



Tuesday, April 14, 2020
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City Council
of the City of Palm Springs

Pursuant to Executive Order N-29-20, by Governor Newsom, this meeting was conducted by teleconference and there was no in-person public access to the meeting location.

CALL TO ORDER:

A Special Meeting of the Palm Springs City Council was called to order by Mayor Kors on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Councilmembers Grace Elena Garner, Lisa Middleton, Dennis Woods; and Mayor Geoff Kors

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Holstege

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

City Clerk Mejia led the Pledge of Allegiance.

REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION:

The Special Closed Session of the City Council of April 14, 2019, was called to order by Mayor Kors at 5:30 p.m., with all members present.

The meeting convened into Closed Session to discuss the following items as listed on the Special Closed Session Meeting Agenda:

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – MATTERS CREATING SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO LITIGATION, Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2):

Two (2) matters that, under the existing circumstances, the City Attorney believes creates significant exposure to litigation.

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – DISCUSSION TO CONSIDER INITIATION OF LITIGATION, Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4):

Under existing facts and circumstances, there are two (2) matters the City Council has decided or may decide to initiate litigation.

City Attorney Ballinger reported that the City Council received briefings and provided direction to staff regarding the agendaized Closed Session Items but did not take any reportable action.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Bruce Hoban, representing Vacation Rental Owners and Neighbors of Palm Springs (VRON), suggested that the City may desire to clarify whether homeowners should restrict their travel to their second homes located in Palm Springs.

John McCoy, advised that VRON has sent notifications regarding the City's order on short-term vacation rentals to permit holders.

Gretchen Gutierrez, representing the Desert Valley Builders Association, spoke on the operational changes implemented to protect construction workers.

Anna Cabral, representing United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 1167, expressed support for requiring that essential businesses mandate that employees and customers wear face coverings and maintain social distancing; suggested that the City Council consider requiring businesses to limit the number of customers to a percentage of overall capacity, provide security for crowd control, provide employees with personal protective equipment (PPE), daily sanitation of the store, and allowing workers to wash their hands every 30 minute or as needed.

Daryl Terrell, opined that the City Council should require essential businesses to develop social distancing protocols which protect employee health, prevent crowds and unnecessary person to person contact; recommended that violations of such protocols should result in closure of the business.

Darlene Backlund, urged the City Council not to close the hiking trails in Palm Springs.

1. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE ON EMERGENCY ORDER REQUIREMENTS AND ENFORCEMENT:

City Manager Ready advised that he issued a new order on April 13, 2020, requiring essential businesses to comply with the County's order mandating employees and customers to wear face coverings.

Police Chief Reyes advised that residents are substantially compliant with the County and City's orders related to hiking trails and social distancing, noting that he is concerned about gatherings forming at trailheads; stated that Police Department personnel have begun going to grocery stores and other essential businesses notifying them of the County and City's recent directives regarding face coverings for all employees and customers; requested that residents call the newly established Police Department Hotline to report COVID-19 violations. In response to City Council inquiries, Chief Reyes summarized the procedures implemented to protect Police Department personnel in the office and out in the field; noted that citations and fines may be issued individuals and businesses for repeated violations of the orders.

Fire Chief Nalder reviewed actions taken to reduce Fire Department personnel's exposure to the coronavirus; stated that the Fire Department has a sufficient supply of PPE and additional supplies have been ordered.

Special Program Compliance Director Goedhart summarized the number of calls to the vacation rental hotline and the number of confirmed violations against the City's order on short term vacation rentals; noted that compliance officers continue to monitor for illegal advertisements.

In response to City Council inquiries, City Attorney Ballinger clarified that property owners may not allow friends and family to utilize their second homes unless specifically authorized, noting that the State, County and City's orders prohibit non-essential travel; opined that property owners should be discouraged from visiting their second homes; confirmed that the County has directed and the City has complied with the closure of park and trailhead parking lots; opined that non-essential businesses are limited to activities required for them to re-open once the stay at home orders are lifted, such as securing the property or to maintain the inventory.

In response to City Council inquiry, City Manager Ready stated that staff will develop strategies to inform apartments dwellers that they must wear face coverings while in common areas.

Mayor Kors requested that staff develop a one-page notice that tenants may provide landlords regarding the City's orders; noted that the rate of infection within the Coachella Valley has significantly decreased in comparison to California as a whole; requested that staff agendize consideration of adopting additional protections for essential workers.

In response to City Council inquiry, Police Chief Reyes advised that police officers are not stopping drivers for the sole purpose of inquiring about their whereabouts in relation to the stay at home order.

Mayor Kors and Councilmember Middleton expressed gratitude to the residents and business owners for substantially complying with the stay at home order and wearing face coverings in public.

Councilmember Garner reminded residents that Find Food Bank is now offering food distribution sites at two locations in Palm Springs, alternating between sites each Thursday.

ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Anthony J. Mejia, MMC
City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL: 05/07/2020