

City launches new Community Improvement webpage detailing all code enforcement activities, including group home information

The City's Community Improvement Division has created a new web page that will provide visitors with a host of information regarding various categories of code enforcement activities.

Click here to view that page.

Visitors to the page can get lists of the code enforcement activities throughout the City such as building code violations, property maintenance violations, inoperable vehicles, and group home complaints. Click here.

For example, for group homes, the webpage provides information regarding group homes that have received conditional use permits to operate, state licensed facilities, pending group home applications, homes that have been issued citations, closed locations and homes currently under review. Click here.

The page also has links to information related to medical marijuana uses permitted by Measure X and garage sales.

The page also has contact information, phone numbers and links to file nuisance complaints.

Residents and web page visitors can call a duty officer/main hotline at (714) 754-5638 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or use the City's Costa Mesa Connect service here.

For state licensed homes, residents can click here to file a complaint with the California Department of Health Care

Services (DHCS).

Library Foundation members donate \$26,000 to city's Lions Park Projects

Members of the Costa Mesa Library Foundation Committee presented Mayor Sandy Genis and the City Council with three checks totaling \$26,000 that will help fund essential equipment that will enhance the experience of children, teens, and adults visiting the new Donald Dungan Library that is currently under construction.

Longtime library advocates and members of the Friends of the Library Barbara Steck, Charlene Ashendorf and Mary Ellen Goddard presented three checks, which include, \$6,000 for the Children's Library Early Childhood play and Learning Island, \$15,000 for the Teen Library Technology Bar and \$5,000 for the Interactive Media Display.

"Thank you for investing in our community and most importantly thank you for your strong support," Mayor Sandy Genis said. "We truly value your partnership."

The city is currently in the process of constructing the Lions Park Projects, a \$36.5 million public works effort that will include a new 20,000-square-foot Donald Dungan Library as well as the refurbishment of the existing library into a new Neighborhood Community Center and many park improvements.

The library is scheduled for completion in spring of 2020. For more information about the projects [click here](#).

Public Services launches new website to keep residents updated on Capital Improvement Projects

Public Services is working closely with the Communications and Marketing team to share updates on the city's major Capital Improvement Projects.

A few of the City's large projects include the Bristol Street Improvements Project, the Lions Park Projects, the Arlington Drive Improvements Project, and the Fire Station No. 1 Reconstruction.

As part of this collaboration, there is a new webpage available at www.costamesaca.gov/CIP that features some new project fact sheets.

Visit this webpage for frequent updates.

Assistant City Manager Tammy Letourneau writes the book, the only book, on staff

report writing

In every local government organization, staff members write staff reports to present important information and inform the legislative body.

These staff reports can cover any number of topics, from purchasing playground equipment to development projects.

Costa Mesa Assistant City Manager Tamara Letourneau has worked in city government for 29 years and for the last 17 years, she has taught university level courses in city management.

During that time as a college instructor, she learned that no resource existed to teach students and employees how to write a staff report.

“So I wrote one myself,” she said. “There is no other resource like it.”

The result is “Mastering the Art: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Quality Staff Report for Local Government,” which is billed as a resource guide for local government professionals.

[Click here](#) to order the book on Amazon.

According to the book summary, this guide simplifies the process and can serve as a reference manual that all government professionals keep on-hand throughout their careers.

Letourneau added several personal touches, including a forward from her mentor and the first city manager she worked for Jim Starbird, who is now retired.

Each chapter of the book is a guide to write each section in the staff report, including Tammy’s Tips at the end of each chapter.

With storms approaching, city prepares sandbags for residents in case of flooding

With inclement weather expected beginning this event March 1 through Saturday March 3, the City of Costa Mesa will provide residents with sand and sand bags at Fire Station No. 4, located at 2300 Placentia Avenue.

It is a self-service location, with shovels available for use, and the number of sandbags is limited to 15 sandbags per household. No commercial use please.

Maintenance Services staff will also be patrolling potential flooding spots to make sure catch basins are clear of debris and operational.

For more information on sandbags [click here](#).

A day of gratitude and giving thanks

It was Thanksgiving Day 2015.

Katlyn Soltys crawled her way out of the Santa Ana riverbed, where she had been living near the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Brookhurst Street, and into Costa Mesa's Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene.

She was approaching her 26th birthday and had already racked up 14 brutal years of addiction to alcohol, heroin, crack and meth. A Michigan native, she had let drugs destroy her relationship with her family.

But it was on this day of gratitude and giving thanks that she realized she needed to end the cycle of destruction.

So a friend took her to the Lighthouse for breakfast where she met church staff members Tim Brown and Ronnie Steen. She instantly felt love at the church. She thought that this is where she needed to be to get her life back

“It was the kindness I felt from everyone,” she said. “It had been a real long time since anyone had been that nice to me.”

But Brown and Steen had bad news for her. They told her the Lighthouse was a men’s only facility. She left the church dejected and sad but after wandering the streets of Costa Mesa, she returned later that day with this message for the church staff.

“I looked at Tim and said, ‘I’m going to die if you don’t let me live here,’” Soltys said.

So the two Lighthouse workers prayed about it and decided to let her stay. They set up a little cot in their sanctuary kitchen area where Soltys stayed and did whatever work they wanted her to do. She cooked and attended their meetings.

“I’m just thankful that during this time in my life their doors were open for me,” she said. “I felt like I was a person to them. Even though I was a woman in a men’s facility I felt just as equal. My heart felt full.”

For Lighthouse Church Pastor Phil Eyskens, who works daily with the city’s Network for Homeless Solutions, Soltys is just one of many his ministry touches on a regular basis.

“When I was first assigned as pastor of the Lighthouse over seven years ago, I soon came to the conclusion that this unique church was more than just a church, but it was also a mission,” said Pastor Phil Esyken. “Katlyn’s story is one of the many success stories we have realized here at the Lighthouse, as we strive to offer a hand-up approach in this rubber-meets-the-road ministry. Go Katlyn, go!”

Through Soltys’ connection at the Lighthouse, she met another church worker, Lindah Miles, who helped her get into a sober living facility in Palm Springs. That ended up being a life-changing and lifesaving moment and Soltys has never looked back.

After spending 90 days in the Palm Springs rehab facility, Soltys moved into another one in Garden Grove called Gabe’s Home, named after the son of Pastor Joe Furey of His Place Church in Westminster who died of a heroin overdose. She now lives in a Huntington Beach apartment with her fiancé, who also got clean after years of addiction.

Soltys ended up in California at the age of 23 after her mom kicked her out of their Michigan home and sent her to a rehab facility in Temecula that she eventually also got kicked out of.

She spent three years bouncing in and out of rehab homes and living in Oceanside, San Diego and Costa Mesa before giving up drugs for good on that Thanksgiving Day in 2015. But for someone who had spent more than a decade hooked on alcohol and drugs, the pathway to sober living and a life off of the streets was more difficult than imagined.

“I was kind of shell shocked,” she said. “The readjustment of coming back and having a roof over my head was really uncomfortable. I didn’t know what to do. You don’t get that many success stories from homelessness. What is life after homelessness? I felt that overwhelming feeling.”

Then she got busy. She got a sponsor through Alcoholics Anonymous. She got a job at a law firm in Irvine and would take the bus every morning to work at 5 a.m. She said even though it was long hours, the job gave her a safe place to be every day and she was grateful to have the opportunity.

She worked there a year and a half and then her life changed again. Her son Levi was born.

“I look at Levi now and I think how could I ever see a life without him,” she said. “I love my family and I realize how much love my family has for me and I couldn’t imagine ever going back.”

Indeed, after years of emotional trauma, after years of distrust and anger, she has mended fences with her family and now speaks to her mother every day and says her mom is her best friend. She credits that to her sobriety and how former addicts look back at the damage they have done and instead become what she called “other-centered.”

“I can’t imagine what I put my family through,” she said. “If I have a bad day and I ever think about getting high, I think about my family and I wouldn’t want to put them through that again.”

Today, Soltys feels the drive to help others who are in the shoes she once was in. She says the best part of her sobriety is that she can be a sponsor in AA. She helps women go through the 12 steps. She hopes that someday the Lighthouse Church will have a place for women to seek help from addiction and she also hopes someday to make a career out of helping others.

“It helps me to help them,” she said. “They are helping me more than I’m helping them and they don’t even know that. I’ve done a lot of fun things in sobriety.”

Things continue to look brighter and brighter for her. After eight years without a driver’s license she got hers reinstated

this past February, and the next day her fiance's boss gave her a car.

She attributes all of this to a higher power.

"My story is much related to God," she said. "I didn't plan to stop using that day. I didn't plan to leave the riverbed that day. I really enjoyed being homeless. I really enjoyed using drugs. I'm telling you it was God."

Maintenance Tech Brendan Carpenter honored with City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Senior Maintenance Technician Brendan Carpenter with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly employee Meet and Greet on Thursday Feb. 22.

"I appreciate Brendan for his hard work and being a great contributor to the city team," City Manager Hatch said. "He is efficient, has a can-do attitude and always keeps the best interest of Costa Mesa residents his first priority."

Carpenter has provided five years of professional and dedicated service to the City of Costa Mesa, starting in 2013 as a part-time General Aide. He was hired full-time in 2015 as a Maintenance Worker, and was promoted to Senior Maintenance Technician in 2016.

With the recent departure of the Maintenance Supervisor in the Streets and Traffic Section, the street maintenance staff has

had to step up to assist with daily operations to ensure the high level of service that is expected proceeds uninterrupted.

Carpenter has taken on the responsibility of managing the daily work of the city's sign shop and processing work orders generated by the Transportation Services section. He eagerly accepted the challenge while continuing to fulfill his daily duties manufacturing and replacing signs.

He is managing projects and overseeing the in-house roadway painting program. Some of his recent accomplishments include the replacement of the old-style coyote warning signs with the City's new updated signs, the Pacific Avenue improvements where the street dead ends at Fairview Park and setting up the field crews that recently completed the installations of the bike sharrows on East 19th Street.

In addition to honoring Carpenter, City Manager Hatch welcomed five new employees and congratulated three others for recent promotions.

The new hires include Fanni Acosta, a new Human Resources Analyst, Waqas Khan a new Plan Checker in Development Services, Franklin Rodriguez a new Recreation Leader II in Parks and Community Services, Martha Robbins a new Police Department Crime Analyst in Public Services, Fady Ashamalla a new Engineering Technician III.

Hatch also honored Ruben Salas and Juan Santos, who were both promoted to Maintenance Supervisors and Janet Zuazo, who was promoted to Recreation Leader IV.

Mayor Genis honors business leader Janet Krochman with Mayor's Award

Costa Mesa Mayor Sandy Genis presented longtime local business leader Janet Krochman with the Mayor's Award at the Feb. 20 City Council meeting.

"Janet has been actively volunteering in Costa Mesa for years, initially getting involved while supporting her son's activities at school, Boy Scouts and youth sports," Mayor Genis said. "Janet's long list of community involvement includes working with veteran's groups, non-profit organizations and most recently assisting local businesses mitigate the impact of homeless on their businesses."

Krochman said she was very touched when she learned she was going to be presented with this award.

"Thank you all very much," she said. "Hopefully I will have another 40 years in the city and continue to do good things."

City Outreach team details achievements by the Network for Homeless Solutions

As a result of the City of Costa Mesa being named in a lawsuit filed by Orange County Catholic Worker vs. the County of Orange and Santa Ana and Anaheim regarding homeless

encampments, city outreach staff compiled a summary of achievements from the city's Network for Homeless Solutions.

The Network for Homeless Solutions is the only city-sponsored homeless outreach division within the county with three full-time equivalent outreach workers and partnerships with over 50 social service, governmental and private agencies for housing those experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa.

Below are some of the highlights:

HOUSING

- 101 housed in 2017
- 270 housed since the network began in 2013
- 80 clients placed in permanent supportive housing via Coordinated Entry program

RECONNECTIONS

- 41 reconnected in 2017
- 112 reconnected to date

MEDICAL LINKAGES

- 245 in 2017
- 772 since 2012

SOCIAL SERVICE LINKAGES

- 191 in 2017
- 386 to date

MENTAL HEALTH LINKAGES

- 235 in 2017

OC HEALTH CARE AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTACTS 2017

- 752 total contacts
- 483 self-disclosed homeless

PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM CONTRACTS

- 221 total contacts
- 47 self-disclosed homeless



The Network for Homeless Solutions collaborates with the County of Orange, the Department of Social Services, Social Security and Department of Motor Vehicles on homeless issues.

In addition, the Network has partnerships with local non-profits including Mercy House, Collette's Children's Home and Families Forward.

In addition, the Network for Homeless Solutions partners with the Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene in the Westside of Costa Mesa, which serves as a homeless service center and periodic shelter for extremely vulnerable individuals.

The Network regularly delivers bus passes to homeless and recently housed individuals for medical, job and housing appointments and in addition provides taxi rides to homeless individuals needing transportation for reconnections, housing or medical appointments.

Highlights of the NHS partnerships include the following:

- 51 individuals helped by Mercy House over three years.
- 79 individuals helped by Collette's Children's Home over three years.
- 58 individuals helped by Families Forward over two years.
- 580 collaborative actions in 2017 with non-profit housing providers for the purpose of providing housing support to recently housed clients.
- 294 field support actions assisting both Costa Mesa Police Department park rangers, police officers and residents with homeless individuals seeking assistance.
- 41 emergency housing placements in 2017.

Arlington Drive Improvement Project reaches another milestone

The Arlington Drive Improvement Project reached another milestone.

The curb and gutter delineating the roadway along the south side of the street is complete and the pavement along the south side from the Davis School site entry to Newport Boulevard has been base-paved.

Two-way traffic on Arlington Drive is now restored and will remain open through the project's completion.

Nearly all the underground work is complete and the contractor will finish base-paving the remainder of the street later this week.

Lastly, work on the bioswale, landscape improvements, and construction of the bicycle trail will begin soon.

Construction to take place on Bristol Street beginning tonight Feb. 16

As part of the on-going Bristol Street Improvement Project, Sully-Miller Contracting Co. will begin grinding existing deteriorating pavement on Bristol Street, between Baker Street and Randolph Avenue, on Friday, Feb. 16 beginning at 8 p.m.

On Saturday, Feb. 17, from 6 a.m. to early afternoon, Sully-Miller will be installing new pavement on Bristol Street, between Baker Street and Randolph Avenue. Adjacent businesses have been notified of this scheduled work and access to them will be maintained.

Please expect intermittent delays during the construction. The median curbs on Bristol Street between Baker Street and Newport Boulevard will be completed in the next two weeks and the landscaping by the end of March 2018.

[Click here](#) for a map of the area under construction.

The improvement project includes roadway resurfacing, new

storm drain catch basins, new landscaped medians, new traffic signal installation and a storm water diversion project.

This project represents more than \$6.5 million in improvements with funding coming from various sources including Federal, State and County agencies, gas tax and local funds.

This project will provide a smoother ride along this stretch of Bristol Street, better operational conditions for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and improve the water quality of the Back Bay area by providing treatment for some of the storm water runoff.

New construction fencing forces Anaheim Avenue entrance to close at Lions Park

The construction fencing around Lions Park was expanded on Wednesday Feb. 14, resulting in the closure of the parking lot entrance on Anaheim Avenue and limiting parking availability at the Donald Dungan Library and the Downtown Recreation Center.

The entrance from Park Avenue will be open for park visitors. The parking spaces in front of the portable trailers will be reserved for personnel working on the Lion's Park Project but may be used by staff and the public on the weekends.

Additionally, the parking spots adjacent to Fire Station No. 2 may be reserved for Donald Dungan Library staff. Street

parking on 18th and Anaheim will remain unaffected by these changes. This fencing will remain in place for four to eight weeks.

During this closure, vehicles may not double park or stop anywhere in the parking lot for pick-ups/drop-offs, or any other reason, as the added congestion may pose a safety issue and inhibit or prevent emergency vehicle access to the lot.

Lions Park is currently undergoing a \$36 million upgrade that will result in a new library and community center. [Click here](#) for more information.