

January 5, 2004

Honorable Mayor and Members of  
the Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular Meeting of  
January 13, 2004

## **CITY'S BANNER PROGRAM**

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the City Council receive and file the following report regarding the City's Banner Program.

### **Summary:**

The City presently has banner poles at five locations: Hermosa Avenue at Lyndon Avenue, Pier Avenue at Valley Drive, 10<sup>th</sup> Street at PCH, Aviation Boulevard at Prospect Avenue, and PCH at 1<sup>st</sup> Street. These poles were installed in the early '80's and were primarily used for civic related non-profit events. Approximately five years ago the City adopted a commercial banner program, which allowed commercial advertising at a rental rate of \$2,500 per month. Commercial banners were restricted to two sites: PCH at 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Aviation Boulevard at Prospect Avenue. The City used this program to raise funds for special projects such as the Vetter Windmill and others. Over the past two years they have primarily been used for generating funding for the Hermosa Beach Education Foundation.

A number of issues have developed which this report will address. The first issue is the structural capability of the poles to handle the increased size of the banners. The second issue came last summer when Caltrans informed the City that it could not display commercial advertising on PCH.

### **Issue No. 1 – Structural analysis of Banner Poles:**

There have been two incidents over the last year and a half that have caused staff concern that the banners are exceeding the capability of the existing poles. The first incident occurred in late 2002 when extreme wind loading caused a cable to break at Aviation and Prospect and damaged some car windshields. The second incident occurred in March, 2003 when extreme winds caused the poles at 1<sup>st</sup> and PCH to sway back and forth, loosening the anchor bolts and damaging the concrete foundation cap. Because of the safety concerns these two incidents raised, staff determined that a review of the size requirements for banners and methods of attachment was necessary.

The banner poles are 20–25 years old and have attachment points for banner cables welded by the manufacturer at the top of the poles spaced at 3-feet apart. The pole manufacturer's recommendations were most likely for a 3-foot tall banner to be supported with attachments to a cable at the top (with a 5-degree sag – not taut!) and the bottom corners attached to the bottom connection point on the pole with a tether. This method of hanging the banner was to minimize wind loading transferred to the poles.

Over the years these poles were modified with attachment points spaced 4-feet apart to accommodate the 4' x 40' banner. In addition to this change a second cable was added at the bottom and both cables were tightened very taut. These changes were made to make the banner more rigid minimizing the bouncing and flapping which made them difficult to read.

Unfortunately this rigidity also means that they induced much higher stresses in the poles. The next change that was implemented was to install two banners, one above the other. This was done at the Pier/ Valley location and the Aviation/Prospect location, where demand was the highest. This of course greatly exceeded the anticipated wind loads on the banner poles.

Staff contacted Ameron International Pole Company, the major manufacturer of these types of steel poles, to determine the original design requirements. It was requested that they run the calculations based upon design standards in place in the 1980's. The major difference was that the maximum wind velocity was set at 60 mph with a 1.3 gust factor. The present design standard requires an 80 mph wind velocity with same gust factor. The 4' x 40' banner still far exceeded allowable stresses (see attached structural calculations). These calculations assume worst case, solid and rigid banner installation

Due to safety concerns, staff has implemented the following changes to the banner program:

- ✂ No double banners are allowed on banner poles
- ✂ Bottom of banners is attached to pole with rope tethers only
- ✂ 4' x 40' banners are required to be open mesh fabric
- ✂ Maximum size of a solid banner material is 3' x 30'

#### Issue No. 2 – Commercial Banner Program:

Caltrans has issued the City a new encroachment permit for installation of banners at the PCH and 1<sup>st</sup> Street location. The banners are restricted from displaying any private advertisements (see attached copy of permit). The City has been working with State Assemblymember George Nakano's office to set up a meeting to review this requirement, but has not as yet confirmed a date. Staff recommends that the City continue the commercial program utilizing the Aviation at Prospect site, as already authorized by City Council. The original need for two locations never seemed to materialize. Granted, PCH was the preferred location with 60,000 average daily traffic (ADT). Aviation has a 30,000 ADT, Pier Avenue has a 19,500 ADT and Hermosa at Lyndon has a 14,800 ADT.

Staff recommends that the Education Foundation's request (letter dated December 10, 2003 attached) to use the Pier at Valley location be denied. The large majority of civic oriented banner requests (see attached memo dated January 5, 2004) received in 2003 want the Pier Avenue location. The Council has guaranteed the Education Foundation at least 6 months per year for their banner, which would eliminate the majority of these other requests.

Staff also considered the Education Foundation's request to move the Aviation and 10<sup>th</sup> Street banner poles to span the northbound PCH right turn lane to eastbound Aviation. The thinking here is that this location would also be very visible to traffic on PCH. Staff recommends against this request and submits the following comments:

- ✂ The median island appears to all be in Caltrans' right-of-way and therefore could not be permitted.
- ✂ There are serious concerns regarding adding any further distractions to the drivers in this high-speed right turn lane due to potential conflicts with the pedestrian crosswalk and the parked vehicles and driveways immediately east of this location. This is a very high accident location.
- ✂ There is not adequate clearance from overhead power lines.
- ✂ Maintenance crews would have to close the ramp to all traffic to raise and lower banners.

- ✂✂ Potential view impacts to nearby Hotel and businesses would require a public hearing.
- ✂✂ Cost of \$50-75,000 to meet present building codes.

**Fiscal Impact:**

None at this time.

**Attachments:**

1. Structural calculations
2. Caltrans Permit
3. Memo dated 1/5/04

Respectfully submitted,

Concur:

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Richard D. Morgan, P.E.  
Director of Public Works/City Engineer

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Stephen R. Burrell  
City Manager

Noted for fiscal impact:

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Viki Copeland  
Finance Director