



Thursday, August 20, 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 Thursday, August 20, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Kors led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.

PRESENTATIONS:

Emergency Management Coordinator DeSelms presented an update on COVID-19 case data for the City, County, and Coachella Valley region and responded to City Council inquiries.

Denise Goolsby, Neighborhoods Manager, presented an update on response rates to the U.S. Census.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:**1. CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTING LISA MIDDLETON TO THE OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 5, AND CANCELING THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 3, 2020, FOR DISTRICT 5**

Councilmember Middleton announced that she will abstain from voting on this matter, as it relates to the election in her District.

City Clerk Mejia presented the staff report and responded to City Council inquiries.

Following discussion, MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER GARNER, SECOND BY MAYOR PRO TEM HOLSTEGE, CARRIED 4-0 (WITH COUNCILMEMBER MIDDLETON ABSTAINING), to direct the City Clerk to proceed with conducting the election for City Council, District 5.

2. EXPANSION OF OUTDOOR DINING ON PALM CANYON DRIVE AND OTHER PUBLIC STREETS TO FACILITATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL EMERGENCY RELATED TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Director of Planning Services Fagg narrated a PowerPoint presentation. In response to City Council inquiry, Director Fagg advised that it would be easy to extend the rental period of concrete barriers on a month-to-month basis, if needed; opined that water barriers are less desirable than concrete barriers due to maintenance issues; stated that the concrete barriers can be decorated and/or painted; expressed concern that parklets may not provide adequate protection to patrons if Palm Canyon Drive is only partially closed.

In response to City Council inquiry, Deputy Fire Chief Loya summarized the emergency access locations for a partial and full street closure.

Mayor Kors summarized comments heard during stakeholder meetings, noting that concerns were expressed that restaurants and businesses north of the proposed closure may not benefit from these actions; pointed out that during the summer months there have been issues with crowded sidewalks and that a full street closure may help elevate overcrowding; noted that staff should outreach to other business districts in the City that may desire a similar program.

In response to City Council inquiry, City Manager Ready advised that outreach has been primarily focused on businesses; stated that the Historic Tennis Club Neighborhood is most likely to be impacted by the street closure, noting that their concerns have typically revolved around maintaining vehicular access along Belardo and Baristo, which will not be impacted by the proposed street closure.

Councilmember Woods provided his liaison report, noting that Main Street suggested that a full street closure may be desirable and that the Arenas businesses have expressed a desire for a street closure; noted that design guidelines will need to be developed by staff.

Councilmember Middleton expressed a desire to move forward with a 6-month pilot program for the full street closure of Palm Canyon Drive from Tahquitz Canyon Way to Baristo Road, noting that access for public safety vehicles must be maintained; voiced support for weekend street closures on Arenas Road.

Councilmember Garner voiced support for a 4-6-month pilot program, noting that many patrons may prefer outdoor dining, even if the State allows indoor dining; recommended that the concrete barriers be painted in a consistent color or theme.

Mayor Kors noted that most area businesses support a full closure of Palm Canyon Drive and voiced his support for the pilot program; noted that the City Council may desire to extend the road closure to Alejo Road, if successful.

Mayor Pro Tem Holstege voiced support for the full closure of Palm Canyon Drive and Arenas Road, noting the success of the Pride Festival; noted that staff should closely monitor the program and return to City Council for consideration of expanding the program area.

In response to City Council inquiry, Director Fagg noted that a smaller pilot program area will allow staff to assess the impacts to trash collection, street cleaning maintenance, food delivery, and directing traffic; recommended that staff continue to work with Main Street to establish design and operating standards for retail businesses; advised that staff could place the concrete barriers within two weeks.

The City Council agreed to: 1) move forward with a full closure of Palm Canyon Drive from Tahquitz Canyon Way to Baristo Road and to stand ready to adjust to a partial closure or further expansion, if warranted; 2) direct staff to work with the Arenas businesses to determine if they desire a street closure and their preferred options; 3) allow businesses that obtain the necessary permit and invest in building a parklet to retain it for at least a one year period; and 4) allow restaurants to expand in front of another business if they are notified and do not object.

CITY COUNCIL, SUBCOMMITTEE, AND CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS AND REPORTS:

Mayor Kors reported on the status of the County's permanent supportive housing project proposed for Palm Springs, noting that the County is working on a public outreach plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Holstege reported on the "PS Keeping You Safe" campaign to raise public awareness about COVID-19 safety precautions.

ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Anthony J. Mejia, MMC
City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL: 09/24/2020