

## Mayors Dinner Speech

Edward Selich, Mayor

2-5-15

Thank you and welcome to the 2015 Mayor's Dinner.

First, I want to thank Speak Up Newport, of which I am a Board Member, for putting on the Annual Mayor's Dinner.

The board, especially the Mayors Dinner committee, this year Kathy Harrison and Debra Allen, works so hard to make this a special evening.

I also want to thank the Marriott Hotel and General Manager Debbie Snavelly and her staff for all their support. They are great partners to work with each year.

Each year every Mayor puts his or hers personal stamp on characterizing the State of the City, ranging from long to short, and humorous to serious.

I chose to start off with a bit of humor this evening.

We have been through a rough election cycle and campaign season this past fall. I think it is important to step back and laugh at ourselves a bit to keep things in perspective.

Although what we do is serious work it should not be so serious that we cannot see the humor that emerges from it.

I would like to recognize my family sitting at my table who are here to share this evening with me. First, my lovely wife Lynn, who is my rock in getting through all that comes with the job. My daughter Adrienne and her husband Gabe, my daughter Ally and her boyfriend John, and my brother Dennis.

It is my honor to serve as your Mayor for the third time. To be Mayor just once, let alone three times, is an honor I could have never imagined when I moved here 34 years ago.

Every Mayors Dinner speech has a theme. If I had to characterize mine it would be "Stay the Course".

After the 2006 Election I dubbed the newly elected City Council the "Dream Team".

I did so because of the unique blend of talents, the personal chemistry, and dedication to make our city a better place.

I am proud and honored to serve with those 8 individuals elected in 2006, 2010, and 2012.

Mike Henn, Don Webb, Steve Rosansky, Nancy Gardner, Rush Hill, Keith Curry, Leslie Daigle, and Tony Petros.

What a team we were.

What a team! Look what we accomplished:

1. Approval and implementation of a nationally groundbreaking ordinance to regulate group drug and alcohol rehabilitation homes.
2. Financial stewardship of the City that produced:
  - a. 8 years of budget surpluses,
  - b. successful navigation of the Great Recession without using reserves to cover operating shortfalls
  - c. and a AAA credit rating from the top 3 rating agencies, one of only 5 cities in California.
3. An award winning Facilities Financing plan that provides the path for replacing and constructing new civic facilities for the next 20 years.
4. Policy guidance and investment in pursuit of a smaller, smarter, faster City government, reducing total FT positions by 106 employees, or 13%.
5. Negotiation of the most aggressive employee pension contribution rates in Orange County, going from zero to \$7.4 million/year and making steady progress toward our policy goal of a 50% employee contribution toward total pension cost.
6. Acceleration of the payoff of today's estimate of the City's unfunded pension liability in 19 years, a full 11 years sooner than required.
7. Record setting reductions in the overall crime rate in Newport Beach, to the lowest level on record for the last 40+ years.
  - a. In fact, a recent report released by the Police Department revealed the 2014 overall crime rate was the lowest in the City's history.
8. Extension of the John Wayne Airport Settlement Agreement, extending these critical quality of life protections through 2030.
9. Established for the first time ever, lawful and market-appropriate rental rates for moorings, docks and marinas using the public tidelands in our harbor.

10. Negotiation of approximately \$100 million in developer fee contributions to the City that provide a major underpinning for the ongoing investment in new parks and key City facilities.
11. Major, generational reinvestment in public value and the quality of life right through the Great Recession, including:
  - a. The nationally acclaimed Oasis Senior Center.
  - b. Three major new parks; Sunset Ridge, Civic Center, and Marina parks- totaling 34 acres.
  - c. The new Civic Center complex including City Hall.
  - d. 17,000 square feet of additional library space at the Main Library and renovation of the Mariners and CDM branch libraries.
  - e. A dedicated Emergency Operations Center in the new Civic Center.
  - f. Completion of the \$50 million project to completely restore the Upper Newport Bay.
  - g. Complete dredging of lower Newport Harbor for the first time in 80 years at a cost of \$10 million.
  - h. At Marina Park the first new coastal marina in California in 23 years.
  - i. Clean up of the Rhine Channel, the Bay's only significant toxic materials location.
  - j. Other harbor enhancements such as the new dock on the Rhine Channel and refurbished public docks.
  - k. Neighborhood revitalization resulting in major street right of way beautification.
  - l. Huge improvements in water quality throughout Newport Harbor and our oceanfront beaches, including several national rankings for clean beaches.
  - m. The complete re-zoning of the City consistent with the General Plan approved in 2006.
  - n. The City's first-ever Coastal Land Use Plan.
12. The effort to revitalize Balboa Peninsula through public and private investment that has resulted in:

- a. Right of way beautification of Balboa Blvd
- b. Utilities undergrounding completed for almost the entire Peninsula
- c. Marina Park to be completed next year, on time and on budget.
- d. The approval of the Master Plans for the revitalization of Balboa Village and Lido Marina Village.

13. Other notable projects include:

- a. Newport Coast Community Center
- b. Coastal Peak Park – 10 acres
- c. Mesa Birch Park – 1 acre
- d. Santa Ana Heights Fire Station
- e. Tsunami Sirens
- f. Citywide Traffic Signal Synchronization
- g. Entranceway Monument Sign program
- h. Citywide Way Finding Sign Program
- i. And much more

The City Council did not do all this by ourselves.

It obviously takes more than the seven of us.

We have an incredibly talented and dedicated city staff.

We have an engaged community with thousands of hours volunteered annually.

Working together we were all able to accomplish this

I want to take some time to discuss the Civic Center.

People forget that the 2006-2014 City Council voted not to build the City Hall next to the library.

However, our voters demanded that it be built there in a park-like setting.

Remember the slogan *“City Hall In The Park”*?

We had an open process that involved hundreds of residents creating the vision of what that should be like.

They wanted a Civic Center and Park not just a City Office Building. We delivered on that.

I am so proud of that facility.

It is like no other. It is our civic gathering place.

It is the cultural center of our city.

It is a symbol of civic governance.

It is customer friendly to our residents.

It has architectural significance.

It is more than a building for city employees.

It is the cultural and governance heart to of our city, centrally located, and equally accessible to all.

Since its opening our residents continue to define its place in our civic culture.

- Weddings,
- Special Events,
- Concerts,
- Community meetings,
- Art shows.

I see people:

- Walking,
- Jogging,
- Picnicking,
- Eating lunch,
- Crossing San Miguel on the pedestrian bridge,
- Using the dog park,
- Viewing the sculptures,
- Enjoying the serenity of the landscaping
- And yes, children playing on the bunnies.

I see people doing things we never envisioned - such as the family I recently saw with a croquet game set up on the lawn adjacent to the Community Room.

As time goes on it will be used in ways we have not yet imagined.

Great cities have great public places and spaces.

Our Civic Center and Park is a great public space for today and will be so for generations to come.

The campaign is over.

It is time to stop the derisive, cartoonish characterization of the Civic Center and the bunnies and embrace the Civic Center and Park as our cultural and governance center.

It is an iconic symbol of our City and will be so recognized for generations to come.

In summation, this City Council over the past 8 years has tackled every tough issue in the City that needed to be tackled.....we never kicked the can down the road on a single problem, leaving a mess for someone else to clean up.

I can proudly say the State of the City is the best it has ever been in the city's history.

So now we are transitioning from the "Dream Team" era to "Team Newport". For the first time in 20 years, (1994 was the year term limits kicked in), we had four new Council members take their seats at the same time and join the remnants of the "Dream Team".

So I say "Stay the Course".

The building blocks have been set in place.

We have a Facilities Financing Plan in place to provide for the replacement of key city facilities over the next 20 years.

We have begun major investment in West Newport and the Peninsula with the Beautification Projects, Balboa Village Planning and the proposed West Side Community Center.

We have a program for pension reform in partnership with our employees.

We have a Draft Master Plan for Arts and Culture.

This is the next step in the evolution of our city into a truly great city.

In addition to great public space and places great cities have a vibrant Arts and Cultural program.

I look forward to forging public private partnerships to move our city in that direction.

The fundamentals are there.

This doesn't mean that we should close our ears to new ideas.

As I said we have just gone through a contentious campaign season.

The debate was spirited and lively with different point of views expressed.

However, the voters have spoken and it is time to get down to the business of running the city.

Although there may be different points of views on some issues I believe we all have the best interest of our city and its residents at heart.

I believe we will do, as past Newport Beach City Council's have always done; and come together to make our city even better.

New ideas will be presented. Some will be accepted; some rejected.

Old ideas will be reviewed Some retained; others discarded.

As a result the new will merge with the old and we have a better city for it.

I welcome the new members to our Council and look forward to working with them to improve our city.

2015 will be an exciting year.

We just finished our Goal Setting Session last Saturday.

With the information that came out at that session there now will be an opportunity finish up some major projects, an opportunity to review others and the opportunity initiate those that we collectively believe are of value.

Above all it will be an opportunity to come together, as we always do, as City Council members, City Staff, and residents, to do our best to make our city an even greater place than it is today.

This will be my last opportunity to stand before you at a Mayors Dinner.

As I look out in the audience I see so many friends who have given me their support and friendship over the past 20 years on the Planning Commission and City Council and I thank you for that.

We have not always agreed but we have always been true to our beliefs.

As Mahatma Ghandi said *“Friendship that insists upon agreement on all matters is not worth the name. Friendship to be real must ever sustain the weight of honest differences, however sharp they be.”*

Thank you and good evening.