

OT News

November 3, 2022



City OK's extra \$1M to finish ship fixes Partial reopening delayed until at least end of the year while workers wrap up numerous projects

by Kristy Hutchings ... Long Beach Press-Telegram

The reopening date for Long Beach's historic *Queen Mary* has once again been extended as the city and the ship's new operators work to complete additional repairs.

The legendary ship, initially slated to reopen last month, is now estimated to have a partial reopening by the end of the year.

The Long Beach City Council this week approved a \$1 million allocation from the city's Tidelands Area Fund to support those repairs — which include flooring, carpet

and elevator fixes — according to a city staff report. The extra money adds to the \$2,870,500 allocated for other repairs earlier this year.

That \$1 million cost, though, will be covered by revenue generated through city-issued permits that allow filming and special events on the ship even while closed.

“These revenues were designated to offset reopening improvements to the extent possible,” the staff report said, “and will be used in support of the needed improvements.”

The *Queen Mary* was originally closed to the public in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But by that point, the World War II-era ship had already fallen into massive disrepair under the management of its previous operator, Urban Commons, prompting the ship’s continued closure.

Urban Commons declared bankruptcy and gave up its 66-year lease in 2021, bringing the *Queen Mary* back under city control for the first time in 40 years. A few years prior, the city gave Urban Commons \$23 million to fund major ship repairs, but a 2021 city audit found that those repairs were never completed.

In June, the city approved a contract with Evolution Hospitality LLC to take over the *Queen Mary*’s operations and oversee the repairs, which included replacing the ship’s boilers, elevators and restrooms, plumbing repairs, and parking upgrades, all deemed necessary to ensure a safe reopening.

Under that agreement, Evolution is responsible for the ship’s overall maintenance and *Queen Mary*-related events for the next five years, but Long Beach will continue overseeing major capital improvements necessary for the ship’s overall restoration and preservation.

The city and Evolution estimated in June that the \$2,870,500 repairs would be completed and the ship would reopen by October.

The ship still needs new linoleum flooring and carpeting to improve aesthetics and reduce tripping hazards, an upgraded heating and cooling system, some elevator repairs, new guest room locks and new kitchen goods to comply with Fire Department regulations, the staff report said.

But that doesn’t mean substantial progress hasn’t been made on the needed fixes.

“Evolution has addressed plumbing issues throughout the ship, reinstated internet and Wi-Fi across the entirety of the vessel, begun the process of restoring the ship’s handrails and is actively improving the energy efficiency aboard the ship by installing

energy-efficient lightbulbs and fixtures,” as of Oct. 20, the staff report said. “In addition, Evolution has initiated the replacement of the ship’s boilers and the repair/installation of the ship’s heat exchangers.”

Now, Long Beach is planning to partially reopen the ship by the end of the year, according to city spokesman Kevin Lee. Other areas in the ship will open in 2023, though it’s unclear which areas will open first. Additional details will be available in the coming weeks, Lee said.

Evolution is working to improve the ship’s parking capacity, which is a major revenue generator. Those potential changes will be brought back to the City Council in the future for review.

This article was published by the Long Beach Press-Telegram on November 3, 2022
The article is being shared with the SSHSA Southern California Chapter Membership as
an update on the status of the Queen Mary.