

Seaside Inside February 29, 2024

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Working for Seaside

Even though February is a short month (and one day longer than normal), it has been jam-packed with many activities. Since the last edition, I attended the monthly AMBAG meeting, the Moving Together event hosted by Palenke Arts at MLK School of the Arts, Council Member Dave Pacheco's town hall meeting, and I was interviewed by KSBW about AT&T home telephone service in Seaside. Lastly, I was the Seaside representative to a panel concerning housing sponsored by the Women's Council of Realtors of the Monterey Peninsula. The next article discusses the high points from the panel.

Housing in Seaside, Monterey, Salinas, and Del Rey Oaks

Housing is one of the significant issues that haunt the cities and towns of the Monterey Peninsula. Should we authorize building more apartments and fewer houses or the perfect combination of both? Do we have enough water? What does the State of California want us to do?

To examine these and other questions concerning housing and quality of life, the Women's Council of Realtors convened a panel consisting of Council Member Ed Smith from Monterey, Dr John Uy, Vice Mayor of Del Rey Oaks, Grant Leonard, Planning Manager of Salinas and myself.

The first question related to how the cities were handling housing. All the cities are on the sixth Housing Element Cycle from 2023 to 2031. California mandates that each city plan (not build) for a designated number of new housing units. The numbers are as follows: Seaside 616, Del Rey Oaks 270, Monterey 3,684, and 6,674 for Salinas.

Seaside is on its way to exceeding the goals with four current projects: **Ascent:** 106 units, 16 affordable. Construction began in 2024 and is estimated to be completed in 2026. **Greater Victory:** 21 very low-income units are proposed to be located behind Greater Victory Church. **Seaside Market:** 32 housing units, with 7 affordable units, are proposed for this property. **Campus Town: approx.** 1,400 units, construction is anticipated later this year.

Council member Smith from Monterey stated clearly that Monterey won't be able to build 3,684 and will be lucky if they build between 200 and 300 units. The problem is the lack of water. Salinas and Del Rey Oaks have space for development.

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The second question centered on each city's three top priorities and challenges. I brought up some of Seaside's priorities, including our parks, which this council is dedicated to improving. Currently, Seaside is creating a parks master plan. There has been a 30% reduction in overall crime in the city, and we will continue to do better. We are spending money on infrastructure, including the repair of roads, and of course, working on our downtown. We are working with county officials who are considering building a new public library on the corner of Noche Buena and Broadway. Seaside's challenges include water, frivolous developer lawsuits, and forming a city identity.

The priorities for Del Rey Oaks are the development of Ft Ord land, safety and infrastructure issues, and upgrading technology. Challenges include staff retention and a tiny budget of 4.7 million (compared with 66 million for Seaside). They recently lost 20% of their staff when one of the five paid employees quit.

The Monterey City Council is going through a process to establish its goals for this year. Council Member Smith believes that there should be economic stability, water, and infrastructure. Their challenges include only having 2 million dollars in discretionary funds out of their 172 million budget. Only 31,000 people live in Monterey, but there are six million visitors annually. This is a considerable strain on the system.

The priorities for Salinas are housing, development, and infrastructure. Their plan for homeless people is working, and they want to continue and expand their reach. Challenges include staffing turnover and the changing state laws.

There were other questions concerning ADUs and rental registries, plus questions from the audience. I think the takeaway is that Seaside is doing a pretty good job in terms of housing.

Why Does the City Council Make Proclamations For Various Ethnic Groups?

The Seaside City Council proclaimed February Black History Month and March Irish American Heritage Month. Throughout the year, we make proclamations for other ethnic groups. This is done because we acknowledge that multiculturalism is woven into the fabric of Seaside and that all the groups are connected to our community. That being said, our Irish American population is only 2.2% compared with 36% of our Hispanic population being Mexican. To honor these two groups on or near St Patrick's Day, take a little green food coloring, put it into a Dos Equis, and read on to see the Irish-Mexican connection.



In 1846, thousands of immigrants, mostly Irish, joined the US army and were sent with Gen. Zachary Taylor's army to invade Mexico in what some historians have called a war of Manifest Destiny.

Dubious about why they were fighting a Catholic country and fed up with mistreatment from Anglo-Protestant officers, hundreds of Irish and other immigrants deserted Taylor's army and joined forces with Mexico. Led by Captain John Riley of County Galway, they called themselves the St. Patrick's Battalion---in Spanish, the San Patricios. They fought bravely in most of the campaigns of the two-year conflict, but their efforts failed to stem the Yankee onslaught. Soon, the US Army occupied the halls of Montezuma, and Mexico eventually surrendered, ceding nearly half its territory to the United States.

Toward the end of the conflict, at the Battle of Churubusco, 83 San Patricios were captured, and 72 were court-martialed. Of this number, 50 were sentenced to be hanged, and 16 were flogged and branded on their cheeks with the letter "D" for deserter.

Mexicans see them as heroes, honoring them every Sept. 12 with a special commemoration. In 1993, the Irish began their own ceremony to honor them in Clifden, Galway, Riley's hometown.

From *The San Patricios: Mexico's Fighting Irish* by Mark R. Day



Five Stars for Our Brave Employees Who Battled the February Storms

Five stars go to all city staff who worked during the recent storms. Seaside was hit with a lot of rain and wind this winter, which caused damage to houses and roadways around the city. During the rain, our public works department cleared drains and ensured debris wasn't causing any flooding. The public works department also had sandbag filling stations ready in two city areas. Our fire department was ready to take calls and help those in need, and our police department was also ready to help where needed. It takes a group effort to help our community, and our team was prepared for the challenges of Mother Nature.