

# Daily Pilot

SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2023 /// dailypilot.com



Photos by Jessica Cuchilla, Robert Mayer Leadership Academy

**A DUMP TRUCK** drops fresh decomposed granite to resurface the Secret Garden at Huntington Central Park on Wednesday.

## Volunteer efforts take root at the Secret Garden

BY ERIC LICAS

Volunteers performed much-needed repairs Wednesday, laying the foundation for a new chapter for the Secret Garden, a hideaway in plain sight at Huntington Central Park.

The garden had initially been restored by the Huntington Beach Tree Society in 2014 and was being maintained by the small, local nonprofit. They were planning a major face-lift of the open space for 2023, on the heels of one of the wettest winters Southern California has seen in years.

"We've been undergoing a big sort of a second phase of our work of upgrading everything

and getting it maintained the way it should be," Tree Society member Juana Mueller said Thursday. "And the rains just really said, 'You gotta do this.' It had rutted out the path so badly that it was actually not safe anymore."

Heavy downpours created cracks and furrows that made the garden's gravel walkways more difficult to traverse. It had to be closed in April, a few weeks after the green space was featured in a Daily Pilot article, Mueller said.

But participants of the Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce's Robert Mayer Leader-

See **Garden**, page A4



**FRESH GRAVEL** was laid on the paths winding through the Secret Garden at Huntington Central Park on Wednesday. A wet winter in Southern California damaged the garden's pathways.



Susan Hoffman

**PARADE CHAIRMAN** Jack Callahan rounded up the Norco Cowgirls Equestrian Rodeo Drill Team during the Balboa Island Parade last year. Callahan was named the grand marshal of the parade for this year.

## Neigh-sayers expected at Balboa Island Parade

BY LILLY NGUYEN

The Balboa Island Parade committee is inviting residents to mosey on down to the streets on June 4 to partake in the 28th annual Balboa Island Parade.

The theme for the parade this year is "Horsin' Around Island Style," and spectators are encouraged to grab their cowboy hats and ride down to the island clad in their aloha shirts and shorts. This continues the Wild West tradition from last year's parade, which was themed "Island Rodeo — Boots, Chaps and Cowboy

Hats."

Jack Callahan, who has been part of the Balboa Island parade committee and the Balboa Island Improvement Assn. for years — essentially since the group started holding the parade 28 years ago — said the theme was continued into this year because of the success of the 2022 edition. He described the affair as quintessential "Americana."

"What was amazing was that people really dressed up. There's going to be horses, cowboys,

See **Parade**, page A2

## School district sets end target for task force

Members have met looking to find options for Board of Trustees as Ocean View School District faces changes.

BY MATT SZABO

What comes next for the Ocean View School District?

Though district Board of Trustees President Patricia Singer announced in February that she wouldn't agendize the closing of any campuses next school year, school and parent representatives continue worrying about the district's declining enrollment.

OVSD Supt. Michael Conroy has created a 40-plus member superintendent's task force to examine that issue. It consists of school site, community and union representatives, as well as principals from six different OVSD schools.

The task force has been meeting twice a month and held its third meeting on Wednesday night.

The goal is to come up with a range of options for the Board of Trustees to consider. A soft target date of Oct. 24 for recommendations to be made was established at Tuesday's board meeting.

"My concern with just leaving it open-ended forever is that it is a very difficult conversation," Singer said at Tuesday's meeting. "If we don't have some kind of timelines, we could be talking about this for the next three years. Let's face it — it is a very passionate conversation, a very difficult conversation."

See **District**, page A2

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

**CDM ATHLETES REFLECT ON PREP CAREERS ON SIGNING DAY** PAGE A3

## 'Made from love': Lebanese eatery eases into Costa Mesa

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Roland Karam moved to the U.S. from Lebanon at 7 years old.

"We went back when I was about 10 and 11, and I got to experience fifth and sixth grade there, which was nice," said Karam.

After they returned to the U.S. more permanently, Karam's parents still sent him back to Lebanon each summer, an experience he is grateful for.

"I built relationships there with family and my grandparents, got to learn the language more and got really familiar with that side of my culture and the food."

A love for his culture and its food inspired Karam to start a catering company during the pandemic when diners were looking for a way to get a unique experience while most restaurants remained closed.

"We started doing live catering, which was unique. Live shawarma stations and live kebab stations," said Karam. "We would do anything from birthdays to weddings to engagements."

Karam launched EZ Kebab, a

catering company specializing in Lebanese street food, in 2020 with his brother-in-law Ronyn Chedid as executive chef and friend Eryck Duran as director of operations.

EZ Kebab set up roasting spits with fresh chicken and beef shawarma, sliced to order.

"We would set them up on site and make fresh bowls and wraps, custom for all guests," said Karam. "Then we had our live kebab, where we would bring our charcoal grills, and we grilled chicken kebab, steak kebab and kofta kebab."

EZ Kebab served Orange County, Los Angeles, San Diego and the Inland Empire, growing a dedicated following. Then in April, down the street from its catering facility, EZ Kebab opened its first brick-and-mortar location at 1951 Harbor Blvd. in Costa Mesa in an old A-frame building formerly occupied by a Wienerschnitzel.

The walk-up window serves the same char-grilled kebabs and

See **Cuisine**, page A4



Courtesy of EZ Kebab

**EZ KEBAB** serves dishes inspired by Lebanese street food. It opened its first brick-and-mortar location in April.

# DISTRICT

Continued from page A1

Seven district staff members, including Conroy, also attend the meetings. They are facilitated by Dr. Joe Farley, a former Orange County superintendent.

"We're there to provide support, listen to the conversations and the questions about information that might be requested so that we understand the context of the conversation and what's being said," Conroy said in an interview Friday. "Obviously, I can tell [the staff], 'You don't have to come, you can just watch it,' but I think it's more powerful when you're in the room listening to really get the feeling of the meeting."

The district's enrollment has been declining for years. Ocean View lost 2,600 students over the past decade to its current enrollment of 6,809. Conroy has said that trend is expected to continue with birth rates dropping



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

**OCEAN VIEW** School District Supt. Dr. Michael Conroy speaks during the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Park View Park in Huntington Beach in October 2022.

within district boundaries and residents' median age increasing.

At the Feb. 14 school board meeting, Conroy introduced an idea to close Circle View, Village View and Golden View elementary schools and repurpose Spring View Middle School. However, that notion was paused after two community forums.

Robert Espinoza, who represents the district's

preschool and Circle View on the task force, remains heavily vested in the district. His wife, Crystal, is a special education teacher in the district at Spring View Middle School. He has one OVSD graduate who is currently a freshman at Marina High, and two other sons that are in kindergarten and preschool, respectively.

See **District**, page A3

# PARADE

Continued from page A1

clowns — we'll pass out American flags, and we have quite the opening ceremony where we'll do the flag salute and sing 'God Bless America,'" Callahan said. "That kind of tears at the heartstrings of people. Things are pretty crazy [these days], and so the parade's a reflection of values of America, and what America stands for and the goodness with the flag ... 'Western' is very America."

Local dignitaries will also be appearing at the event, the likes of which include the entirety of the Newport Beach City Council, city harbormaster Paul Blank, Police Chief Joe Cartwright, Fire Chief Jeff Boyles, state Assemblywoman Diane Dixon, O.C. Board Supervisor Katrina

Foley and KCAL news reporter Michele Gile.

Callahan was named this year's grand marshal and will ride in a stagecoach along with his daughters and grandchildren.

"It's a real honor," Callahan said. "I'm very active on Balboa Island ... and they sort of call me the mayor of Balboa Island as a joke. I'm just very well known, and so for them to elect me as grand marshal is a real honor and a pleasure."

Callahan said he remembers how the parade started as a small party to celebrate the opening of Newport Beach Fire Station No. 4.

It eventually turned into a procession that spans two blocks and 100 entries this year, in addition to marching bands from local high schools and eight military vehicles to honor

veterans.

The parade is traditionally held the first Sunday of June.

"There's always a lot of things on the Fourth of July, then you have Memorial Day and Labor Day," said Callahan. "We didn't want it to conflict, and we thought it was a good idea to leave it in June toward the end of the school year and the beginning of summer vacation, to really kick off summer."

The bridge to the island will close at 10:45 a.m. for the parade, so those interested should plan to arrive early as the event steps off at 11 a.m. The Balboa Island Improvement Assn. will also host an "after party" for the parade that will feature the Fabulous Nomads at a stage in front of the fire station.

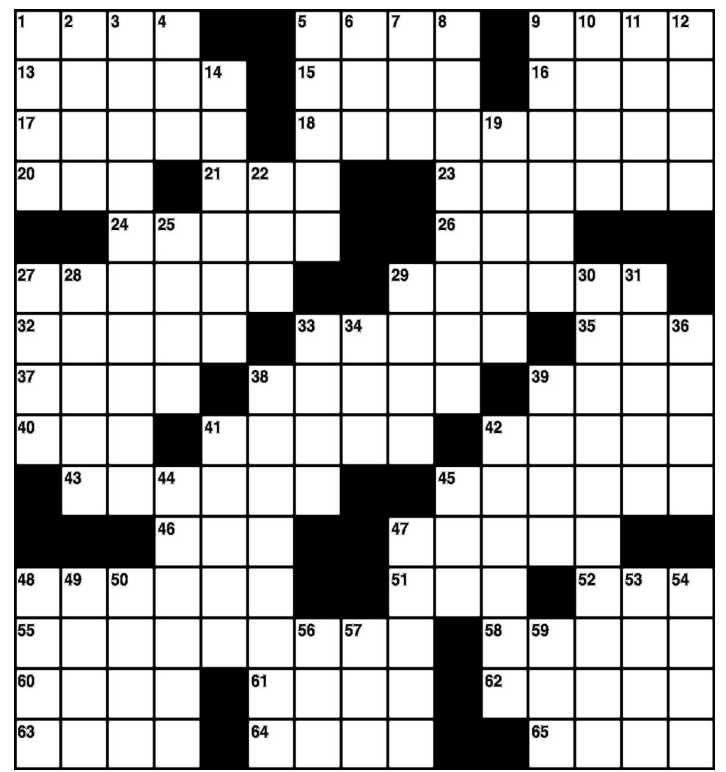
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# THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

## ACROSS

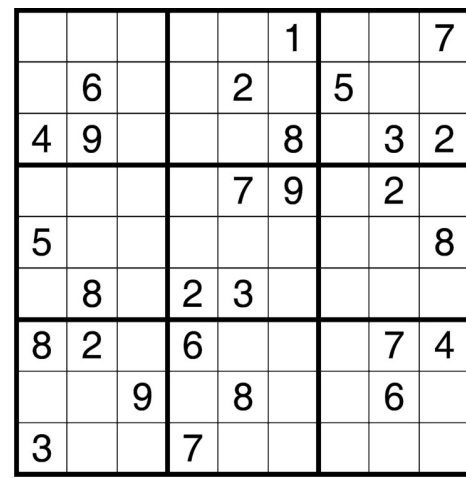
- 1 \_ child; pregnant
- 5 \_ time; never
- 9 Lunch in the sty
- 13 As sore as \_
- 15 "It just disappeared!"
- 16 Dad
- 17 Hillside
- 18 Senses
- 20 Teacher's favorite
- 21 Have a bug
- 23 Keyboard instruments
- 24 Therefore
- 26 Dos divided by dos
- 27 Large diving bird
- 29 Faultfinder
- 32 Prize
- 33 \_fire; truce
- 35 Pasture sound
- 37 Fling
- 38 Moby Dick, for one
- 39 Tater
- 40 Sweltering
- 41 Charisma
- 42 Glistened
- 43 Closer
- 45 Distorts
- 46 Rather or Quayle
- 47 Change
- 48 Savvy
- 51 Little rascal
- 52 "\_ Believer"; Monkees hit
- 55 Broad street
- 58 Arm part
- 60 Isn't able to
- 61 Suffix for exist or refer
- 62 Ointment
- 63 Mineral springs
- 64 Lion's cry
- 65 Candy store chain



## 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 A3.

## DOWN

- 1 Stinging insect
- 2 Suffix for digest or flex
- 3 Bathroom cabinet item
- 4 Fashionable
- 5 Fruit in a fritter

- 6 Gout site
- 7 And not
- 8 "Certainly!"
- 9 Water source
- 10 Molten rock
- 11 Ready for business
- 12 Football

- maneuver
  - 14 Inclined
  - 19 Bert's pal
  - 22 Extremely cold
  - 25 Goes astray
  - 27 Sworn statement
  - 28 Faint
  - 29 Serene
  - 30 Not doable
  - 31 Tally up
  - 33 Blacken
  - 34 Hearing organ
  - 36 Lofty poems
  - 38 At any time
  - 39 Lower leg part
  - 41 Wooden box
  - 42 Walks away with
  - 44 Legal drinkers
  - 45 Sawyer of fiction
  - 47 Fruit drink
  - 48 Alphabet
  - 49 Detergent
  - 50 Albacore
  - 53 Relocate
  - 54 Astounds
  - 56 Spanish year
  - 57 TV brand
  - 59 \_ Vegas
- Tribune Media Services

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*bold spices*

*smooth tannins*

*chocolate*

*black cherries*

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

CdM athletes reflect on prep careers on signing day

BY ANDREW TURNER

Lined up across two separate rows on a raised stage, the college-bound athletes from Corona del Mar High participated in the school's signing day ceremony on Monday inside the Sea King Theatre.

It was a fitting look for some of the athletes who have often performed at a high level in front of their local community.

Fifteen of the 26 signees for the Sea Kings will be competing in some form of aquatics, a range including swimming and diving, rowing, sailing and water polo.

Ruby Srinivasan is excited to be joining the rowing squadron at Harvard, where she will be returning to a place of her past.

"I lived in Boston until I was in sixth grade," Srinivasan said. "A lot of my family still lives there. I tend to go back in the summers, but I'm just really excited because the Charles [River] is such a historical place to row. As a kid, I grew up watching [the] Head of the Charles [regatta] with my family. My grandpa used to be a professor at [Boston University], so I'm just really thrilled to be back."

Among the group, the Sea Kings had five members of their senior class commit to play college football: quarterback David Rasor (UC Davis), wide receiver Cooper Hoch (San Jose State), and linebackers Mason Kubichek (Chap-



CORONA DEL MAR High School student-athletes ceremonially sign to play a sport in college at the school on Monday. The school had 26 athletes partake in its signing day event.

man), Kaulin Post (Chapman) and Brady Sarkisian (Texas).

"It's really cool having a program that produces not just good football players, but just good men, in general," Rasor said of his school's gridiron program.

Jack Loucks, who served as a receiver for CdM, will also be competing at the next level, but in basketball. The senior guard signed on the dotted line to join Fairleigh Dickinson, one of the best stories in March Madness history.

Fairleigh Dickinson became the first No. 16 seed to overthrow a No. 1 seed in the first round of the NCAA men's basketball tournament when it beat Purdue

this past season.

"It was like a week after [the upset], when I was out on my visit," Loucks said of the timing of his commitment. "It's in New Jersey, so it's really far. It's a really different place. I was just really excited when I was out there. Obviously, I was excited to get recruited by them before their upset, but after that made me more intrigued when I was there. But that didn't play too big of a factor whether or not I was going to go there."

The crosstown rivalry — the Battle of the Bay — meant a lot to Loucks, who grew up on the other side of the Back Bay.

"Beating Newport Harbor

my junior year at Newport Harbor was probably my favorite moment in basketball, just because it's the rivals [in] in Newport," Loucks said. "I grew up with all those kids on the other team, and I went to Ensign for seventh grade. I grew up on the other side of the bay, so when I switched over, it was a little bit of extra rivalry because I knew all of them a little bit better."

Other highlights around the area for spring signing day events included Huntington Beach, which had its baseball program set a school record for seniors signed in a single sport with 13 this year.

Fountain Valley also saw



MAKENA MACEDO, left, and Jillian Schlom pose for a photo during Corona del Mar High School signing day.



GAVIN GOSSETT, left, and Colin Hebble take a selfie during Corona del Mar High School signing day on Monday.

Vivian Hennessey, who is headed to the University of Colorado, become the school's first cheerleader to sign a national letter of intent to compete in the sport.

"Since competitive cheer became an officially sanctioned sport six years ago, it makes Vivian Hennessey the very first cheer athlete at [Fountain Valley] to sign with a college for the sport of cheer," Fountain Valley cheer coach Tara Bearden

said in a statement. "We are all so very proud of her hard work and passion for the sport. Seeing a cheerleader up there getting the respect they deserve made it such an amazing day and proud moment for everyone involved."

Go to [dailypilot.com](http://dailypilot.com) for a list of local athletes who have signed or committed to play a sport in college.

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DISTRICT

Continued from page A2

"We purchased our home in the Circle View tract specifically [to go to] Circle View," he said, adding that the campus just east of Marina in Huntington Beach is one of the district's GATE magnet programs.

But with Measure R bond money running out, closure was considered for Circle View instead of modernization. The district currently has Star View Elementary being modernized this year, with Mesa View Middle School to follow in 2024.

Village View, Golden View and Spring View — the other three schools that were potentially on the cutting block — also have not been modernized. Meanwhile, Espinoza said, College View was modernized despite having the lowest enrollment numbers in the district and no special programs like some of the other campuses.

"That's a big contention in the community, how would you guys keep that

school open and close other schools with higher enrollment and better performance?" he said.

Still, Espinoza said the district replaced the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system at Circle View during spring break, which he saw as a good sign that an effort is being made.

Espinoza said the first couple of superintendent's task force meetings have been getting all the members up to speed with what is going on in the district.

"We're not even close to getting into any options yet," he said. "Right now, it's still the really early stages."

Keeley Pratt is another well-connected parent on the task force representing Village View Elementary, the campus two of her children attend.

She said the Oct. 24 timeline for reaching a recommendation for the Board of Trustees is important, because Dec. 1 is when the first interim budget reports are due. Pratt added that parents were concerned because, as school closures

were first floated in February, schools haven't had a lot of time to develop a marketing strategy to increase their enrollment in time for it to be reflected in the following year's budget projections.

"This is pretty unprecedented, it seems, to have this large of a committee," she said. "The fact that we're all sort of accepting this date, I think that's a positive step. Hopefully it is, and hopefully it's a timely step as well. We don't want to be free-falling forever. We have to have checkpoints along the way, to see what it means to be successful. What are we going for here?"

Pratt said there's a wide range of knowledge level among the task force participants, but she's relaxed her frustrations as she realizes that it's important to

take it slow and for everyone to have the same information at the same time.

If school boundaries are withdrawn or teachers get redistributed, school closures can affect every school in the district, she said.

"That movement is so surprising to people," she said. "They thought, 'It's not my school so it's not my problem,' but it's a district problem. It will impact every single student and every single staff member, not just teachers. We're talking custodians, school office managers, clerks, all the way down the line."

"Hopefully people will tune into YouTube [video of the district's May 24 task force meeting] and listen to this stuff, or even just go onto the task force website [[ovsd.org/schoolstaskforce](http://ovsd.org/schoolstaskforce)], download the data and

look at the numbers. It's incredibly important and also a real testament to — and trial of — the value of public education. It's really unusual to have this type of data at our fingertips all at once, and I hope people capitalize on it. Can we optimize the money and strengthen the quality of education? Is there something outside of the box that we could be doing?"

Pratt said three things have to happen to make the task force worthwhile. It has to come to a consensus, the Board of Trustees has to support the consensus with action, and the public has to believe in this plan and believe in public education.

"All of this will be for naught if those three things can't happen," she said. "To be determined, right?"

Espinoza said he's unsure

how things will play out, but he added that no matter what decision is made, people will likely be upset.

"We haven't done anything," he said. "The only real thing we've done is remodel lower-performing schools in the hope that will increase enrollment, and that has been a complete failure. I get the intention. It's a great intention ... but should we really remodel a lower-performing school when we may need to close it because of these 10-year trends?"

"Now you're bringing us into this task force to make these decisions, but the decisions have kind of already been made. I mean, it's been 10 years. You're giving me a bucket on the Titanic."

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Grid of crossword puzzle answers including words like WITH, ATNO, SLOP, ABOIL, POOF, PAPA, SLOPE, PERCEIVES, PET, AIL, ORGANS, HENCE, UNO, OSPREY, CRITIC, AWARD, CEASE, MOO, TOSS, WHALE, SPUD, HOT, CHARM, SHONE, NEARER, TWISTS, DAN, COINS, ASTUTE, IMP, IMA, BOULEVARD, ELBOW, CANT, ENCE, SALVE, SPAS, ROAR, SEES.

Grid of Sudoku puzzle answers with numbers 1-9 in a 9x9 grid.

MARKETPLACE

To place an ad, go to <http://timescommunityadvertising.com/>

Legal Notices section containing three public notices from the City of Newport Beach regarding ordinance summaries for Ordinance No. 2023-6, 2023-4, and 2023-8.

CUISINE

Continued from page A1

spit-roasted shawarma plus falafel and other side dishes the catering company is known for. A 500-square-foot patio offers seating for onsite dining, but the drive-through window makes it possible for guests to get EZ Kebab meals on the go, though Karam said customers should not consider them fast food.

"We do tell people we are quick service, our food is made fresh to order," said Karam. "We are definitely not fast food. It is more like curbside ordering. You pull up in your car, and we take your order, and someone will run your

"I want everyone to know our food is made from love. Out of love for our culture and out of love for our authentic food."

- Roland Karam

food to your car."

Karam hopes to make Lebanese food more accessible for diners who may prefer a quick bite to the commitment of booking his catering services or who may not even be familiar with Lebanese cuisine.

"We want to stay authentic and really educate the public about Lebanese food," said Karam. "There is so much on the scope of Mediterranean food."

"Mediterranean food" is a term that can include Greek, Persian and Lebanese cuisine, and while they have their similarities, Karam is eager to share the dishes that set Lebanese street food apart, like kofta kebab.

"Our kofta kebab is a traditional Lebanese kebab. It is ground beef with seasonings, onions, parsley, and that has been a very big seller because that is something new to the community," said Karam. Karam said other Lebanese-driven dishes like fattoush salad made with toasted khubz, mixed greens and fresh veggies and lentil soup or shorbet adas made with red lentils have also been popular.

"They are made with authentic seasonings and spices, a lot of which we get directly from Lebanon," Karam said. EZ Kebab still operates as a catering company, and Karam hopes to expand the brand with more stand-alone drive-throughs in Southern California. Mostly, Karam is happy to share his culture with Or-



Courtesy of EZ Kebab

EZ KEBAB founder Roland Karam has opened his first location in Costa Mesa, serving dishes inspired by street food he enjoyed during his childhood in Lebanon.

ange County and hopes diners will find the same joy he found eating traditional dishes in Lebanon. "I want everyone to know our food is made from love," said Karam. "Out of love for our culture and out of love for our authentic food. It is made

purely with the customer in mind, to enjoy what I enjoyed growing up. I want people to take a bite of a wrap and experience what I experienced growing up."

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Legal Notices

CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH: ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 1687 RELATING TO ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS AND JUNIOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Adoption of Ordinance No. 1687 entitled "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH, CALIFORNIA, REPEALING AND REPLACING LAGUNA BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 25.17 (SECOND RESIDENTIAL UNITS) AND AMENDING LAGUNA BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 25.10.004 (R-1 RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY ZONE, USES PERMITTED), AND 25.15.006 (R/HP RESIDENTIAL/HILLSIDE PROTECTION ZONE, USES PERMITTED), RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS AND JUNIOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS, AS MODIFIED BY THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION, AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT," was introduced at the City Council meeting of May 2, 2023, and adopted on May 16, 2023, on the following 5-0 vote: AYES: Orgill, Rounaghi, Weiss, Kempf, Whalen; NOES: None; ABSENT: None.

Ann Marie McKay, City Clerk



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH PUBLIC NOTICE ORDINANCE SUMMARY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on May 23, 2023, the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, adopted an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-5

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF A LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM AMENDMENT TO THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION AMENDING TITLE 21 (LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN) OF THE NEWPORT BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE RELATED TO TIME SHARES (PA2022-0202)

The Ordinance amends Newport Beach Municipal Code Title 21 (Local Coastal Program Implementation Plan) to modify the definition of time share to include fractional ownership units, subject to California Coastal Commission approval in full conformity with the California Coastal Act. As a time share use, fractional homeownership will be prohibited in all residential zoning districts and only allowed in certain commercial and mixed-use zoning districts subject to specified time share regulations.

This Ordinance was adopted by the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, at a regular meeting thereof on the 23rd day of May, 2023, by the following vote:

AYES: Mayor Noah Blom, Mayor Pro Tem Will O'Neill, Council Member Brad Avery, Council Member Robyn Grant, Council Member Lauren Kleiman, Council Member Joe Stapleton, Council Member Erik Weigand
NAYS: None

The Ordinance shall become final and effective thirty (30) days after adoption.

Dated this 24th day of May, 2023.

/s/ Leilani I. Brown, City Clerk City of Newport Beach



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Newport Beach will establish the City's Appropriations Limit for Fiscal Year 2023-24, pursuant to Article 13B of the State Constitution on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 4:00 p.m., or soon thereafter as the matter shall be heard, in the Council Chambers at 100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach.

APPROPRIATION LIMIT:

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Article 13B Appropriation Limit for Fiscal Year 2023-24: \$246,571,634. Total Appropriations Subject to Limit: 226,525,587. Amount Under Limit: \$20,046,047.

Copies of the calculation of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Appropriations Limit are available for public inspection on the City's website at http://www.newportbeachca.gov/finance.

For questions regarding this item please contact Jason Al-Imam, Finance Director, at (949) 644-3126 or jalimam@newportbeachca.gov.



/s/ Leilani I. Brown, MMC, City Clerk, City of Newport Beach

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GARDEN

Continued from page A1

ship Academy had pledged to resurface the garden's walkways. After raising over \$1,700, they showed up on Wednesday with a new roller, shovels, carts and a dump truck loaded with tons of decomposed granite.

Six members of the Tree Society, all retirees, worked with six volunteers from the academy to address trip hazards and make the paths running through the Secret Garden easier for children and strollers to wander through. They started at 10 a.m. and were supposed to work until 2 p.m., but managed to finish an hour early, Mueller said.

"I had to leave for a bit at 11. I was called and they said, 'Don't come back. They're done,'" Mueller said. "It was very impres-

"The rains just really said, 'You gotta do this.' It had rutted out the path so badly that it was actually not safe anymore."

- Juana Mueller Tree Society member

sive, especially when we had one of the women there who was six months pregnant."

Their efforts reopened a much-needed haven for reflection and rejuvenation for the Huntington Beach community, Mueller said. She lives in an apartment and said places like the Secret Garden and others taken care of by the Tree Society allow her do something she loves even though she doesn't have space for the hobby at home.

Before the Tree Society began working on the Secret Garden in 2014, it was part of a pilot project to demonstrate the viability of drought-tolerant plants that had apparently been forgotten, Mueller said. Back then, the path through it wasn't even visible, let alone walkable, due to the overgrown pride of Madeira and passion vines that had overtaken the plot. It took years to turn it into a secluded feature at the heart of Huntington Central Park frequented by families, nature lovers and local photographers.

"It's a respite," Mueller said. "It's a place they come to just, sort of reenergize themselves."

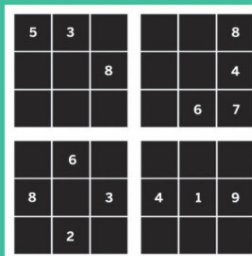
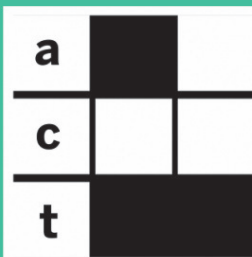
Mueller hopes some of those who visit the garden might develop green thumbs of their own. She added that the Tree Society would welcome fresh hands to help them preserve the sanctuaries they have sown in the city for future generations.

"Because a lot of us are up in age, we would like to get a more youthful team coming in than we are," Mueller said. "Because you need to hand it off. It was restored by volunteers, it was kept by volunteers and it will continue to be done by volunteers."

"When I say youth, it has to be someone who's retired," Mueller added. "Because it's pretty much a full-time endeavor to keep it maintained... but still, when you're retired and you're 60, you're still hot to go!"

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