple reasons, according to staff.

"This dock has been around since the 1960s and it's not in the best shape. If we go out for (grant) funds and we show the economic impact the fishing fleet has on this community, and if we can show the dock is falling apart, that will help our case to expedite this," Port General Manager Paula Miranda said, referring to dock reconstruction.

Port Commissioners unanimously approved a proposal from engineering firm HDR Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$15,000 for the dock assessment.

"We should be able to get a really good idea of what the lifespan left in it is and what the numbers look like," said Aaron Bretz, director of operations. Engineers are expected to take winter wind conditions, the sizes of moored boats, and other variables into consideration.

"We are hoping this report will give us the opportunity in the interim to fix those areas that are urgent so we can continue using the dock, but we really don't know," Bretz noted.

The structural assessment is expected to be complete by the end of October.

Commissioners approved a grading contract for nine acres of property at the International Terminal and discussed several other matters without taking action, including the future of 343 Bay Boulevard, and a proposed expo building in South Beach.

Before the meeting's close, Miranda and each of the Port Commissioners paid tribute to Sara Skamser, a former Port Commissioner and business owner who passed away earlier this month. Upon her arrival in Newport, Skamser quickly became a mentor to Miranda.

"She really held my hand to show me around, telling me everything about the fishing business, but also about the Port. She did her job as a Port Commissioner with no bias," the manager remarked.

Commissioner Jeff Lackey paid tribute to Skamser, saying she "was the kind of person who saw a need or an opportunity and she went after it" and said she was known in the fishing community from California to Alaska.

President Jim Burke referenced their long talks and the encouragement she offered when an opening became available on the Port Commission. "There's a little bit of a void over there by the terminal," he said, referencing the location of Skamser's business, Foulweather Trawl.

Commissioner Kelley Retherford said Skamser played an integral role in her family and in her business from the very beginning. "She was so big in such a small place as Newport. She was a mentor to a lot of us and she was all you would ever want in a friend."

Commissioner Gil Sylvia said he worked with Skamser on a number of projects over the years and said she embodied the friendly, outgoing, intelligent, and dedicated spirit of the community. "She will be sorely missed as a mentor and friend and as such a unique personality," he said.

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Finally, Commissioner Walter Chuck highlighted Skamser's impact on the fishing industry, which was in part due to her inventive nature and her commitment to sustainability.

"I think of any gift she gave the community, it was working on those innovations in the gear with the fishermen and with ODFW to make the industry sustainable and bring it to the forefront of innovation and technology. The impact that has had on the fishing industry and to our community is great. Those contributions can't be stated loud enough."

Skamser's life and contributions will be celebrated on Nov. 6 at Foulweather Trawl at a gathering hosted by the Newport Fishermen's Wives.

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