



Agenda Item 9F

Approvals:

City Manager WJ

Dept. Head SW

Attorney _____

Finance JP

AGENDA REPORT

SAN CLEMENTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting Date: July 20, 2021

Department: Beaches, Parks & Recreation
Prepared By: Samantha Wylie, Beaches, Parks & Recreation Director

Subject: *CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING NIGHT SURFING AT SAN CLEMENTE PIER*

Fiscal Impact: Yes, installation of lights would be \$15,000, plus the ongoing costs of energy use.

Summary: Staff recommends that Council provide direction on establishing the infrastructure for night surfing at the pier.

Background: At its November 17, 2020 meeting, Council requested staff provide information on the possibility of allowing night surfing on the north side of the Pier.

Discussion: The following areas should be reviewed through the consideration of allowing for this type of activity:

1. Risk and safety impacts: Like daytime surfing, night surfing would likely be covered under recreational immunity if an incident were to occur. However, it is unclear on the ability to respond adequately to a medical emergency if an incident occurs and the additional risk associated with lifeguard rescues during nighttime conditions. As a principal theory of beach safety, Marine Safety regularly promotes swimming near a lifeguard when visiting the beach, and, likely, the allowance of night surfing would not support this. Surfing at night can be dangerous to the surfer as visibility is significantly reduced, often losing awareness of nearby surroundings and markers on the shore.
2. Installation costs: It is estimated that lights, installed from the northwest side of Fisherman's Restaurant to the east side of the pier restrooms, would cost \$15,000.
3. Impact on ocean life: Marine life is typically attracted to light at the water's surface. Recent research has demonstrated that light from coastal cities has affected habitats on the seafloor by disrupting the natural biological cycles of marine life, effectively reducing the regulatory cycles that trigger sleep, food, and protection from predators. Additionally, large marine predators, like sharks, tend to hunt at night.
4. Dark Skies: The General Plan Natural Resources Element includes a Dark Skies section with the stated goal to minimize light trespass and pollution from buildings, facilities, and developed areas to preserve dark nighttime skies. Light trespass is defined as light that "spills" from its source to areas where it is

unwanted or unnecessary and is typically caused by poorly shielded or directed lights or lights with too much power for the intended use. The introduction to the Dark Skies section notes that the City "intends to reduce the level of light pollution from 2013 levels, maintain dark skies and explore opportunities to address light trespass."

5. Potential Coastal Commission approvals required: Given that the installation of lights would be permanent, staff believes a coastal development permit would be required.

Recommended

Action: STAFF RECOMMENDS THAT the City Council provide direction on establishing infrastructure and policies for night surfing at the pier.

Attachments: None

Notification: None