

# Slip Renters Must Now 'Use It Or Lose It'

By JOHN McNICHOLAS  
Sentinel Staff Writer

"Use it or lose it," the Santa Cruz Port Commission has told slip renters in the Small Craft Harbor.

The commission Tuesday approved a new slip rental agreement which includes a provision that those who moor a boat in one of the harbor's 1,000 slips must take the boat out of the harbor at least 10 times a year, or face forfeiting the slip.

Harbormaster Steve Scheiblaue explained the provision would ensure proper use of land which belongs to the public — essentially, the 45,000 residents of the port district.

A good analogy, he said after the meet-

ing, was the Federal Communication Commission's management of the airwaves: frequencies are limited, and the commission may determine what their proper use is.

Because of their limited number, slips in the harbor are at a premium. The waiting list stretches to 1,200 applicants who must wait from five to twelve years for a berth.

"Proper use" of the harbor, he said, is for those who want to use it, not for those who want to store boats.

"Up to 200 of the boats there go out less than ten times in one year," he said, "40 or 50 go out three times or less."

To enforce the rule, the staff will make a survey of all the boats in the harbor,

although "We have a pretty good idea right now" which boats aren't used consistently, Scheiblaue said.

"We inventory each dock every week, check the boats and slips, and the boats in poor repair, with nobody there....You can tell the symptoms."

A list of about 100 boats will be made initially, he said, and the owners will be told to check in with the office when they take their boat out. They may call in advance, or use the marine radio, which is in operation 24 hours a day, to notify the harbor staff.

"We'll put them on notice if they don't use it during the next year, they will be in violation of the rental agreement," Scheiblaue said.

"We expect to hear some screams, but the commission, the staff, and the majority of boaters are prepared to hear those screams. There's such a list, and it's such a wait, it's really a shame."

Boats which may go out only once a year, but for extended cruises, will be considered on an individual basis, the harbormaster said.

No boat may be used exclusively to a residence under current regulations, he said.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary building on Lake Avenue was packed with people who wanted to comment on the new document Tuesday night.

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One reaction to the agreement, expressed by more than one person, was that while it spelled out in detail the duties and obligations of the renters, it failed to specify what services they could expect from the district.

The document seemed rather one-sided, they said.

Board members agreed. And, in spite of a warning by the district's attorney, Lindell Van Dyke, that such specifications might be "an invitation to sue us," they changed the document to read, the district "will provide and maintain in good order" the facilities there.

Other language was tempered as well.

Another change included was in the fees for late rent payments. After 15 days, the renters will pay a flat \$10 fee, instead of 10

percent of their slip rental fee.

The agreement, which hasn't been changed since 1974, reflects ordinances that have been adopted since that time, Scheiblaue said. It also reflects the changes in government trends, the harbor itself and "the attitude of the district," he said.

In other action, the commission adopted a resolution enabling the district to disconnect any boat producing "stray current" if the owners do not correct the problem after notification.

Stray current can corrode nearby metal fittings and, at worst, can be a safety hazard.

An increased surcharge — from 20 to 50 percent — on slip rentals by non-concessionaire businesses in the harbor also was discussed. Action was put off until next month's meeting, however.