

# GRAND CENTRAL

Newsletter of the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council • Fall / Winter 2021

## Topaz Building Owners Plan Conversion from Office to Residential



Redesigned entrance and balconies, as well additional landscaping are among the changes proposed for Topaz Building on Sixth Street. The development would convert office space into 228 apartment units.

## Council Tracks Harbor Pollution, Advises Port

The Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council collaborates with government colleagues at the Port of Los Angeles to plan and implement solutions for making our community a healthy and safe place to live and work.

Recent Port-related concerns include the accumulation of cargo ships in San Pedro Bay and the environmental effects of surging cargo volumes and Port traffic. This also affects the supply chain nationally as we head into the 2021 Holiday shopping season. The Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council requested from the Port and received an overview of known sites of environmental contamination as well as a list of historical sites on Port property.

Other resolutions the Council has delivered to the Port and the Board of Harbor Commissioners include a request for an accounting of China Shipping funds originally allocated for the SR 47/110/Front Street beautification project; a request for a traffic impact study relating to the Front Street exit redevelopment plans; and a call for local artist design of the exit's retaining wall.

The Council passed a resolution on alleged lobbyist interference in public testimony on zero-emissions policy discussions. The Council has also sent a letter asking the Board of Harbor Commissioners to update its policy regarding public comments at virtual meetings given Assembly Bill 361's recent amendments to the California Brown Act, which were signed by Governor Newsom on September 16.

The Port Committee is also working with community stakeholders to reduce feral cat numbers on Port lands with the goal of reaching zero population growth in feral cats over five years. The Port Committee meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm and can be accessed virtually by finding the current agenda on the Central San Pedro website and clicking on the Zoom link.

**San Pedro Farmers Market every Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. See page 4.**



At the recent joint planning meeting of the three San Pedro neighborhood councils, Joon Choi, Ann D'Amato, and Veronica Soto presented plans for conversion of 222 West Sixth Street, the Topaz Building, into apartments. The applicant is based in Long Beach and specializes in redeveloping commercial properties and restoring older properties.

The plan, which has been approved by the city, is to retain the existing 15,000 square feet of ground level commercial and convert the rest of the building into 228 apartments (38 studio, 131 one-bedroom, and 59 two-bedroom). Proposed building alterations include adding balconies for the residential units.

Amenities for residents will include a rooftop swimming pool. The building's existing observatory will be removed. The entrance will be modified to make it more "resident friendly." The adjacent parking structure and its 13,245 square feet of ground floor commercial will remain. The landscaping both in front and in the plaza between the two buildings will be enhanced with drought-resistant plants.

There are 652 automobile parking spaces in the two structures combined. Of that total, 353 will be dedicated for residents' parking. An additional 57 are required for the commercial spaces. There is a possibility that the remaining 242 might be opened to the public, probably for a charge. They may also charge residents for parking if other residential buildings are doing so.

Currently the retail spaces in the parking garage building are not up to code, but will be brought up to code as tenants are found for them.

The developers do not yet have a timeline for the conversion. They have not yet considered sustainability measures, but will comply with all requirements. They will work with WINTER (Women in Non Traditional Employment Roles) and Harbor College on local hiring for the construction.

Suggestions from committee members included the following: make parking available to the public as it is desperately needed in the downtown area, green the parking roof top as it is an eyesore to the neighboring buildings that are taller, put a solar canopy on the parking rooftop. consider ways to help draw people along Sixth Street (such as benches), add electric vehicle charging stations, and provide cargo bikes available for use by residents.

For information, visit <https://centralsanpedronc.org/land-use-planning-committee/>.



The conversion would include rooftop deck featuring amenities for residents.

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## Starting a New Chapter at the San Pedro Library

By Barbara St. John

We have an amazing location right at Ninth Street and Gaffey and it is free to all! It is the public library which has reopened while focusing on creating a safe and welcoming space for all. As of this writing, the mandates are still in place for masks and various COVID protocols. For more information on that, please check [lapl.org/reopening](http://lapl.org/reopening).

There still are plenty of books available and computers may be used for free also. There are specific time limitations for computer usage. You need to check with the library for time but free is free!

It is such a beautiful space inside and kept so cheerful and welcoming! Hopefully they will be up and fully running with children's story time and other wonderful activities soon!

I know as soon as that happens library manager David Ellis will be happy to let the neighborhood know! He mentioned to me how he cannot wait to be able to reopen the community room for neighborhood activities in the future. We all as a community would love to see that happen soon.

Thank you to all our librarians for all the amazing work you do to keep our library's going as best you can in these trying times.

The library is open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and on Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.



Photos in this issue by Barbara St. John

A special thank you to these former board members for their service to the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council:

Carolyn Anderson

Frank Anderson

Stevan Casares

Charles Cooper

Caitlin Crommett

Tamra King

Linda Nutile

Carrie Scoville

City services: call 311 or get MyLA311 app (info at [www.myla311.lacity.org](http://www.myla311.lacity.org))

One Call to City Hall 311



## Help the City; Help Our Neighborhoods!

You want to help in your neighborhood but NEVER seem to have any time, I get it. There is such a simple solution to that. 311...so easy. Dial those three simple digits to report ANY illegal dumping. You know what I am talking about, that nasty couch that just appeared in the alley last night? Just call 311 and they will pick it up. They will also fix potholes or remove graffiti within days. This is a wonderful city service. Please use them. They also have an app you can download for these and other city services—<https://www.lacity.org/myla311>.



**Central San Pedro Social Media**

Twitter: @CentralSPNC

Instagram: @CeSPNC

Facebook: CentralSanPedroNeighborhoodCouncil

To join our listserve, please visit our website to register your email address or send an email to [info@centralsanpedro.org](mailto:info@centralsanpedro.org).



San Pedro CPR (Caring, Proactive Residents) crew at a recent cleanup—Harry, Patricia Ann Carr, Karen Bachand, Mary Lastinger, Darleen Shizuyo, Robert Genest, George Matthews, Debbie LaMont Scanlon, Lori Rogers, and Kathy Popoff

## CPR Cleanup Crew, What Do You Do? Get IT Done!

By Barbara St. John

As a community member I want to try and recognize all the wonderful things going on in this amazing place that is San Pedro. A group that gets far too little recognition is the San Pedro CPR (Caring, Proactive Residents) cleanup crew. These volunteers from the community come out to help in the most physical sense and truly just get IT done!

At one of their most recent cleanups, 16 volunteers filled 22 contractor bags in just two hours. This is the ultimate in cleaning up.

I found a truly humble soul in George Matthews whom I reached out to before writing this article to ask if it would be O.K. His response was, "Thanks for having faith in our group and for letting us be of service." I responded by telling him I think that community is so important and he and his group are a perfect example of that.

"It's just finding a common goal, A love for our city," replied Matthews. Check out their Facebook page and reach out if you have any time that you can help with their next cleanup. I'm sure they would appreciate as many hands as possible!



## What's Up at Anderson Park?

The Central San Pedro Park and Schools Committee has been working diligently with the councilmember's office and park advisory board on the refurbishment of Anderson Park, located at Eighth and Mesa streets in San Pedro.

The committee has been collaborating with a designer to make the park more family and community friendly.

The park is the beneficiary of a \$1.5 million in Quimby funds, which will help in upgrading many things so the community can enjoy it for years to come. Quimby funds come from fees collected from developers and must be spent in the areas where the development occurs.

Thank you to Army Feth Linderborg and her committee and the park advisory board for all efforts. We will keep you posted as to any ongoing work in the park. This will be an amazing improvement to our downtown area and a great community park for all.



## Boys and Girls Club

By Barbara St. John

Upon entering the Boys and Girls Club on Q Street in Wilmington, my first impression was the feeling of being very welcomed! Mike Lansing, the CEO and director of the Boys and Girls Club, has done a tremendous job making this facility, and all of the others a true oasis for children. Lansing is not just the director in charge; he is a man who gets in the trenches along with everyone to get the job done. He truly cares about the community he is serving!

There are so many nonprofits in this amazing city, ALL doing fantabulous work. I would like to highlight the Boys and Girls Club. There are three near Central San Pedro—Harbor Gateway, San Pedro and Wilmington—which offer many programs. The Boys and Girls Club also offers afterschool programs at 10 locations.

"We are here to serve the community when they need our services the most!" said Christina Choy, marketing manager overseeing the Boys and Girls Clubs in the area.

When everything shut down in March 2020, the Boys and Girls Clubs reopened within days in order to serve the community. Realizing the need for family meals because of the closing of schools and free meal programs, they started daily grab-and-go meals.

They serve over 1,300 snacks and meals daily, along with the Weekend Wellness program which provides meals feeding up to a family of five. They are feeding approximately 1,200 families each weekend at a weekly cost of approximately \$10,000.

Realizing that libraries were closed and the lack of Internet availability in some areas, they started a bookmobile with one of their school buses, also offering Internet service.

Another one of things the Boys and Girls Club focused on immediately was the many senior high school students left hanging with college dreams not quite fulfilled. With the help of the Boys and Girls Club, they were able to advise 546 seniors, approximately 99 percent of the students they were serving at that time, to go on to college. This was for the class of 2020. Right now they are servicing 1,700 seniors and helping them continue on with their dreams.

The Boys and Girls Club offers a wide variety of opportunities to learn, ranging from arts to athletics to tutoring for ages 6-18 all are welcome. Also, because there are so many families having such a tough time Lansing has said all membership is free at this time.

As with many nonprofits in this era of COVID, their funding has diminished immensely, but they are still managing to do tremendous work teaching life building skills to help the children in our communities. Of course, they can always use money to help in their work, but if you want to do something in your life that gives you purpose, give up some of your time to help by volunteering. There's many things you can do to help them. For more information, contact [bcbg.org](mailto:bcbg.org).

## Los Angeles Maritime Institute Tallships Program

By Barbara St. John

"Hey, do you want to learn how to sail?" shouted a volunteer from the LAMI at the TopSail Festival of Sail booth. My first response was, "what's the catch?" Just a love of the ocean and the wish to volunteer, I was told, so I thought I would check out this LAMI TopSail tall ship youth program.

I had recently retired and just moved to this wonderful community of San Pedro. I had been looking for something to feed my soul and this one remark, from this volunteer, "Do you want to learn how to sail?" called out to me. I am so very glad I answered that call. There is no minimum time commitment, no previous experience necessary, and no fee required of volunteers. The only requirement is the passion of working with young people and love of the sea.

What does the Los Angeles Maritime Institute (LAMI) do? Since its founding in 1992, by retired science teacher and sailing program pioneer Captain Jim Gladson, the mission of the LAMI topsail youth program has been to use sail training to provide youth with real-life challenges that develop knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to live healthy, productive lives!

These ships sail with a crew of mariner educators/mentors. They are charged with encouraging and fostering the growth of awareness, cooperation and teamwork. The ultimate goal is for individual responsibility, competency and leadership.



The Los Angeles Maritime Institute is based at Berth 73 (the S.P. Slip) and operates the tall ships Exy Johnson Irving Johnson, and American Pride.

All the students are active participants in topsail. There is a call of "all hands to sailing stations!" when it's time to set sail and no one person can do it themselves. It takes six strong bodies just to raise the mainsail. Their crew is there to encourage, teach and advise the youngsters to do the work with the kids, not for them. Topsail is more than just a boat ride.

While at sea with LAMI, I learned what teamwork is, what understanding is and how good it feels to like what you are doing. The ocean has so much to offer each of us. You will never know what kind of person you are mentally, physically and emotionally until you go to sea.

In this environment of immediacy and adventure, every person aboard is challenged physically, mentally, and emotionally. The relationships between individual rights, power and responsibility come into sharper focus, providing real-life experience in the workings of society.

The tall ships have been coordinating with the Los Angeles Unified School District and bringing students on the water who may never otherwise experience such an opportunity. They also work with homeschool programs, private schools or really anyone who just wants to learn to sail!

The educational venue is the ocean, onboard a classic rigged 70-foot sailing vessel. This makes for a unique and challenging environment that nurtures the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are both necessary for the education of youth today and difficult to teach in the traditional classroom. LAMI does not train youth for lives at sea, but rather, uses the sea to educate youth in life skills.

Of course, as with all nonprofit organizations in this era of COVID, their funding has been challenged! Yet, they still continue on with these wonderful opportunities with devoted staff and volunteers.

In trying to keep this program going, they have reached out for any and all grants or donations and they recently became the fortunate recipients of an L.A. port grant for \$100,000 and a city grant for \$34,000, which shows the value that others see in this program as well. They continue to seek funding in all forms in order to keep this wonderfully amazing program afloat!

For additional information or to contact someone about becoming a volunteer, visit [www.LAMITopsail.org](http://www.LAMITopsail.org), email [volunteercoordinator@lamitopsail.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@lamitopsail.org) or call 310-833-6055.

Central  
SAN PEDRO  
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Governing board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. For information on this meeting and CeSPNC committee meetings, check our website at [www.centralsanpedronc.org](http://www.centralsanpedronc.org)



### San Pedro Development Tracking Tool

Planning committee member Jason Herring has developed a site showing all of the proposed development projects on a Google map. Clicking on the location on the map brings up details of each project. It will be updated regularly and may be found at <https://www.nwsanpedro.org/planning-and-land-use>. Click on **view map of San Pedro development projects**.



### San Pedro Farmers Market



The San Pedro Farmers Market features farm fresh California produce on Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Beacon Street across from the San Pedro Municipal Building between Sixth and Seventh streets. Vendors offer a variety of fruits, vegetables, eggs, and local food. More information is available at <https://www.sanpedrochamber.com/san-pedro-farmers-market>.



### First Thursdays Downtown

There's a wonderful art and family event on the first Thursday of every month in downtown San Pedro! Along with numerous art galleries being open, there are food trucks and great eateries all up and down Fifth, Sixth and Seventh streets! Come enjoy the bands that will be playing! Also please keep a lookout for the outreach table from Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council!

We will be offering a free craft art table for all the family. Come enjoy a wonderful family night from 6:00 to 9:00 on the first Thursday of every month! Also the trolleys will be running for free on First Thursdays. Look for the red trolley and just hop on. The loop route will return you to your initial stop. It's a fun way to see San Pedro!

## San Pedro Development Update

625 South Beacon Street – the full block across from City Hall, is a by right project by Holland Partners. They received its letter of determination from the planning department, however an appeal was filed by a group challenging the use of an addendum to the program environmental impact report. The appellant's position was that a new Notice of Preparation was required to determine the level of environmental review. The Harbor Area Planning Commission heard the appeal, which was denied.

Holland Partners is also the developer of the Harborfront Apartments between Fifth and Sixth streets. Of the 550 units in that complex, there are 70 vacancies with another 10 units slated to become vacant over the next two months. Rents range from \$2,555 to \$4,905 per month. The larger, more expensive units are all leased. Units currently for rent are primarily studio and one bedroom with a few two-bedroom units still available.

West Harbor has pre-lease commitments for about 65 percent of the space in areas 1a and 1b. Area 1b is where the Fish Market now stands. The major tenants will include a brewery, five large restaurants, and an immersive art experience. More information about each of the tenants can be found at [westharborla.com](http://westharborla.com).

The developers hope to begin work in area 1a in April 2022. The port will begin work on demolishing the Fish Market and completing the second phase of the promenade this summer. Construction in area 1b cannot begin until that happens.

The Port and West Harbor developer are planning a holiday event at the Town Square on Saturday, December 4 in the late afternoon. The boat parade will be held that night and the promenade will be open for viewing the event.

California Senate Bill 9 becomes effective January 1. Los Angeles Councilmember Nury Martinez introduced a motion, CF 21-1085, instructing the planning department to prepare a report on options for implementation with specific provisions for affordable housing and community land trusts including easing parking restrictions, more flexible lot split ratios, easing building size and setback requirements, strategies to upgrade dangerous and overcrowded housing, and strategies to provide ownership opportunities for low income tenants.

California Senate Bill 10 allows cities to adopt it, but does not require them to do so. A lawsuit has been filed due to the clause that permits local governmental bodies to overturn adopted voter initiatives related to land use

Sixty-seven bills aimed at taking local control from mayors and city councils have adopted by the state legislature since 2017. As a result, a ballot initiative has been proposed. The Californians for Community Planning Initiative would amend the state constitution to return land use to local municipalities and enable them to supersede any previously adopted state laws.

The Attorney General's office has approved the wording and is now developing the summary and title. If sufficient signatures are gathered it will appear on the November 2022 ballot.

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- 3 Battleship IOWA Museum
- 4 Downtown San Pedro Dining, Shopping, Outdoor Stage & Warner Grand Theater
- 5 Downtown San Pedro Dining, Art, Studios & Galleries
- 6 CRAFTED Handmade Market Place Brouwerij West Brewery & Tasting Room
- 7 Additional Parking

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