

A Stormy Session At Harbor Meeting

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Two new, highly controversial appointees to the Santa Cruz Port District Commission ran into heavy oratorical seas at a stormy commission meeting Monday night.

Commission Chairman Sally DiGirolamo and Commissioner Phil Baldwin heard their recent appointments to the five-member commission termed: "an insult to the intelligence of the the port district."

.. And the same speaker, Bert Holland, added: "It is suggested that you graciously resign from this board."

A crowd estimated at from 175 to 200 persons roared approval of the suggestion. But another resident, Harry Stoll, got the floor to say:

"As a district resident and taxpayer I hope the two of you stay on the board for a long time. You were appointed by the city council and the board of supervisors to this body."

But that was virtually the last statement of support given by anyone in the audience to DiGirolamo and Baldwin.

For almost three hours in the Branciforte Junior High School auditorium the big crowd of fishermen and recreational boaters expressed numerous concerns about the future of the

harbor for as long as "political" appointees with little knowledge of boating and boaters' problems sit on the commission.

DiGirolamo bore the brunt of the storm, partly because of her position as commission chairman but primarily because of past criticisms she has made of the district tax rate, the lack of a park at the harbor and the cost of harbor maintenance.

With the crowd openly hostile from the outset, and with passions rising as the meeting progressed, DiGirolamo denied that she is opposed to the yacht harbor, saying:

"You may be relieved to know that I am concerned for this harbor, that I want to see this harbor prosper, that I am anxious that the No. 1 problem of the harbor, the shoaling, be solved.

"I have nothing but the kindest feelings for the commercial fishermen who use this harbor. My husband's family has had fishermen in it all the way back, I think, to the time of Jesus Christ. I am very interested in the commercial fishermen, I can assure you."

Someone in the audience then replied, "Name dropper."

See Back Page

Stormy Seas At Harbor Board Meet

FROM PAGE 1

DiGirolamo said she is very concerned to make the harbor available to everyone, but denied a rumor she intends to have the slip gates removed. She announced she plans to bring the city and harbor closer together, and she defended the appointment of Baldwin and herself to the commission by saying:

"The city council and the (county) supervisors decided that they want their representatives on this board because it is a tax levying agency. We feel that elected officials should be on agencies that levy taxes because we can be held responsible by the voters."

DiGirolamo concluded her address with the words: "I have no ill will to anyone. I ask you to give me a chance to show my good faith."

Baldwin said his objective is to make the harbor self-sufficient "at the earliest possible date." But, he said flatly that there are some 80,000 residents in the district, that these pay over \$200,000 per year in taxes to support the harbor and that "they feel ripped off, they don't see any benefits to them. It is valuable, I think, to have elected officials serving on the commission."

After the speeches, the storm broke for fair. DiGirolamo finally used her nameplate as a gavel and said abruptly: "This meeting is adjourned."

The storm broke after DiGirolamo told the crowd she wants a tax cut of 5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation and that she proposes to work toward this at budget time. She also upset the crowd by insisting the harbor is obliged by terms of its use permit from the city to provide a park there.

"You already have the park on Frederick Street," a woman called out, alluding to the fact that Frederick Street has two parks now, both near the harbor. DiGirolamo has often been criticized for getting two parks into her neighborhood, so the crowd loved the comment.

But DiGirolamo, like Baldwin, insisted they had to represent all in the district, the nonboaters as well as the boaters. After a boater had said, "There's nothing we can do, is there, to get you off the board, we're just an audience here, aren't we?" DiGirolamo replied: "You are expressing the same frustration that other taxpayers have expressed about this district for years."

DiGirolamo was challenged by Commissioners Warner Wilson and Alan Simpkins on the harbor's obligation to pro-

vide a park. Simpkins showed the application for expansion of the harbor to the upper basin, only place a park could be placed, and said there is nothing in the document about a park. Wilson said he had looked everywhere and had never seen the obligation documented.

DiGirolamo said she has the document and will show it.

Simpkins told the new commissioners, "It is quite a while since we have had such a substantial change and there is quite a bit of apprehension on the part of the boaters, Port Director Gerald Barney and the harbor staff because of criticisms about mismanagement and the like."

Simpkins called for the criticisms to be clarified, for constructive discussion of harbor problems, for a big effort to let the general public know what the harbor means to the economy of the whole area.

Earlier, numerous fishermen said they are already being pinched to the wall by high costs, inability to use the harbor all the time (its entrance channel is now plugged by sand). One fisherman said he makes only about \$6,000 per year and that if slip rents are increased or fuel prices go up "I'll go under."

Al Cheney, a district resident, called for appointment of a fisherman to the commission, and that call was heard by Councilwoman Carole DePalma and she told the Sentinel after the meeting: "That is a good idea and I'll propose it to the council. We never said everyone on the commission has to be from either the council or the supervisors."

Commissioner G. William Domhoff denounced some in the crowd for "their bullying tactics and remarks."

But the crowd majority wanted two new commissioners and they let DiGirolamo and Baldwin know that.

The fear about increased slip rents stems from beliefs that if taxes are lowered as DiGirolamo wants, the harbor will have to charge more rent to make up the difference. And numerous boatowners contended they already pay a total of a million dollars annually here for personal property taxes, then must pay a possessory tax and high rentals.

NYSE Fire

NEW YORK (AP) — Trading on the New York Stock Exchange was halted for more than an hour this morning by what an exchange spokesman described as a minor electrical fire.