



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

May 23, 2020

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To the Citizens and Businesses of Solvang:

In my message to you yesterday, I spoke about a [Special Meeting of the Solvang City Council](#) on **Tuesday, May 26, at 4:30 PM**. The Special Meeting is being called to discuss City of Solvang Economic Development.

The Special City Council Meeting is scheduled earlier in the day, before Council holds its Regular Council Meeting, to allow for Public Participation. At the Special Council Meeting the Council will hear recommendations for Economic Development and Specific Site Development at and near the Veterans Memorial Hall. This was one of the Council priorities discussed in June 2019, during the Council Goal Setting session for the current Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget. Direction also included necessary, and much-needed, updates to the City's parking, traffic and circulation plans and a change in tourism marketing – away from day-trip bus tourists to a lower quantity of, but higher spending, visitors. In a Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council in January 2020, the Council moved forward directing staff and an Economic Development consultant to develop specific recommendations for the Veterans Hall site.

Tuesday's meeting is the kick-off – the BEGINNING – of a public process for the proposed development. The concept for the development proposal is introduced by the Developer and owner of the private property parcels adjacent to the Veterans Hall. The conceptual proposal is introduced in two phases: 1) for the privately owned parcels only; and, 2) for the larger site including City- and County-owned facilities and other stakeholders. ***This is an introduction of the conceptual development.*** Before the project can be fully shaped, the City will engage in a collaborative process with the stakeholders including the County of Santa Barbara, Courts, Library, Veterans, and Senior Center and will seek continuous input from our community.

The proposed concept for the project builds upon **Solvang's unique "Danish Capital of America" character built by generations**. Our goal is not to change Solvang into something else. The goal is to build upon Solvang's brand and who we are while adding another piece of authentic European, Danish character.

The proposal is for a blended-use development including a wellness hotel, residential units and European-style designed café and retail spaces. The project would significantly raise the property tax valuation and increase capacity for sales tax and transient occupancy tax generation. The goal is for this development to complement the existing Solvang economy and our businesses. The proposed hotel rooms are larger than typical for Solvang, so higher-spending visitors will hopefully stay longer to enjoy Solvang's quality of life. The proposal also includes traffic mitigation measures such as installing a roundabout at the East entrance and additional parking on this site. Finally, the proposal includes a

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Community Center ensuring City and County continued support for providing public good services including a Library, Senior Center, Veterans Hall and City administration.

The current Veterans Hall building also serves as the City's designated Emergency Shelter; yet, the building would require significant reconstruction to satisfy this need. The City and County have also begun initial discussions working collaboratively to accommodate and improve the sub-standard Sheriff's Station and Courts space needs. **Again, this is the very beginning of the public process and outreach including community and stakeholder input to develop the final project.** The final proposed project would then be vetted through City approval process.

We will also focus on overall development for Solvang to ensure cohesive development throughout the City. Council will explore citywide economic development opportunities. First up, Solvang Park – heart of downtown Solvang. Solvang Park, even though small, represents the center of Solvang City. It is where we gather for special occasions and events. It is where Julefest ignites the joy of the winter holiday celebrations. Our City's Danish heritage speaks to the center of town: a central plaza which maintains good public focus and use by our residents, tourists and guests. The proposed concept for development is to create a European-style central plaza, a centerpiece to the City, a place for community to dine and play, and lounge on grassy areas. Once again, this is the beginning of a conceptual discussion. Our goal will be to ensure that the heart of our town serves the interests of our community and that the public use of the space as a Park is maintained.

To better facilitate public participation, the **City WILL allow in-person participation** for this Special Council Meeting. We will adhere to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and the health orders. A limited number of public will be allowed to enter at one time to provide public comment. Virtual participation will also still be available via Zoom or phone. Instructions for remote Council Meeting participation are located here: www.cityofsolvang.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/03302020-509. All Regular Meetings of the Solvang City Council may be viewed via live stream, on the City of Solvang's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UC15ThpbeQv6NkgYrup61SfA.

In addition, the City will hold an information meeting on Tuesday, May 26, at the City Hall from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, where a limited number of public will be able to meet with the developer, Ed St. George, who will introduce the proposed development concept and answer any questions. This will be done on a rotating basis so the maximum number of interested people can participate. We therefore ask that you email us in advance at CityHall@CityofSolvang.com, so we may schedule small, COVID-19-compliant groups without long waits.

As always, if you have comments or questions of any sort, submit them to the Council prior to the meetings by emailing Council@CityofSolvang.com.

On this Memorial Day weekend, I would like to take a moment of reflection to honor those that have given the ultimate sacrifice and remember them in our thoughts and prayers. We thank all of our military veterans and family members who have gone above and beyond in protecting our grateful nation.

We will hold a quaint ceremony (due to COVID-19) at the Veterans Hall on Monday, in honor of Memorial Day.

Be safe,

Solvang Mayor Ryan Toussaint