



# Staff Report

**TO:** Board of Harbor Commissioners

**FROM:** John Moren, Director of Operations

**THRU:** James B. Pruet, General Manager

**DATE:** July 21, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Amending Chapter 3.15 of San Mateo County Harbor District Ordinance Code to Ensure Safe Use of Private Moorings

**Recommendation/Motion:**

**Motion:** Direct staff to publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation within the District, for not less than 20 days prior to Ordinance Code amendment adoption, and place the Resolution to amend the Mooring Regulations Ordinance Code Section 3.15 for consideration on the agenda for the August 18, 2021 regular Board meeting.

**Policy Implications:**

Consistent with the San Mateo County Harbor District's (District) goal to provide a safe, well-maintained Harbor which is accessible to all.

**Background:**

Historically, the District has allowed individuals to obtain permits to install private use mooring balls attached to permittees' own permanent anchors (Chapter 3.15 Mooring Regulations of the District Ordinance Code). The private installation of the mooring anchors was not regulated, and as a result, many permittees have used heavy items, such as car engines and concrete blocks as anchors. Since these private mooring balls are not professionally installed or regularly maintained, boats tied to them often detach during storms. This has led to boats breaking free and wrecking on shore or damaging other moored boats. In addition, many of the currently permitted private mooring balls are left unattended for many months, causing a hazard to navigation as the anchors drag, move around, and unsuspecting vessels get their propellers caught on them.

Staff ceased issuing new private mooring permits because moorings outside of the District owned/operated mooring field were deemed hazardous to navigation and the environment. In addition, private mooring balls are unnecessary since the District has now professionally installed and maintains 37 mooring balls for daily/monthly rent, 23 of which are currently available for use. Should a need for additional moorings arise, the District could install more in the same mooring field area.

Staff recommends that the Board consider the amendment to the Ordinance Code, attached as Exhibit A, to prohibit issuance of new private mooring ball permits altogether and begin the phase-out of private mooring balls. Those existing private

mooring permits in good standing can continue to be used by the original permittee (pending proof of annual inspection). The existing permits cannot be transferred to other parties, subleased, or used by a vessel not registered to the permit holder. If existing permittees fail to pay fees or utilize a private mooring ball for three consecutive months, the district shall cancel the permit upon reasonable notice and remove the mooring ball.

**Summary/Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Board direct staff to provide notice regarding the proposed amendment of Chapter 3.15 of San Mateo County Harbor District Ordinance Code to ensure safety of private moorings to read as attached in Exhibit A and return to the Board August 18, 2021 for adoption of the amendment to the Ordinance Code.

**Attachments:**

- 1) [Exhibit A: Amended and restated Chapter 3.15 of San Mateo County Harbor District Ordinance Code Regarding Private Moorings](#)