



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Andrea K. Lueker, Harbor Manager

DATE: April 28, 2020

SUBJECT: **Consideration of a Fishermen's Market Pilot Program**

Recommendation

Recommendation: District Staff recommends the Board of Commissioners review the proposal to allow a Pilot Program for a Fishermen's Market on Harford Pier.

Motion: Move approval of District Staff's recommendation.

District Major Objective/Goal

Objective #3 – Keep Harford Pier Open and Optimize Use

Policy Implications

Port San Luis Harbor District – Port Master Plan

Fiscal Implications / Budget Status

To be determined.

Alternatives Considered

The following actions were considered, but are not recommended at this time:

- Do not engage in a pilot program for a Fishermen's Market.

Background

Over the past several years the idea of a Fishermen's Market on Harford Pier has been discussed. The concept would be to allow Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen with an additional venue for them to sell their product directly to the public. The District currently has a resolution (No. 98-05) that allows a Commercial Fisherman to sell their product to the ultimate consumer but only off their boat while secured to the Harford Pier, so long as such activity does not disrupt other lessees and licensees. While we have had commercial fishermen engage in this activity, it is especially difficult at Port San Luis as the distance between the vessel and the pier is typically far and prevents the public and the Commercial Fisherman an easy way to conduct a transaction. In other ports up and down the coast, selling fish from your vessel is typically done with the vessel in a slip or secured to a much lower pier/dock.

Discussion

District staff has fielded several requests from Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen for a Fishermen's Market, where they can sell their product directly to the public. Fishermen's Markets are popular in a number of ports and add value in multiple ways to both the commercial fishing community as well as the public and are complimentary to more traditional seafood supply chains and consumer outlets. Specifically, a Fishermen's Market will:

1. Provide a regionally unique venue for the public to access a diversity of seafood harvested by Central Coast fishermen at good prices from a trustworthy and transparent source (the purchaser knows exactly where their seafood is coming from).
2. Provide an opportunity to educate the public about fisheries and cooking with seafood and for the public to interact with members of our local fishing community.
3. Provide members of our fishing community an opportunity to access an alternative market to ensure the best value and cost.
4. Provide members of our fishing community the ability to build a brand around their business.

The concept, currently, is to begin with a very simple format and procedures. Depending on the success of the pilot program, there may be interest in expansion; a more permanent market facility and/or an alternate location. In addition, this operation in other ports serves as a cooperative offering to existing fish markets through added diversity of product, meeting the actual fishermen, as well as an existing fish market providing services that the Fishermen's Market does not offer (such as filleting, cleaning, etc.). Finally, a Fishermen's Market will likely be operated on a limited hour/day basis vs the consistent operating hours of a Fish Market such as Olde Port Fish and Seafood or the former BJ's Fish Market.

District staff has entered discussions with the San Luis Obispo County Health Department and they have provided the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health, Fishermen's Market Guidelines, March 2018 (Attachment 1). They have also reviewed the concept plan as provided in this staff report and County Health believes the plan fits well within the guidelines.

The following provides a snapshot of the Fishermen's Market Pilot Program.

Location: Vacated Olde Port Fish and Seafood Company building.

Operations: A space (dimensions to be determined) inside the building will be provided to each participating fisherman. Each fisherman will bring in and sell their own caught product on a booth/table or from a tote. Each space will include the name of the fisherman, name of the vessel, city, state and zip code as well as the acceptable market name of the fish sold, all legible and clearly visible to patrons. Each participating fisherman will operate pursuant to the Guidelines for Fishermen's Market (Attachment 1).

Permit(s): Port San Luis Harbor District will apply for the required permit, through San Luis Obispo County Health Department. Each participating fisherman will be required to obtain a Commercial Fisherman Retail Business License (State Department of Fish and Wildlife), and other licenses, etc.

Procedures: District staff will work with interested Commercial Fishermen to develop specific procedures for booth/table space, fee, hours/days of operation, etc.

Conclusion

The Harbor District is supportive of the Commercial Fishing Industry and has received several requests over the years for some type of Fishermen's Market, where the Commercial Fishermen sells his/her own product. With the opportunity for the temporary use of a building on Harford Pier, District Staff is recommending moving forward with this pilot project.

Attachment(s): 1. California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health Fisherman's Market Guidelines