



**CITY OF PACIFICA
COUNCIL AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT**

7/24/2017

SUBJECT:

Post Fourth of July Report to City Council

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Move to accept the Post Fourth of July Report to City Council.

STAFF CONTACT:

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BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

This year, the City of Pacifica continued its tradition of being festive and active during the 4th of July holiday. Planning for holiday activities, City departments worked collaboratively to assure a pleasant and safe holiday celebration for community members and visitors.

Planning for the Holiday

While planning the 4th of July event this year, meetings were held involving staff from the Pacifica Police Department, North County Fire Authority and Pacifica Department of Public Works. The goal was to engage in a collaborative effort to provide a safe and clean environment for community members to enjoy the holiday. Police Department and Fire Department personnel reviewed and discussed their respective operational plans to assure effective and timely response in the event of an emergency during the July 4th festivities. Police Department and Public Works staff addressed logistical considerations to assure proper equipment and signage was deployed.

In the days leading to the 4th of July holiday, Police Department personnel erected a lighted sign board on State Route One with message reminding citizens that illegal fireworks were not allowed in Pacifica, and of the potential for a \$1,000 fine for violations. In addition, posters were distributed within the City educating community members regarding the new Illegal Fireworks Social Host Ordinance, with the theme of "Host a Show, Pay the Dough." This information was followed up by press releases issued to local print and web based media. In addition, anti-litter posters were distributed to local businesses with the intention of keeping Pacifica clean not only during the July 4th holiday, but year-round.

The City of Pacifica is one of very few cities in the Bay Area that permits the sale and use of Safe and Sane fireworks within City boundaries. As non-profit groups prepared to fundraise by selling Safe and Sane fireworks, the North County Fire Authority conducted inspections of the fireworks stands to ensure compliance with safety and Fire Code regulations. Staff from the Police Department and North County Fire Authority met with non-profit groups selling Safe and

Sane Fireworks in advance of the beginning of fireworks sales to assure they were aware related codes and procedures to assure a safe and lawful operation.

In final preparation for the July 4th festivities, the Department of Public Works deployed signage to inform citizens of parking lot closures taking effect in the evening hours of the holiday, as well as to educate them regarding the municipal codes affecting the beach areas. Public Works also deployed barricades to the Linda Mar Beach parking lot to create an area for the Police Department to deploy the Command Post Trailer as a hub for the evening enforcement activities.

Activities on July 4th

The Illegal Fireworks Task Force, created by Resolution of the City Council, provided recommendations regarding public outreach and enforcement strategies relating to illegal fireworks. Recommendations were largely focused on communicating with our community. Prior to July 4th, community engagement activities increased and included the following:

- Educational messages on social media regarding illegal fireworks
- Education outreach via the Pacifica School District
- Information dissemination regarding the Nail 'em smartphone application
- On-camera interviews with local television media regarding the new Social Host Ordinance as well as the Nail 'em smartphone applications
- Contact with more than 30 habitual illegal firework violators

Due to this increased public outreach, contact between the community and the Police Department was frequent during the two weeks prior to July 4th. Specifically, community members voiced their concerns regarding illegal fireworks, and were helpful in identifying those who use illegal fireworks in their neighborhoods each year. Police Department staff became aware of conversations on various social media platforms involving those who use illegal fireworks, promising to “crash” the Nail 'em application with false reports. Conversations also occurred where the sentiment of “This is Pacifica, this is what we do,” relating to illegal fireworks were also seen. Outreach efforts drew a large response from community members who were grateful for these efforts. The communication between the Police Department and community was higher than staff had ever seen regarding the July 4th illegal fireworks problem.

This year, the Pacifica Police Department rolled out the free Nail 'em smartphone application, and began to receive reports within hours of becoming operational on June 23. The first date with double-digit reports of illegal fireworks via the application was on July 2, when 13 reports were received. There were 19 reports on July 3 and 323 reports on July 4th. Reports dropped to single digits until July 10, when the application was disabled.

When a community member made a report via the Nail 'em application, it generated an email to the Pacifica Police Department. Staff would then forward the email to our communications center in South San Francisco, where a call for service was then created, and an officer

dispatched.

On July 4th at about 10 PM, staff stopped forwarding the application emails to the communications center due to several reasons:

- Duplicate reports of the same incidents were being reported via telephone and the application
- False reports were being made via the application
- The overall calls for service during peak hours minimized the effectiveness of the application
- Community members reported being frustrated that application reports were not being immediately handled by officers

Although staff was not forwarding the emails from the application after 10 PM, the emails were continually monitored for intelligence purposes.

Staff found that community members were not using the application features to assist in pinpointing locations of illegal fireworks.

Overall, the efforts of the Illegal Fireworks Task Force were a success, specifically in the area of public outreach. The work of the Task Force has laid a great foundation for years to come.

On July 4th, the Department of Public Works assured the proper number of trash receptacles were in place and were being emptied in the designated Safe and Sane fireworks discharge areas. In addition, Public Works staff kept high use public facilities such as beach areas and public restrooms clean and operational.

North County Fire Authority personnel took a proactive approach to fire prevention during the holiday evening. Fire companies, Fire Prevention Inspectors and Chief Officers patrolled neighborhoods to provide a presence in the community. Fire personnel interacted with citizens, educating them on fire safety and the penalties associated with the use of illegal fireworks. Fire companies pre-positioned throughout Pacifica to avoid traffic congestion delays, assuring a quick response to fires and other emergency situations.

All sworn staff of the Pacifica Police Department worked the 4th of July holiday. Enforcement efforts were conducted by officers working in teams. Beach teams, neighborhood teams, and patrol officers directed their enforcement with a zero-tolerance approach to illegal fireworks. Due to the personnel numbers required for safe enforcement, the Pacifica Police Department augmented their staff with a total of nine officers from Brisbane, Broadmoor, Colma and South San Francisco Police Departments.

Beach teams patrolled Linda Mar Beach, as well as Rockaway Beach and associated parking lots. Safe and Sane fireworks were only allowed on a defined portion of Linda Mar Beach, and two beach parking lot areas designated for the use of Safe and Sane fireworks.

Between 7:00 PM and Midnight, the prime hours for illegal fireworks activity, a total of 33 officers were on duty in Pacifica. This number includes Reserve Officers, allied law

enforcement officers and Pacifica Police officers.

Patrol officers handled routine calls for service, which tend to increase during the evening hours of the 4th of July. Fireworks related calls for service made up the majority of the calls responded to by beat officers. As shown in the table below, fireworks calls and total calls for service have tended to increase in recent years.

Year	July 4 th Firework Calls (All Day)	July 4 th (5pm-Midnight) Fireworks Calls	Total Calls (All Call Types)
2012	82	71	144
2013	105	94	161
2014	107	104	157
2015	112	97	168
2016	113	103	176
2017	238	201	334

Given that some reports via telephone for illegal fireworks activity were also duplicated on the Nail 'em application, the known false reports made via the application, and the fact that staff stopped logging calls for service via the application at 10 PM, it is highly likely that the calls for service are skewed.

Reports by officers and comments from community members were mixed regarding illegal fireworks activity. Many felt that in some areas commonly known for illegal fireworks problems, the activity was far less this year. However, areas that were seen to have significant activity this year were described as worse than in years past. Most noted that the period of time the illegal fireworks were being discharged this year was shorter than in past years, possibly due to the holiday falling on a Tuesday.

Fireworks enforcement resulted in eleven administrative citations being issued on July 4th. One additional citation was issued on July 5th, for a total of twelve. While there were no major law enforcement incidents noted this year, the prominent complaint amongst citizens was loud noise coming from the discharge of illegal fireworks.

The North County Fire Authority responded to six fire incidents in Pacifica between 8:00 AM on July 4th and 8:00 AM on July 5th. Of these fires, all six were debris fires. There were no structure or vegetation fires reported during this period.

Post July 4th activity consisted of neighborhood and beach clean-up efforts. Department of Public Works staff worked to clean neighborhoods littered with fireworks refuse, and along with the Pacifica Beach Coalition, monitored clean-up efforts of the non-profit fireworks sales groups for several weekends that followed.

The collaboration between the Police Department, Department of Public Works, North County Fire Authority and Pacifica Beach Coalition has led to another successful, safe 4th of July holiday in Pacifica.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

Decline to accept the Post Fourth of July Report to Council and provide staff with further direction.

RELATION TO CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND WORK PLAN:

Staff work which resulted in a July 4th holiday free of any major incidents supports the City Council goal of “**Maintaining a Safe Community.**”

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ORIGINATED BY:

Police

ATTACHMENT LIST:

None (TXT)