



Policy / Operations Committee Meeting of June 13, 2024

Santa Cruz Port Commission  
**Policy / Operations Committee Meeting**  
**MINUTES**

*Committee Members Present:*  
Steve Reed, Committee-Chair  
Darren Gertler, Commissioner

*Staff Present:*  
Holland MacLaurie, Port Director  
Blake Anderson, Harbormaster  
Renee Ghisletta, Admin. Services Officer  
Hilary Weisert, Admin. Assistant

**SPECIAL PUBLIC SESSION – 2:00 PM**

Committee-Chair Reed called the special public session to order at 2:00 PM at the Harbor Public Meeting Room; 365 A Lake Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA (hybrid meeting platform).

1. Oral Communication
2. Review Current Activities of Salty Sheep Ministries' Program (Ryan Althaus)

**Discussion:** The Policy and Operations Committee met to review and discuss the current and proposed activities of the Salty Sheep Ministries' program.

Harbormaster Anderson stated that Mr. Althaus (who was not in attendance at the meeting) currently utilizes his vessel to provide free and accessible marine excursions to the public, including free community sails, free floating church services, and free outings for local nonprofits supporting individuals with disabilities. He stated that Mr. Althaus has submitted a 6-pak charter permit application, but prior to presenting the application to the full Commission for review and deliberation, staff is seeking guidance from the Policy and Operations Committee on whether Mr. Althaus' current utilization of his vessel is in compliance with Port District regulations.

The Committee reviewed and discussed Mr. Ryan Althaus' current utilization of his vessel and provided the following determinations:

- Since no consideration is being exchanged for Mr. Althaus' current free and accessible marine excursions, the activities do not violate Port District Ordinance Section 223 – Charter Boat Operations or U.S. Code of Federal Regulations CFR§ 24.10-1 (Passengers for Hire).
- The current activities of the Salty Sheep program do not meet the criteria for Business Use of Slip in accordance with Port District ordinance Section 302(e).

As a result, the Committee directed staff to proceed with preparing Mr. Althaus' charter permit application for presentation to the full Commission.

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed charter operations and the safety concerns associated with Mr. Althaus' organized boating activities.

Harbormaster Anderson stated that while Mr. Althaus has addressed the safety concerns in his charter permit application, the Commission will need to carefully consider this aspect as part of its review and deliberation.

In response to a question posed by Commissioner Gertler, Harbormaster Anderson confirmed that staff has not previously presented a charter permit application to the full Commission for approval that included serious safety concerns. He stated that there are currently no safety concerns associated with other approved charter operators.

Committee-Chair Reed questioned whether potential mitigation measures could be implemented to address the safety concerns (i.e., requiring charter guests to provide signed waivers to the Harbor Office prior to boarding the vessel).

Staff responded that while the Commission can implement special provisions for individual charter permits, that process is typically reserved for large-scale charter operations, not 6-paks (all 6-pak charter permits are issued under the same standard conditions). Additionally, the impacts associated with tracking and monitoring the real-time business operations of a charter operator would be unduly cumbersome.

Audience member, Liz Murphy, expressed concerns about the safety issues related to Mr. Althaus' charter operations and requested that the Commission carefully consider that aspect as part of their review.

To summarize, the Committee directed staff to proceed with preparing Mr. Althaus' charter permit application for presentation to the full Commission.

Committee-Chair Reed adjourned the special public committee meeting at 2:42 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. MacLaurie', written over a horizontal line.

Holland MacLaurie, Port Director