



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

Engineers take a closer look at two Port assets

Two Port assets on opposite sides of Yaquina Bay, both experiencing structural problems, were discussed by commissioners at the Port of Newport's February meeting.

The seawall that supports the Rogue Brewery has been a source of interest at the port, including most recently a 2018 structural evaluation recommended further investigation. The 540-foot seawall is more than 40 years old and, out of an abundance of caution, has led Port officials in recent years to discourage the brewery from placing additional heavy equipment near the water side of the building.

"There have been concerns that the seawall might not be in the best shape to support some uses in the building," General Manager Paula Miranda explained.

As a result, Miranda and her staff brought forward a recommendation to hire PBS Engineering to perform a more in-depth evaluation to assess the seawall's stability and outline repair alternatives.

At a price tag of \$58,500, the company will observe and document the condition of the deadman anchor used to secure the seawall, observe and document the condition of the seawall and the surrounding soils, and ultimately develop a number of options for the port to consider. A portion of the cost is offset by a \$12,900 grant obtained from the Lincoln County Community and Economic Development Fund.

"I was glad to see this on the agenda," said Commissioner Jeff Lackey. "Rogue is an important tenant and is important to the community," he noted.

On the other side of the harbor, port officials discussed the structure at 343 SW Bay Boulevard that housed a tenant with a charter fishing operation.

Recent king tides revealed that the pilings the building rested upon are failing at a dangerous rate and the structure had begun leaning toward a neighboring building.

In a written report, Director of Operations Aaron Bretz explained that an independent engineer was brought in to examine the structure and "found that almost 100% of the timber piling were one-inch shells, several had minimal bearing, and several had no bearing with signs of failure. The concrete footings that support the pilings were found to be undermined and have showed signs of settlement."

City of Newport building inspectors also examined the property and declared it unsafe to occupy, ordering it demolished or repaired by March 5. The port is hoping to extend that date in order to address the issues.

"The only way to fix the issue is to fix the pilings," Miranda reported to the commission. "As you know, it takes a year to get a permit from the federal government to do anything like that. Secondly, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix the issue."

No action was taken at the meeting, but port officials will continue to meet to determine next steps. Port commissioners also met in closed session to discuss the issue as it related to negotiations with the tenant, who had the responsibility for maintaining the pilings according to the signed lease.

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