



When the plenary assembly of the Formentera Council gathered for the group's October session, councillors voted in unison to back the government team's plan to press the Balearic port authority (APB) to create a moorage area in la Savina's port for the island's boat owners.

President's office secretary Bartomeu Escandell said that though the port is a commercial hub and home of two marinas, it lacks a zone for the Formentera's owners of pleasure boats. He highlighted a recently announced APB supervisory board decision to not renew one of the two la Savina marina leases when it expires in 2018, and raised the prospect of a public space that could be used by the island's boat owners.

In making their request, the officials have referred to some of the conclusions that emanated from gatherings organised by the island's Consell d'Entitats at the end of 2014 entitled “Looking toward the future of la Savina,” namely, that strategies moving forward should be underpinned not by growth and expansion but optimisation of existing resources. The overhaul could also affect regulated moorage at estany des Peix, a place which, absent space in la Savina's port to do so, local residents have gradually filled with small recreational watercraft. Escandell underscored what he called a “warm relationship” between the Formentera Island Council and Balearic Islands port authority, citing the recent planning and execution of upgrades at the port as well as the revival —both economic and social— afoot in la Savina's port and town.

Budget increase

Members of the plenary also gave the green-light to a proposal from senior councillors on retooling the administration's budget. According to Escandell, who also serves as tax office councillor, €9,746,000 of liquidity, transferred from the treasury, would keep the administration from entering the red despite certain unavoidable expenditures this tax year. With “yes” votes from the senior cabinet and the abstention of the opposition, the measure was approved.

The budget increase is intended to finance the payment of debts of the recently disbanded Consorci Formentera Desenvolupament (€1.7m), free up credit to purchase the Sa Senieta plot (€2.5m, €1m of which will be funded by the sustainable tourism tax), upgrades of carrers Guillem de Montgrí and València in Sant Ferran (€1.4m), patrimony payments for the permit granted, in 2005, for construction of Ca Ses Castellones (€1.55m). Escandell explained the

figure would also include credit to cover ordinary operation costs.

Sa Senieta purchase

Senior councillors approved a measure despite the abstention of the other parties to back a proposal to acquire Sa Senieta, a designated site in Formentera's cultural heritage catalogue. The councillor explained the Council's intent to buy Sa Senieta for €2.5 million, one million of which would come from the sustainable tourism fund. Now begins the task of articulating the specific use that the building will be given, though this must be cultural or patrimonial. The councillor justified the Sa Senieta buy referring to "the immense historical value of the home, its singularity and strategic location inside Sant Francesc," adding the move is a continuation of the policy of reclaiming heritage sites.

Regulatory retooling

The assembled members of the plenary also gave the go-ahead for preliminary approval for an ordinance regulating occupation of the public thoroughfare. According to land, tourism and trade secretary Alejandra Ferrer, the adjustment seeks a balance between how businesses like restaurants and hotels can use public spaces to conduct business, and the broader public interest, by striving for minimal interference between businesses' use of public land and that of the people, who, she noted, would always trump private interests. Among the proposed tweaks, aimed at "streamlining and simplifying," Ferrer singled out a requirement that businesses with terraces remain open between 15 May and 15 October, a way to put longer-haul operations over fleeting ventures. The measure won the support of the assembly's senior councillors and members of the Popular Party, and PSOE and Compromís affiliates abstained in the vote.

Session attendees also voted to take a first step towards defining limits on hours that businesses are allowed to play music. Alejandra Ferrer called it "a means to promote silence and good-neighbour relations in the face of proliferating nightlife establishments in assorted urban areas". Such measures, she said, balance quality of life and the constitutional rights of people in residential areas with nightlife businesses catering to residents and tourists".

Under the new rules, nightlife outposts in residential areas of Sant Francesc, Sant Ferran and el Pilar de la Mola will be forced to curtail their nighttime hours: those previously licensed to operate until six am will be required to close at four am, while those heretofore held to a four-am closing time must close by three am. Article 20 of the ordinance enables the Council to periodically hasten closing times if relevant justification and technical reports have been provided". The senior cabinet was joined by the councillors of Compromís in supporting the measure, the remaining members of the assembly abstained.

Finally, the assembly voted unanimously to pass a PP proposal for speed bumps near Mestre Lluís Andreu primary school and a Compromís measure for transparency of web-based propositions.

Departmental report

As Formentera's secretary of land, tourism and trade, Alejandra Ferrer, appeared before the assembly, she described the effort to make Formentera sustainable as being propped up by three basic pillars: first, social and cultural, second, economic, and third, environmental.

Ferrer gave an overview of work, including controls, inspections, prosecution and resolutions, assigned to an inspection service created last year. As for occupancy of public thoroughfares, 22 citations were issued this year, with fines totalling €7,800. Illegal operations, meanwhile, were behind 21 violations in which related fines reached €79,113.

In 2017, checks in tourism led to 36 citations whose fines amounted to €108,015, while land use violations precipitated €430,656 in fines. Another 20 citations were issued that carried fines of €551,000.

Councillor Ferrer also highlighted the work of the trade office, for instance, consolidation efforts this winter as well as ongoing promotion of Eivissa and Formentera's small and medium-sized business association (PIMEF), the Chamber of Commerce and island craftworkers.

As well Ferrer spoke about regulating tourism and the work of the land office, including finalising subsidiary regulations, or *normes subsidiaries*, in Catalan, which allowed the Council to issue building permits for Sant Ferran's new primary and nursery schools. She also touched on the supreme court ruling concerning the 'Punta Prima case,' which was favourable to the administration, and concurred that the subsidiary regulations manoeuvre had been conducted correctly, respectful of the environment and the general public good.

On housing, Councillor Ferrer underscored collaboration with the Govern to ensure detailed information is available about individuals seeking housing on the island. She also held up measures brought before the assembly that day, like the ordinance retooling.

Finally, Ferrer spoke about a kind of tourism promotion that strives for social and environmental responsibility, and pointed to the recent Save Posidonia Project Festival, plus campaigns like Discover Formentera in May and Discover Formentera in October.