



**Tuesday, March 17, 2020**  
**Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the City Council**  
**of the City of Palm Springs**

Pursuant to Executive Order N-25-20, by Governor Newsom, this meeting was conducted by teleconference and there was no in-person public access to the meeting location.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

An Emergency Meeting of the Palm Springs City Council was called to order by Mayor Kors on Thursday, March 17, 2020, at 11:00 a.m., in the Council Chamber, City Hall, located at 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California. Public access was provided at the Palm Springs Convention Center, 277 N. Avenida Caballeros, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Councilmembers Grace Elena Garner, Lisa Middleton, Dennis Woods; Mayor Pro Tem Christy Holstege; and Mayor Geoff Kors

**Absent:** None.

**City Staff**

**Present:** David H. Ready, City Manager; Jeffrey Ballinger, City Attorney; Marcus Fuller, Assistant City Manager; and Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk, were present at Roll Call. Other staff members presented reports or responded to questions as indicated in the minutes.

**DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL CLOSURE ORDERS AS A RESULT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

Assistant City Manager Fuller narrated a PowerPoint presentation on the status of COVID-19 in Palm Springs and Riverside County.

Mayor Kors spoke on the City's demographics, noting that approximately 40% of the population are over the age of 60 and 10% are immune-compromised or have other underlying health problems making them vulnerable to the coronavirus.

Police Chief Reyes and Fire Chief Nalder summarized precautions taken to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus between first responders and actions to be taken if personnel become exposed to the virus.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

Liz Ostich, spoke on the financial impacts to local restaurants and employees due to the forced closure of non-essential businesses; requested assistance in acquiring cleaning supplies so that restaurants may continue to operate for take-out and delivery orders.

Allen Worthy, spoke on the possibility of increased crime due to the shelter in place order.

Mark Fruchtman, opined that the City's actions are appropriate, noting that every city in the Coachella Valley needs to take similar actions to further prevent the transmission of the virus.

Daniel Algari, urged the City to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement funds as soon as possible; suggested that the City install infrared systems to detect customers with fevers.

Robert Sneed, Ph.D., Rebirth Temple of Faith, questioned whether the City will assist religious institutions and other businesses with recouping financial losses due to the coronavirus.

Matthew Bousquette, spoke on the financial impacts of closing non-essential businesses.

Michael McCartney & Jim Osterberger, noted that they are bar owners and questioned whether the government will provide rental assistance during the closure of their business.

Joey, opined that the Coachella Valley should be on lockdown to proactively prevent the transmission of the coronavirus.

Gerry Keller, owner of Lulu California Bistro, spoke on his efforts to comply with the public health orders.

Mario Gonzalez, local restaurant owner, questioned whether the government will provide funds to help mitigate financial losses during the coronavirus pandemic; spoke on the importance of increased testing for the virus.

Boris Stark, reported on measures taken by the City of San Francisco related to exempting hotels and lodging properties as essential businesses, urging the City Council to take similar actions.

Richard Broadie, spoke on the need for fast food restaurants to remain open and questioned whether the City will operate a food distribution site for those in need.

David Feltman, recommended that the City develop a communication strategy to inform all residents about available resources during the pandemic.

Joy Brown Meredith, representing Main Street, urged the City Council to examine possible grants, rebates, or fee reductions to support local businesses experiencing financial losses due to the coronavirus; requested that the City's procurement department assist in acquiring cleaning supplies so that restaurants may continue to operate.

**CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

Mayor Kors announced that Eisenhower Hospital has established a 24-hour hotline to respond to residents inquires about their health related to the coronavirus; noted that the City has launched a webpage dedicated to providing the latest information on resources for residents and businesses related to the coronavirus; voiced support for the closure of non-essential businesses and urged residents to limit all non-essential outings and travel; encouraged healthy persons to assist seniors and those with underlying health conditions with grocery shopping; noted that the tourism industry is leading an effort to gather information and developing a website about which restaurants will continue to operate for take-out and delivery service.

City Manager Ready reported on the City's actions taken to date in response to the coronavirus; noted that the City will continue to work with the County of Riverside in relation to sheltering the homeless.

Mayor Pro Tem Holstege voiced support for the closure of non-essential businesses and instructing residents to shelter in place; spoke on the need for the Riverside County Department of Public Health to issue a similar order for the entire Coachella Valley; noted that the City Council will need to discuss measures it can take to support local businesses and residents.

Councilmember Garner noted that information is available to residents on the City's website in English and Spanish and that the Find Food distribution site continues to operate at the James O. Jessie Desert Highland Park.

Councilmember Woods read an email from a friend in regards to the devastating conditions in Italy due to the coronavirus, voicing his support for the closure of non-essential businesses.

In response to City Council inquiry, Patricia Cooper, representing County Supervisor Perez, noted that restaurants may distribute unused food if they comply with Public Health guidelines; noted that the U.S. Small Business Administration will provide low-interest loans to businesses impacted by the coronavirus; noted that the County is preparing to launch its first drive-thru coronavirus testing site.

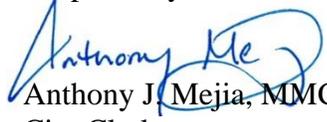
Councilmember Middleton recommended that the City reach out to neighboring cities so that they may coordinate actions and have consistent regulations valley-wide; spoke on the need to ensure that businesses are taking appropriate actions to prevent hoarding of critical supplies and preventing price-gouging; recommended that grocery stores provide special shopping hours for seniors and special-need residents; requested that the City Council limit the number of meetings and topics to ensure that staff can focus on responding to critical issues.

During the course of discussion, the City Council agreed to: 1) issue a letter to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Governor requesting closure of the casino, 2) requesting that grocery stores provide special shopping hours for seniors and special-need residents, 3) restaurants, including hotel restaurants, may continue to operate for take-out, delivery, and room-service only; 4) cannabis dispensaries and the supply chain may continue to operate, noting that cannabis lounges must cease operations; and 5) the closure of all non-essential businesses to the public. City Manager Ready noted that the closure of non-essential businesses will become effective March 18, 2020.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The City Council adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Anthony J. Mejia, MMC  
City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL: 04/23/2020