

# Daily Pilot

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024 // dailypilot.com



Photos by Eric Licas

**HUNTINGTON BEACH** residents marched from the Main Street Branch Library to the pier on Friday in protest of a proposal to privatize the city's libraries and institute a children's book review board. The latter became law Tuesday with a 4-3 vote led by the City Council conservative majority.

## Children's book review board stamped official

Formation of decision-making body to examine material at libraries receives final approval in a 4-3 vote by the Huntington Beach City Council.

BY MATT SZABO

Huntington Beach is moving forward with its parent/guardian children's book review board after it received another round of approval at Tuesday night's City Council meeting.

The vote was the same as the initial vote two weeks prior, when the board item was introduced. Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark, Mayor Pro Tem Pat Burns, and council members Casey McKeon and Tony Strickland voted in favor, with council members Dan Kalmick, Natalie Moser and Rhonda Bolton voting against.

Now finalized, Ordinance No. 4318 will add Chapter 2.66 to the city's municipal code, relating to the "Community-Parent Guardian Review Board for Review of Procurement of Children's Library Material."

Several in the crowd, holding black and white signs with the same word, yelled out "Shame!" after the final vote was taken Tuesday night.

"You're disrupting the meeting," Van Der Mark said, before calling for a five-minute recess.

Public comments were less numerous than the previous

See [Review](#), page A2



**ERIC SILKENSON**, left, applauds people protesting City Council moves regarding the library system in Huntington Beach.

## Community services highlighted in Laguna

Officials answered questions Tuesday during the State of the City luncheon at the Montage Laguna Beach.

BY ANDREW TURNER

Laguna Beach city officials are looking forward to continued progress on some priority projects, including expanded programming and enhanced public safety capabilities in South Laguna.

An update on the status of the Laguna Beach Community and Recreation Center was a topic of discussion at the State of the City luncheon at the Montage Laguna Beach on Tuesday.

Acquired from the Diocese of Orange for \$23 million in December 2022, the 6.5-acre property, now home to the center, was formerly the St. Catherine of Siena school site. It has since morphed into a community-serving facility, equipped to handle a variety of art classes and athletic activities. The transformation has included the addition of temporary skate ramps.

"The acquisition of this property has afforded us the opportunity to respond more quickly to safety-related issues in South Laguna," Mayor Sue Kempf said in a video played at the event. "We have added both police and marine safety substations to the facility, and soon we'll have a fully equipped emergency operations center."

Kempf's video presentation also made reference to several



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**POLICE CHIEF** Jeff Calvert, Fire Chief Niko King, Marine Safety Capt. Kai Bond, Public Works Director Mark McAvoy, acting City Manager Gavin Curran and Mayor Sue Kempf, from left, answer questions during the Laguna Beach State of the City luncheon, which was held at the Montage on Tuesday.

statistics regarding city departments. Marine safety personnel executed more than 2,300 rescues in South Laguna last year. The city also kick-started a mobile mental health program with Be Well OC, averaging over 400 community contacts per month.

After an in-house ambulance service was started in 2022, the fire department reported an average emergency response time of seven minutes by its ambu-

lances in 2023. Laguna Local, a free on-demand transit service, had 63,000 boardings in its first year.

During her brief remarks following the video, Kempf said Laguna Beach continues to work toward filling the positions of city manager and community development director permanently. She called Assistant City Manager Gavin Curran, who is currently serving as acting city manager, the "natural choice" to

lead the city in the interim.

Public Works Director Mark McAvoy was popular among a panel of city officials, as he was called upon to respond to questions about a number of projects in town. They included queries about the ever-present construction along Coast Highway and Laguna Canyon Road.

"The Caltrans project is wrapping up soon," McAvoy said re-

See [Laguna](#), page A2

## 2 titles become Newport test case

Library director's decision to keep a pair of controversial kids' books on the shelves faces appeal on April 15.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Under a recently instituted practice, the Newport Beach Board of Library trustees is poised to hear public appeals this month on two children's books — "Melissa," by Alex Gino, and "Prince & Knight," by Daniel Haack.

Board members will deliberate on whether or not to uphold a decision made by the city's library director after community members requested an evaluation of both books in September. As part of a collection development policy, community members are able to request evaluation of resources if they have concerns about certain titles. That request then goes to library staff before it makes its way to the desk of the city's library services director, Melissa Hartson.

"With that, the existing development policy states that any unresolved concerns after receiving the director's decision can then be brought before the board for a final decision. Patrons did inquire with the board about how this stage of the process within our policy works, and the board for-

See [Case](#), page A2

## District asks for waiver of state rule

Newport-Mesa officials say they don't want to lease, sell unused parcel to highest bidder if a better use is possible.

BY SARA CARDINE

Those who sell property are usually looking for the highest possible offer, but Newport-Mesa Unified School District officials considering what to do with 11.36 acres of costaly zoned land in Newport Beach are taking a different course.

Trustees on Tuesday approved seeking a waiver from the state that would exempt them from portions of California Education Code that require public school districts to accept the highest bid when leasing or selling a piece of surplus property.

The move comes after a NMUSD-convened advisory group, composed of a cross-section of stakeholder representatives, held a series of public hearings beginning in November to prioritize potential uses for the site.

Located at the western terminus of Costa Mesa's 16th Street,

See [Waiver](#), page A3

## ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



James Carbone

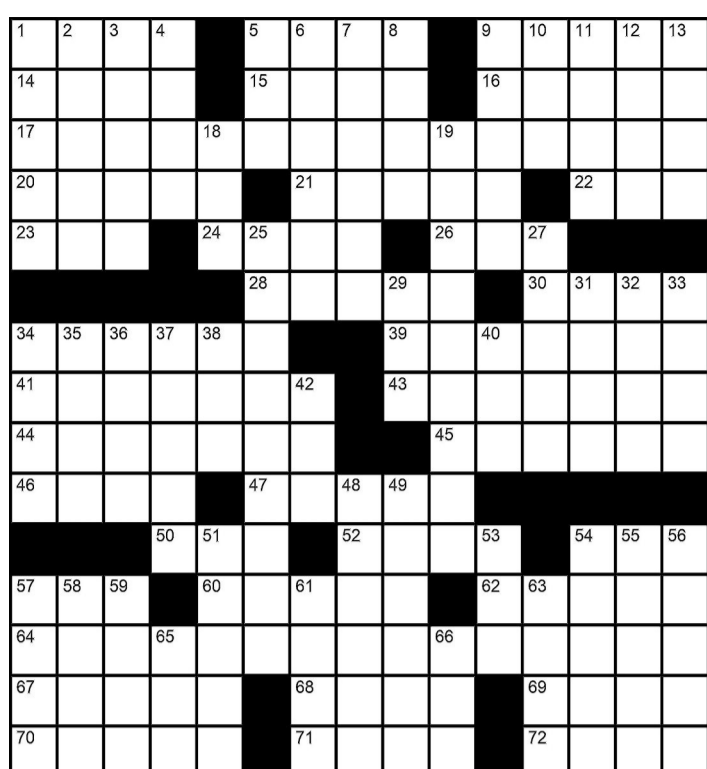
**COSTA MESA BOYS' VOLLEYBALL HEADING TO PLAYOFFS WITH WIN OVER ESTANCIA** PAGE A5



**THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE**

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

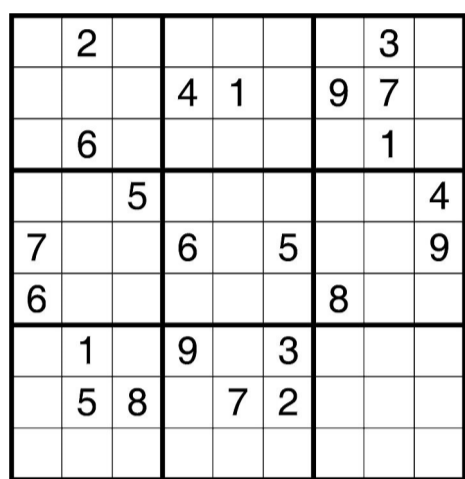
- ACROSS**  
 1 Storytelling poet  
 5 Use a swizzle stick  
 9 Yogurt-based dip  
 14 Water, in Spanish  
 15 Opposite of coarse  
 16 High hairstyles  
 17 Cozy nighttime footwear: 2 wds.  
 20 South American range  
 21 Ecological region  
 22 Aardvark's prey  
 23 Pig's home  
 24 Pre-owned  
 26 "Just a \_!"  
 28 Special surprise  
 30 Actress Wilson  
 34 Singer Yearwood  
 39 Indonesian island  
 41 Pitcher's opponents  
 43 Nonprofessional  
 44 Some magazine ads  
 45 Car radio convenience  
 46 Scottish isle  
 47 Swing or samba  
 50 Educational org.  
 52 Alero maker, for short  
 54 Postgraduate degree: Abbr.  
 57 Owns  
 60 Answer to "Who's that?": 2 wds.  
 62 Theater seater  
 64 Valuable Scrabble square: 3 wds.  
 67 Earn  
 68 Soprano's solo  
 69 "No ifs, \_ , or buts"  
 70 Endures  
 71 Chest muscles, for short  
 72 Snafu
- DOWN**



**SUDOKU**

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk).



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A5.

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Rum-soaked cakes     | (privileged info)            |
| 2 Actor's rep          | 8 Move, in real-estate lingo |
| 3 Reddish-complexioned | 9 Indian money               |
| 4 Take a risk          | 10 Tablet program            |
| 5 NorCal airport       | 11 Notion                    |
| 6 Carpentry wood       | 12 Of two minds              |
| 7 _ story              | 13 Helper: Abbr.             |
|                        | 18 The Buckeyes'             |
- Tribune Media Services



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**AN 11.36-ACRE** parcel of land near the ecologically rich Randall Preserve has been owned by Newport-Mesa Unified School District for decades but never used.

**WAIVER**

Continued from page A1

the parcel is adjacent to the 384-acre former Banning Ranch oil field (renamed Randall Preserve), recently acquired through a \$97-million conservation effort by the nonprofit Coastal Corridor Alliance.

Conservationists and community members urged members of the Banning Ranch Surplus Land Committee to advise that Newport-Mesa Unified officials retain the property as open space, while others favored creating an outdoor classroom where students could benefit from the proximity of Randall Preserve.

Wendy Leece, a former NMUSD trustee who served from 1993 to 2002, spoke on behalf of both options during Tuesday's board meeting.

"I challenge you to take this process seriously. Because it's an opportunity," she told board members. "It isn't just 11 acres of dirt — there are owls out there, the burrowing owls, and there are rules regarding the habitat that surround the burrowing owl. I encourage you to think outside the box and think of an outdoor classroom on the westside."

Despite the predomi-

nance of that viewpoint, members of the advisory committee identified a ground lease with a state waiver as the best possible use for the site, followed by keeping it as undeveloped open space and then selling off the land.

Committee chair Adam Ereth — who owns a Costa Mesa-based environmental consulting business and chairs that city's planning commission — explained the group's preference was to give the school district the widest spectrum of options.

"There are some very strong feelings around wanting to retain this as open space. And although that may be true, and I think a lot of people do believe in that, the fact does remain that there are other options that you can pursue," Ereth said Tuesday. "We, collectively on this board, wanted to leave that to you to decide, not just us."

District legal consultant Stephen McLoughlin assured trustees seeking a waiver from the state would not obligate NMUSD to take any particular course of action but would, instead, allow officials to issue requests for proposals meeting any parameters they wanted to establish.

"When you do these RFPs, you get people from

- sch.  
 19 "No idea": 2 wds.  
 25 Day 1 on the job: 2 wds.  
 27 Warehouse box  
 29 Sly \_ fox  
 31 Beehive State people  
 32 Accurate  
 33 Male deer  
 34 The one here  
 35 Hockey venue  
 36 "The \_Bitsy Spider"  
 37 Very expensive  
 38 That lady  
 40 Do damage to  
 42 Org. with number IDs  
 48 "That's enough!": 2 wds.  
 49 Priest  
 51 Leans  
 53 Fishy, in slang  
 54 Landline device  
 55 Cattle groups  
 56 Wedding wear  
 57 Web code: Abbr.  
 58 Field of study  
 59 Knights' titles  
 61 Trade  
 63 Dishonest scheme  
 65 Peach center  
 66 "\_ Boot" (1981 film)

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**THU, APR 4 KINGSTON TRIO**      **FRI, APR 5 ULI JON ROTH**      **MON, APR 8 GILBERT O'SULLIVAN**      **WED, APR 10 JOAN OSBORNE**

- 4/4 THE KINGSTON TRIO  
 4/5 ULI JON ROTH  
 - INTERSTELLAR SKY GUITAR TOUR  
 4/6 RONSTADT REVIVAL  
 (LINDA RONSTADT TRIBUTE)  
 4/7 CINDERELLA'S TOM KEIFER  
 4/8 GILBERT O'SULLIVAN  
 4/10 JOAN OSBORNE ACOUSTIC TRIO  
 4/12 ROGER CLYNE & THE PEACEMAKERS  
 4/13 TINSLEY ELLIS  
 4/14 THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS  
 4/18 SPONGE  
 4/19 RICHIE FURAY  
 4/20 GEOFF TATE  
 4/21 VONDA SHEPARD / JACK TEMPCHIN  
 4/25 ISRAEL VIBRATION & ROOTS RADICS  
 FIVE FOR FIGHTING  
 WITH STRING QUARTET  
 4/27 KIDS OF CHARLEMAGNE (STEELY DAN TRIBUTE)  
 4/28 BOB ANDERSON (FRANK SINATRA TRIBUTE)  
 5/3 OZZY vs AC/DC  
 5/4 STEVE TYRELL  
 5/5 OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS  
 5/7 BLUES TRAVELER  
 5/8 JUDY COLLINS  
 5/9 CALIFORNIA GUITAR TRIO  
 5/10 TOMMY TUTONE (FULL BAND) / WHEN IN ROME  
 5/11 PAT BOONE  
 5/15 MR BIG - THE BIG FINISH TOUR  
 5/17 JOHN CRUZ  
 5/18 VENICE  
 5/19 THE LETTERMEN  
 5/22 THE WAILERS  
 5/24 DSB (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)  
 5/26 BLACKHAWK  
 5/31 YACHTY BY NATURE  
 6/1 STEELHEART



**FRI, APR 12 ROGER CLYNE**      **SAT, APR 13 TINSLEY ELLIS**      **THU, APR 18 SPONGE**      **SAT, APR 20 GEOFF TATE**

- 6/6 HOWIE DAY  
 6/7 ROBERT JON & THE WRECK  
 6/8 THE ENGLISH BEAT  
 6/9 GARY HOEY  
 6/14 AMBROSIA  
 6/15 CHEST FEVER (THE BAND TRIBUTE)  
 6/16 ELVIN BISHOP BIG FUN TRIO  
 6/21 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)  
 6/22 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)  
 6/29 SKELETON CREW  
 (GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE)  
 7/3 IAN MOORE  
 7/5 WALTER MICHAELS BAND  
 7/6 SHINE ON (PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE)  
 7/12 YYNOT (RUSH TRIBUTE)  
 7/13 FAST TIMES  
 - THE ULTIMATE 80s TRIBUTE!  
 7/14 THE CREAM OF CLAPTON BAND  
 FEAT. WILL JOHNS & NOAH EAST  
 7/19 THE 5TH DIMENSION  
 7/20 Y&T 50TH ANNIVERSARY  
 7/26 KEN GARCIA  
 7/27 BOB SCHNEIDER  
 7/28 BOBBY GRAY  
 8/1 CASH'D OUT (JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE)  
 8/3 CUBENSIS (GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE)  
 8/17 PIANO MEN: GENERATIONS  
 (BILLY JOEL AND ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE)  
 8/23 SUPER DIAMOND (NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE)  
 8/24 SUPER DIAMOND (NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE)  
 8/29 THE PETTYBREAKERS  
 (TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)  
 8/30 MIDGE URE  
 8/31 MICK ADAMS & THE STONES  
 9/8 AN EVENING WITH JOHN LYDON  
 "I COULD BE RIGHT, I COULD BE WRONG"  
 9/14 JOURNEY USA (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)  
 9/15 BENISE: FIESTA!  
 9/22 JANE MONHEIT  
 9/25 ANA POPOVIC  
 9/27 DAVE MASON  
 10/3 ZEBRA w/SPECIAL GUESTS FUZZBUBBLE  
 10/6 DAVE HAUSE  
 10/18 GARY PUCKETT & THE UNION GAP  
 10/20 THE YOUNG DUBLINERS  
 11/23 RUFUS WAINWRIGHT  
 12/15 THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA - CHRISTMAS SHOW

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Los Angeles Times  
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California State Parks seasonal lifeguard Sierra Fockler discovered a 14-inch Pacific football fish around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13, near the lifeguard station located at Crystal Ccve State Park in Orange County. It's the second such case of the fish washing ashore over the last three years. (Courtesy of California State Parks)

Good morning. It's Wednesday, Oct. 25. I'm Carol Cormaci, bringing you this week's [TimesOC newsletter](#) with a look at the latest local news and events.

Watch where you're stepping on O.C.'s famed sands, because you may encounter a rare specimen of marine life. One, in fact, that has very sharp teeth.

That's what happened on a recent afternoon to lifeguard Sierra Fockler, who found a spooky-looking black angler fish, specifically a Pacific football fish, while she was walking near the lifeguard headquarters building on Moro Beach, located within Crystal Cove State Park.