Pier 1 The Embarcadero
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SAN FRANCISCO PORT COMMISSION - MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Meeting Date: September 15, 2026

Closed Session: 2:30 PM
Open Session: 3:15 PM

Port Commission Hearing Room
Ferry Building, Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94111

PORT COMMISSIONERS

Stephen Engblom, President
Ken McNeely, Vice President
Willie Adams, Commissioner
Vanessa Tapia Hartigan, Commissioner
Rich Lee, Commissioner

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michael Martin

COMMISSION SECRETARY

Jenica Liu

LINK TO VIDEO RECORDING

https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/player/clip/53161?view_id=92&redirect=true

1. **Call to Order / Roll Call**

   President Engblom called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. All Commissioners – Engblom, McNeely, Adams, Hartigan, and Lee – were present.

2. **Approval of Minutes – August 11, 2026**

   ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Adams, second by Vice President McNeely. Approved unanimously.

3. **Public Comment on Executive Session**

   No public comment received.

4. **Executive Session**

   A. Vote on whether to hold a closed session and to invoke the attorney-client privilege regarding the matters listed below as Conference with Legal Counsel.

   ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Adams, second by Vice President McNeely. Passed unanimously.

   i. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL AND REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR – This is specifically authorized under California Government Code Section 54956.8. *This session is closed to any non-City/Port representative: (Discussion Item)

      1. Property: Pier 24 Annex
         Person Negotiating: Port: Scott Landsittel, Deputy Director, Real Estate & Development; David Le, Property Manager
         Negotiating Parties: Brian Holland, Pier 24 Location, LLC
         Under Negotiation: __ Price __ Terms of Payment X Both

         Port's negotiators seek direction from the Port Commission on factors affecting the price and terms of payment, including use, term, rent structure, rent credits and other market lease incentives to secure investment in and occupancy of Pier 24 Annex for use supporting temporary events and exhibitions, with conditions on public access and use.

         PRESENT:
         President Stephen Engblom
         Vice President Ken McNeely
         Commissioner Willie Adams
         Commissioner Vanessa Tapia Hartigan
         Commissioner Rich Lee

ALSO PRESENT:
Michael Martin, Executive Director
Jenica Liu, Commission Secretary
Scott Landsittel, Deputy Director, Real Estate and Development
David Le, Property Manager
Annette Mathai-Jackson, Deputy City Attorney
Justin Bigelow, Deputy City Attorney

5. Reconvene in Open Session

A. Possible report on actions taken in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.1 and San Francisco Administrative Code Section 67.12.

No report.

B. Vote in open session on whether to disclose any or all executive session discussions pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.1 and San Francisco Administrative Code Section 67.12.

ACTION: Commissioner Adams moved to reconvene in open session without disclosing closed session discussions. Vice President McNeely seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

6. Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement

The Commission Secretary read the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgment.

7. Announcements – Quiet noise-making devices, how to make public comment

The Commission Secretary read the announcements.

8. Public Comment on Items Not Listed on the Agenda

No public comment received.

9. Executive

A. Executive Director's Report
- **i. Economic Vitality**
- **ii. Equity**
- **iii. Resilience**
- **iv. Key Project Updates**

Director Martin presented his report, beginning with the recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month, including its historical significance and upcoming cultural celebrations supported by the Port. Director Martin highlighted the

Foodwise Pop-Ups on the Plaza event celebrating Latino and Latina makers, scheduled for October 3 at the Ferry Plaza. He also announced the arrival of the Mexican tall ship ARM Cuauhtémoc, which would be open for public tours during its September 23–27 visit.

Director Martin then reported on the Port's participation in the 42nd annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, noting stewardship activities at the Pier 94 wetlands and Islais Creek Park. These volunteer events support long-term ecological restoration efforts, including meadow recovery following the 2025 accidental fire.

Moving north, Director Martin provided updates on the Fisherman's Wharf Forward initiative. He described the successful opening of Alioto's Plaza, which drew strong community participation and positive feedback. The Woods Beer & Wine Company is preparing to open a new taproom adjacent to the plaza. Director Martin also outlined progress on long-term Wharf planning efforts, including resilience strategies and ongoing public outreach.

He announced the launch of the new Waterfront Walkabout, a monthly public art and cultural activation series spanning Pier 14 to Pier 15. Turning to major events, Director Martin reported on the successful hosting of the 2026 Pokémon World Championships drone shows, which brought tens of thousands of visitors to the waterfront. He also previewed preparations for Fleet Week 2026, which will feature ship tours, landside activities, and the Blue Angels air show.

Director Martin concluded by recognizing former Port Commissioners Gail Gilman and Steven Lee for their years of service. Numerous Port staff, community members, and organizational partners shared remarks acknowledging their leadership, commitment to equity, advocacy for small businesses, and significant contributions to the Port's mission.

Public Comment

Several individuals provided public comment, offering remarks of appreciation for former Commissioners Gilman and Lee, including:

- Brad Benson – Praised former Commissioners Gilman and Lee for their dedication, thoughtful policy engagement, and steadfast support of staff, especially through complex and sometimes tedious government work.
- Dominic Moreno – Thanked both former commissioners for their advocacy for maritime operations, support of fishermen, commitment to Fleet Week and federal partnerships, and for their personal kindness and encouragement.
- Amy Cohen – Acknowledged the former commissioners' understanding of economic development and their support for activation efforts,

expressing appreciation for their insight into community and business needs.

- Bri Maughan – Offered gratitude on behalf of the Fisherman's Wharf community, crediting both former commissioners for their leadership, partnership, and longstanding support of neighborhood organizations and events.
- Boris Delepine – Commended both former commissioners for their political insight, advocacy for equity and small businesses, and critical role in sustaining the waterfront through challenging post-COVID years.
- Alice Rogers – Thanked both former commissioners for their value-driven work and for consistently uplifting neighborhoods in the southern waterfront, recognizing their attention to community voices.
- David Beaupre – Highlighted Commissioner Gilman's passion for affordable housing and wayfinding improvements, and Commissioner Lee's commitment to water recreation and support for small businesses and fishermen.

Commissioner Comment

Following the close of public comment, the Commission shifted to remarks recognizing former Commissioners Gail Gilman and Steven Lee. Commissioner Hartigan noted the momentum created by their past leadership and expressed admiration for their legacy, describing service on the Commission as a "labor of love" and acknowledging the high standard they set. Commissioner Lee echoed this sentiment, stating that he hoped to learn from their example and appreciated their kindness and guidance.

Vice President McNeely reflected on working with both former commissioners during his first year, praising Commissioner Gilman's dedication to equity and governance and Commissioner Lee's consistent advocacy for small businesses and attention to the real-world impact of Commission policies. He thanked them for their leadership and mentorship.

Commissioner Adams offered an extended tribute, recalling their steady leadership during the Port Director transition, their advocacy for working-class communities, fishermen, and small businesses, and their deep respect for Port staff. He emphasized their integrity, commitment during the challenges of COVID, and lasting impact on Fisherman's Wharf and the Port overall. He stated that their names would be remembered for generations.

President Engblom also thanked both former commissioners, highlighting Commissioner Gilman's commitment to housing and community voice, and Commissioner Lee's entrepreneurial perspective and practical expertise, which helped the Commission think more innovatively. He commended both for exemplifying the best of San Francisco's civic spirit.

Former Commissioner Lee reflected on his service, discussing the challenges of the pandemic era, his advocacy for small businesses, and his belief in supporting tenants' recovery. He emphasized the strength of Port staff and expressed gratitude for being invited back. Former Commissioner Gilman spoke about the seven-and-a-half miles of waterfront as a public trust and underscored the responsibility to balance economic needs with community access and equity. She thanked staff for their dedication and urged continued innovation and public stewardship.

Commissioners then discussed the Executive Director's Report, reflecting on the Alioto's Plaza opening, the momentum building at Fisherman's Wharf, and the importance of equitable waterfront activation. Commissioners discussed the Blue Economy Initiative—including strong early leasing interest—and expressed interest in developing a formal drone policy and broader strategy in response to the success of recent drone shows.

10. Real Estate & Development

A. Informational presentation with possible action to increase the Port's sole-source grant to the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefits District not-to-exceed amount by $1,953,902 and extend the term by 12 months. (Resolution 26-45)

Amy Cohen of the Real Estate division presented a proposal to amend the Port's sole-source grant to the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District by increasing the not-to-exceed amount by $1,953,902 and extending the term by 12 months. Ms. Cohen summarized accomplishments since 2023, including daily ambassador presence, beautification and public-realm improvements, marketing initiatives, and activation programming that has supported economic recovery. She explained that the amendment would allow continuity of services while the Port explores joining the CBD as a formal assessment-paying member beginning in 2028.

Public Comment

No public comment received.

Commissioner Comment

Vice President McNeely sought clarification on how the Port's relationship with the CBD would evolve after the grant period and how future assessments would be structured, noting the importance of aligning with other CBD models the Port already participates in. Commissioner Adams asked whether the grant was intended to continue indefinitely and requested further explanation of how tenant assessments might work under a future CBD membership model. Commissioner Hartigan asked for additional historical context about the prior Portside CBD, funding sources, and how assessments would be calculated going forward,

highlighting the importance of understanding the long-term framework. President Engblom emphasized the need for the Port to better communicate the economic impact of its investment—such as translating increased foot traffic into tangible revenue estimates—so the public can clearly understand why an $8 million investment at Fisherman's Wharf is justified and aligned with the Port's mandate to optimize the waterfront. Collectively, Commissioners expressed support for the CBD's work while requesting clearer articulation of the return on investment and the expected long-term benefits of joining the district.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Adams, second by Vice President McNeely. Passed unanimously. Resolution 26-45 adopted.

B. Informational presentation with possible action recommending the formation of a new Community Facilities District for the Pier 70 Historic Core with Historic Pier 70, LLC (aka, Orton Development, Inc.) under the Port's Lease Disposition and Development Agreement and Master Lease L-15814, each with Historic Pier 70, LLC to the Board of Supervisors and approving amendments to Master Lease L-15814 to facilitate the formation of the Community Facilities District. (Resolutions 26-46 and 26-47)

Assistant Deputy Director Wyatt Donnelly-Landolt presented an informational update and requested approval of actions to form a revised Community Facilities District (CFD) for the Pier 70 Historic Core. Mr. Donnelly-Landolt reviewed the successful redevelopment of eight historic buildings totaling 338,000 square feet, now home to tenants including Astranis, Gusto, Y Combinator, and Restoration Hardware.

He explained that the original CFD structure contemplated both facilities and services taxes; however, following economic impacts and tenant concerns, staff now proposed implementing a single services tax to fund long-term maintenance and address an identified budget gap for Crane Cove Park. This revised structure would reduce the overall tax burden while providing a stable revenue stream for ongoing services.

Orton Development President James Madsen delivered remarks highlighting the public-private partnership and the project's benefits to the waterfront.

Public Comment

No public comment received.

Commissioner Comment

Commissioner Hartigan thanked staff for the clarity of the presentation and asked whether eliminating the facilities tax and restructuring the CFD would create funding gaps over time, especially given ongoing recovery and anticipated growth in occupancy. She also inquired whether the structure could be revisited in the future should conditions change. Commissioner Adams offered supportive remarks, reflecting on his long familiarity with the site and the evolution of the

Pier 70 redevelopment, noting that the adjustment to the CFD structure was consistent with past adaptations the Port has made as circumstances shift. Vice President McNeely indicated he had no further questions, adding a light-hearted comment about the departure of wildlife from the buildings.

President Engblom sought additional clarification on the CFD's applicability—specifically asking whether the Historic Core CFD would be affected by future residential development elsewhere at Pier 70—and inquired about early outreach to the Board of Supervisors as part of the forthcoming formation process. He concluded by noting the presence of innovative tenants such as Y Combinator and Astranis at Pier 70 and expressed interest in engaging them in the Port's Blue Economy Initiative, suggesting they would be strong participants in advancing that work.

ACTION: Motion by Vice President McNeely to adopt the resolutions with an amendment referencing Board of Supervisors File No. 140729, second by Commissioner Adams. Passed unanimously. Resolutions 26-46 and 26-47 adopted.

11. Planning & Environment

A. Informational presentation on the Concept Design for the Recreation and Parks Department Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park redesign and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Port and Recreation and Parks Department for the management of Port lands within the two parks.

Port Planner Nico Wright and RPD Project Manager Eoanna Goodwin presented an informational update on the renovation of Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park. The project aims to create a unified, accessible, and vibrant waterfront gateway by improving circulation, planting, lighting, recreation amenities, and event infrastructure across approximately five acres.

Ms. Goodwin described how community feedback shaped the concept design, with strong public support for increased green space, better accessibility, flexible event areas, and enhanced safety. The redesign includes expanded recreational zones, improved nighttime activation capacity, and stormwater-friendly landscape features along the Embarcadero edge. Construction is scheduled to begin in December 2026 with completion expected within one year. A memorandum of understanding between the Port and RPD will be presented later in 2026.

Public Comment

No public comment received.

Commissioner Comment

Vice President McNeely asked for confirmation of the construction timeline, clarified that the full park construction period would begin in December and extend for one year, and complimented the design renderings as exciting and

visually compelling. He also posed questions about the scale and design of the Market Street entryway, noting that it appeared narrow relative to the size of the overall park and suggesting it should create a strong sense of arrival for visitors.

Commissioner Hartigan expressed enthusiasm for the project and compared its potential impact to the Presidio Tunnel Tops, highlighting how the redesigned park could become a signature destination that unifies the Embarcadero waterfront with downtown. She noted the strong promise of the proposed improvements and the quality of the design work.

Commissioner Lee asked about how the project incorporates considerations for flood protection and sea-level rise. Staff explained the deliberate placement of stormwater gardens and a flexible edge along the Embarcadero to allow adaptation to future conditions.

Commissioner Adams offered supportive remarks and reflected on the legacy of Sue Bierman, noting her long public service on the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Port Commission. He described the redesigned park as a fitting tribute to her contributions and a continuation of her work advocating for public spaces.

President Engblom closed the discussion by thanking staff and emphasizing the importance of strong interdepartmental coordination for a complex civic project of this scale. He noted that the park represents a unique condition along the waterfront—public parkland located landside of the Embarcadero—and encouraged the Port to consider how its programming and management can complement the redesigned space. He highlighted the opportunity to better link activities at the Ferry Building, the farmer's market, and the new park, and expressed enthusiasm for working with partners to ensure the Port keeps pace with the level of activation the redesigned park will attract.

No action was required on this informational item.

12. New Business

Director Martin outlined several upcoming follow-up items, including an update on the Blue Economy Initiative, development of a drone policy and broader drone strategy, and a return-on-investment framework to accompany the next Fisherman's Wharf CBD item. Commissioner Hartigan requested that activation efforts also return as a formal topic, noting recent ideas such as drone activations, the Art Loop, and opportunities for future programming around the Embarcadero as new public spaces come online. Director Martin agreed and reiterated that activation strategy is tied closely to the Port's partnership with the Downtown CBD.

President Engblom added that, during construction of the Embarcadero Plaza/Sue Bierman Park project, the Port should explore interim activation or open-space programming on Port-controlled sites to serve as a temporary "relief valve" for the public. Director Martin committed to evaluating options.

Commissioner Adams asked a procedural question confirming the next meeting date of October 20, which Director Martin affirmed, adding that staff would return with a report on the upcoming Fleet Week.

13. Adjournment

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Adams, second by Vice President McNeely. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.