

Huntington delays pier demolition

By Ann Pepper

The Orange County Register

O.C. Register - 5-9-90
 HUNTINGTON BEACH — The city's old storm-damaged pier will see the end of one more summer after all, the City Council decided Monday night.

Rather than begin demolition at the beginning of August as planned, the city will wait until October to start work. The delay will allow surfers and beach-oriented shops to enjoy the benefits of the summer sunshine and surf before the 18-month rebuilding project begins.

The council also voted to hire a professional fund-raiser to come up with the \$2.5 million still needed for the \$12 million replacement pier.

The construction delay should make surfers happy, a councilman said.

"I'd be willing to allow a delay of two or three weeks," Councilman John Erskine said. "I don't want to be accused of delaying the project, but it would let the surfers have August. We could start after they go back to school."

The delay would also benefit businesses that depend on summertime beach-goers for much of their income, said Lou Sandoval,

city public works director. Sandoval said he would not begin knocking down the rickety, 75-year-old pier until Oct. 1.

"Labor Day is really the end of summer and it's only fitting that we wait until then before we begin demolition," he said. "The later start will delay the reopening date by about six weeks. But a grand opening in February would not be the most appropriate time anyway. An April or May opening will be much more festive."

Sandoval also said the city will do its best to minimize the inconvenience to surfers and beach-goers during the demolition and rebuilding.

"I'm not making any promises, but we will try not to restrict the public from more than 150 feet on each side of the pier," Sandoval said. "If we do need extra space we'll be able to use up to 500 feet on either side, but we will try not to need it."

While surfers catch a few extra waves around the old pier, the Robert B. Sharp Co. will work on raising the \$2.5 million still needed to replace it.

The council voted 5-2, with Councilmen Wes Bannister and Jim Silva dissenting, to hire the fund-raising company at a cost of \$250,000.

"I don't think we can do this in-house," said former Mayor Ron Shenkman, who has spent the past nine months in a volunteer effort to try to raise the money. "We've pretty much tapped everything we are going to be able to do locally."

The Sharp Co. will offer a different kind of appeal, Shenkman said.

Bannister said the effort will be fruitless and a waste of money. He supports asking voters to pass a bond measure to raise the funds.

But Mayor Tom Mays said a bond election should be the city's last resort.

"We need to hire the fund-raiser before we go to a bond issue, so the public will know we have done all we can first."

