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City launches anti-litter campaign for fireworks debris

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Last year, a city fireworks task force took on the issue about whether or not fireworks use should be restricted. The task force concluded fireworks were a significant moneymaker for the non-profits that sell them and that people like them. However, concerns were raised about the use of illegal fireworks and the potential harm to people, pets and wildlife from the debris left behind from all the fireworks.

Because of that study, City Council made some changes last year to the way Pacificans enjoy fireworks. Besides neighborhood use, safe and sane fireworks were allowed to be set off only on a portion of Linda Mar Beach and two designated parking lots, one at Linda Mar Beach and one at Rockaway. Those parking lots were cordoned off the night before so no one could park there. But problems arose with too many people seeking parking elsewhere. City Council on Monday directed staff to figure out a better parking lot management plan.

Last year, the non-profit groups went to Linda Mar beach the morning after and worked additional days at Linda Mar and Rockaway to fulfill each group's 160 hours of clean-up obligations. Also, last year, 16 hours of additional clean up was imposed on the local non-profit groups selling fireworks and an emphasis was to be placed on promoting an anti-litter campaign. Nevertheless, fireworks debris in Pacifica neighborhoods continued to be an eyesore and present a potential safety hazard. City Council on Monday asked staff to outline the details of that city-wide anti-litter campaign.

The city spent \$49,719 to manage the July 4 holiday. To offset that, an eight percent fee is taxed on fireworks sale, but it generated \$15,000 less than what the city spent, thus only covering 70 percent of the cost. Additional police department staffing levels cost the city \$6,911 more in 2013

than in 2012. Fire department staff cost an additional \$6,216. Public Works expenses remained the same.

Despite the restriction to a small area of Linda Mar beach, people set off fireworks everywhere on the beach and burned bonfires. More city staff will be on the beach this year to try to prevent that. In addition, City Council asked staff to study the feasibility of a "social host" ordinance with which to charge illegal fireworks users. Right now, if a police officer sees a person setting off an illegal firework, that person is fined \$1000. Under a "social host" ordinance, if anyone in the yard is seen setting off an illegal firework, the household is fined \$1000 and pays the fine to the city.

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