

Daily Pilot

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Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

MEMBERS OF THE crew help a young participant step aboard a sailboat on Wednesday as part of the Spectrum Sailing experience at the Orange Coast College School of Sailing and Seamanship in Newport Harbor.

Camp for autistic youth fills kids' sails with confidence

BY ERIC LICAS

Complex tasks like tearing down and rebuilding a Dodge V8 come naturally to Shaun Waters, but it's a challenge for the 11-year-old with autism spectrum disorder to read textbooks, said his mother, Heather Waters. And before his diagnosis about two years ago, he had a hard time fitting in with other students.

Misunderstandings between classmates occasionally led to arguments. And Shaun froze, overwhelmed by the moment whenever school staff asked him to explain his side of things. His silence was a symptom of a condition repeatedly mistaken for insubordination, his mother said.

The Hawaiian Gardens family now homeschools their son, and they work hard to find ways to supplant the opportunities for social development he might have otherwise struggled with at a traditional campus. So they jumped at the chance to sign him up to learn how to sail at a three-day camp hosted by the nonprofit Spectrum Sailing and the Orange Coast College School of Sailing and



See **Camp**, page A2 **A STUDENT** prepares the sailboat during the Spectrum Sailing experience in Newport Harbor.

Crews begin to clear out Bluebird Canyon

Fuel modification zone in the Laguna Beach neighborhood will help residents avoid wildfire catastrophe, officials say.

BY ANDREW TURNER

Laguna Beach has begun work on a new fuel modification zone in the Bluebird Canyon neighborhood, city officials announced this week.

Local fire officials noted that two zones have recently been approved in the area.

"Bluebird Canyon is one of those neighborhoods in Laguna Beach that is situated in a box canyon," Fire Chief Niko King said. "It's with one road in and one road out, so getting this fuel modification done is important to help protect egress in the case of an evacuation."

Hand crews began working Wednesday on a zone that covers approximately 8.7 acres along the lower end of Bluebird Canyon — between Bluebird Canyon Drive and Rancho Laguna Road to the north and Van Dyke Drive, Summit Way and Summit Drive to the south.

Fuel modification zones provide a defensible space for first responders by reducing vegetation within 100 feet of habitable structures.

While the city uses goat herds to handle several of its fuel modification zones, hand crews — using chainsaws and other power tools — are hired to manage areas with protected native species. The workers remove dead vegetation and up to half of the native species in the area.

Work on the project will take place Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. over the next year. The initial implementation is funded through a combination of grants and public funding, city officials said, although the city

See **Crews**, page A4

Second arrest made in series of local burglaries

BY ANDREW TURNER

Authorities have arrested a second suspect in connection with a series of commercial burglaries that hit the cities of Laguna Beach and Newport Beach in December, police said.

, 42, was taken into custody on Feb. 11 by Newport Beach police officers who were acting on an arrest warrant issued by the Laguna Beach Police Department.

The warrant was tied to a series of commercial burglaries alleged to have occurred from Dec.

5 to Dec. 12, police said. Laguna Beach police detectives investigated four incidents of commercial burglary and one attempted commercial burglary within the city limits.

In the course of that investigation, detectives became aware of an additional commercial burglary alleged to have happened on Dec. 12 in Newport Beach, police said.

Kanaeholo was charged with two counts of burglary and one count of felony vandalism, the news release said. Jail records

show that Kanaeholo was booked into the Theo Lacy Facility in Orange on Feb. 13.

Laguna Beach and Newport Beach police collaborated to identify the suspects. Jayson Alden Townsend, 47, of Garden Grove was previously arrested by Laguna Beach police detectives on Dec. 23 in Santa Ana in connection with the commercial burglaries.

Authorities charged Townsend with five counts of burglary, two counts of vandalism, and one count of attempted burglary, po-

lice said. Townsend was booked into the Central Men's Jail in Santa Ana on Dec. 24, according to jail records.

Individuals with information about the alleged burglaries are urged to contact Det. Milone at (949) 715-0984.

Information can also be provided anonymously by calling Orange County Crime Stoppers at (855)-487-6227.

andrew.turner@latimes.com
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

COSTA MESA GIRLS' BASKETBALL CLIPPED BY NORDHOFF IN CIF QUARTERFINALS PAGE A3

LAGUNA BEACH BOYS' SOCCER EDGES PAST LONG BEACH POLY IN CIF QUARTERFINALS PAGE A4

Costa Mesa hires planning firm to deliver on promise of Measure K

BY SARA CARDINE

Costa Mesa officials this week approved a nearly \$2-million contract with a planning and engineering firm to chart a course toward rezoning numerous commercial, industrial and opportunity sites throughout the city to allow for more housing.

Rezoning is a key element in delivering on a promise made in the city's Measure K, a 2022 initiative that overrides an earlier referendum requiring certain large-scale developments or zone changes be put to a vote of the people.

It's also necessary for Costa Mesa to certify its compliance with a state mandate requiring the city plan for the creation of 11,760 new residential units by 2029. Like Measure K, the roadmap outlining how that will be done — the housing element portion of the city's general plan — came due in 2022.

Revising the city's zoning codes and regulations is a daunting process estimated to take up to two years to complete. Yet, staffing shortages at City Hall, particularly in the city's planning department, have created major delays.

Now, two years past the deadline and with the threat of punishment from the state looming, including allowing builders with state-compliant projects the right to bypass local laws, city leaders are in a race against time.

"There's a reason why we have to move swiftly on this," Mayor Pro Tem Manuel Chavez said in a City Council meeting Tuesday. "If we want to have a say in Costa Mesa about the kind of housing we build in the city, we have to take ownership of the fact that the longer we delay implement-

See **Measure**, page A3



File Photo

COSTA MESA officials on Tuesday approved a nearly \$2-million contract with planning firm Dudek to begin a citywide rezoning process promised in the city's 2022 Measure K initiative. But some question whether the public engagement promised on the ballot will be realized.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Costa Mesa clipped by Nordhoff in CIF quarterfinals

BY SCOTT FRENCH

Costa Mesa's surprising run in the CIF Southern Section girls' basketball playoffs met its end Wednesday night, at the finish and after a fiercely fought final quarter. The Mustangs took it with great serenity.

They surrendered the lead to visiting Ojai Nordhoff in the final minute, fell behind on a three-pointer with 21 seconds to go, and settled for a 46-41 Division 5AA quarterfinal defeat.

Disappointing? Of course.

"It is what it is. ... What can I say?" said Costa Mesa's first-year head coach Zedric McKee, who led the program to its first postseason berth in five years with a young roster and aggressive defensive approach. "I give Nordhoff a lot of credit, they really worked their butt off at the end.

"Not a lot of people expected Costa Mesa to make it all the way to the quarterfinals. I'm really proud of [my players]. Definitely going back to the drawing board and work our butts off for next year."

Leilani Quero scored 24 points, 10 of them in a wild fourth quarter, and she grabbed six rebounds and blocked two shots to lead the fourth-seeded Mustangs' charge. She scored another 10 points in a five-minute sequence bridging the second and third quarters as Costa Mesa (14-15) turned a five-point deficit into a 26-21 advantage. It didn't last long, and Nordhoff (18-7), the No. 5 seed, took a six-point lead into the last two minutes. Emi Kamikihara sunk a three-pointer from the right, and Quero followed from the left with her third three of the night to make it 39-39 with 1:19 to go. The Mustangs were ahead when Quero forced a turnover and took it for a layup with 64 seconds left.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

COSTA MESA'S Leilani Quero sinks a layup against Nordhoff in a CIF Southern Section Division 5AA girls' basketball quarterfinal on Wednesday.

Two free throws from Crystal Ramirez, whose speed repeatedly troubled Costa Mesa, and it was even again. Jacaranda Shepard swished in the three-point winner after a turnover, then picked off Quero's pass into the defensive key, was fouled and converted two free throws with 3.4 seconds on the clock to make it certain.

"It was a hard loss, but I think we made a lot of mistakes that we couldn't come back from," Quero said. "I always learn that our mistakes are sometimes going to catch up to us. I'm proud of the way we played, obviously, but it hurts to lose."

Cadence Renshaw, Nordhoff's high post with a deft bank shot in traffic ("she did a little Timmy Duncan there," McKee noted) scored 20 points — 10 of them in the 13-7 early-fourth-quarter stretch — and grabbed 13 rebounds. Shepard and Ramirez added 10 points for the Rangers, who will be home for Saturday's semifinal against No. 8 Riverside Hillcrest (20-6).

Costa Mesa's defense was

See **Clipped**, page A4

MEASURE

Continued from page A1

ing this, the longer the risk comes into play."

Council members Tuesday unanimously approved a three-year, \$1,850,611 professional services agreement with San Diego County-based firm Dudek to oversee the rezoning process. The contract includes an additional 10% contingency and may be extended up to two, one-year terms.

Dudek planner Catherine Tang Saez assured the council her firm would help the city work swiftly and efficiently to meet its goals. The firm aims to prepare the housing element for final certification by November 2026.

"The sites have been selected, the densities have been set. There's been an obligation made to the state, and our job as consultants is to help the city, to take you to the finish line," she said.

But residents speaking in public comments urged the city not to run roughshod over the interests of community stakeholders in their haste to rezone the city, particularly when Measure K itself promised a public visioning process would take place.

Some expressed their desire for a citizens advisory committee that would inform consultants and city staff of residents' wishes for certain streets and neighborhoods.

"Task force, task force, task force — this is so necessary to build community consensus on this major rezoning of the city," said resident Richard Huffman. "We've delayed so long on getting around to doing any visioning and working on this rezoning that now there's no time for it. This is just shameful."

Mayor John Stephens expressed a concern there was no formal mention of how Dudek and city staff would engage community members in the rezoning process.

"It seems like somebody could criticize us and say we've skipped that visioning process that was part of Measure K," he said.

Carrie Tai, the city's economic and development services director, explained the visioning process was baked into Dudek's proposal and promised the public would have multiple opportunities to weigh in throughout the two-year process.

"This absolutely encompasses the visioning process in a method that accommodates a schedule the city needs to deliver on," Tai told the council.

Councilwoman Andrea Marr said she didn't feel an advisory group was necessary, but urged city staff to do their best to engage a vast range of stakeholders in meaningful ways.

"There are more ways than just a task force to do visioning," she said. "[But] I do want to make sure we're doing effective community engagement, that we are asking people what their vision is. This is a huge opportunity to make sure we're doing what the public wants."

sara.cardine@latimes.com
Twitter: @SaraCardine

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
 1 Country with a famous canal
 7 Resides
 13 Makes up (for)
 14 Leave: 2 wds.
 15 Actress Mara
 16 Sad tale: 2 wds.
 17 Give _ take
 18 French fry condiment
 20 Common Korean last name
 21 Earnhardt of NASCAR
 23 Fortune-telling deck
 24 Fashion designer
 Gernreich
 25 SCOTUS justice
 Kagan
 27 Car fuel
 28 Syrup flavor
 29 Huge hole
 31 Simple song
 32 Playwright
 Coward
 33 Low female voice
 34 Wildly popular online
 35 Skating spin
 37 Made sharper
 38 Traffic tie-up
 39 Old photo tint
 43 Secondary accounts, for short
 44 Term _ (class assignment)
 46 Told
 47 Frozen water
 48 Cafeteria head cover
 50 Draw upon
 51 Actor Frank
 53 Peking duck condiment
 55 Lasts
 56 Take to the station
 57 Done for
 58 Wild animals

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12
13							14					
15							16					
17			18		19					20		
21			22		23					24		
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			34				35	36				
37						38			39	40	41	42
43					44				45	46		
47				48					49		50	
51			52						53	54		
55									56			
57									58			

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.

8	6		4					9
		5			2	8		
2					7			5
				3		1		
	2		7		9		8	
		6	2					
1			9					6
		9	2			7		
	8			3		1	4	

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A2.

- DOWN**
 6 So far: 2 wds.
 7 First appearance
 8 Stinging insect
 9 Summer clock setting in PA: Abbr.
 10 Admire: 3 wds.
 11 In a shocking way
 12 Thwart
 14 Swiss roll

- snacks
 16 "Get out!"
 19 Price labels
 22 Bonus performances
 24 Dangerous snake
 26 Coming up
 28 Marathon units
 30 Completely
 31 Hydropower source
 32 Super Mario Bros. company
 34 Mountain that erupts
 35 Director Frank
 36 "You said it!"
 37 Greeted ceremonially
 38 Prisons
 40 Short breaks
 41 Demand
 42 Sales reps
 44 Turned white
 45 Get-well program, for short
 48 "_ goes nothing!"
 49 Raced
 52 Trident, e.g.
 54 Nest egg plan: Abbr.
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