



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

May 2, 2020

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To the Citizens and Businesses of Solvang:

As we continue with the shelter-at-home orders and associated social distancing measures in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Solvang (www.CityofSolvang.com) continues to work feverishly behind the scenes to support our community, both its businesses and residents.

During the **Monday, April 27, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council**, a host of the initiatives on which the City is currently working, as well as the County and the State, were discussed, including the pressing topic of how we continue to feed our community during the extended closures. Out of this conversation, came some agreements and collaborations which we are particularly excited to share with those who were not watching the Council meeting's live stream.

The City of Solvang is partnering with [People Helping People](#) (PHP) on their food distribution program, to supplement their free, weekly emergency food distribution services which take place on Tuesdays at Mission Santa Inés (1760 Mission Drive, Solvang), 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM. The partnership is essentially a collaborative fundraising campaign: the City will initially donate \$10,000 towards this effort, and PHP will match those funds. The City has agreed to donate another \$5,000 per quarter in matching funds, for a total of \$30,000 through fiscal year 2020-21, to aid PHP with its continuing, non-“emergency” food distribution services. The goal of this program is to supplement the ongoing support from our community to feed those in need. We plan on a continued partnership with PHP, working together to raise communitywide funds. As Mayor, I will ask that the City support the donation of additional matching funds to additional raised donations from the private and non-profit sector.

The **SYV Community Kitchen at St. Mark's-in-the-Valley** (www.smitv.org) is delivering prepared meals twice per week to Solvang seniors, anyone immunocompromised, or anyone who does not have transportation. Each delivery consists of a simple entrée such as soup, stew, chili, or casserole and an “extras” bag of bread and fresh produce. These meals can be picked up at St. Mark's in Los Olivos by anyone who has transportation. Deliveries are on your doorstep (no contact, no one enters your house). Pick-up is arranged to maintain social distancing, avoiding contact. No forms or qualifications needed. **For delivery, please call 805-325-9280.** To pick up, go to 2901 Nojoqui Avenue, on the corner of Alamo Pintado Avenue in Los Olivos (next to Mattei's Tavern, one block from the town flagpole). This project is a collaboration among many individuals and groups in Solvang and throughout the Santa Ynez Valley.

The City Council has also authorized the City Manager to proceed with participation in a State program to provide three-meals-per-day delivery to senior citizens in need, with an initial investment of City match to fund the program in the amount of \$50,000. The program is Federally-funded at 75%, and 19% by the State. In the last couple of days, the State released guidelines and process for establishment of this program. The City will be working with the non-profit sector and local restaurants to establish the program locally, to meet any now-unmet needs of our senior residents.

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For business support, the City approved a contract with [National Development Council](#) (NDC), a certified Small Business Administration Lender. NDC will work with the City to process Payroll Protection Loans, seek grants for businesses, and will set up a longer-term revolving loan program to support re-start of the economy.

The City's Tourism consultant, IDK Events, held a first steering committee meeting this past week comprised of 12 business and Solvang representatives. The discussion surrounded methods of preparing the community for re-opening and the consideration of creative ways to help business to re-open in the event of an anticipated phased approach. Results of the discussion will be presented to the Council on May 11, 2020, at a Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council.

Once again, I would like to remind everyone about our Solvang Resources website (www.SolvangResources.com), which contains a host of compiled information and lists of resources available to our community during this trying time. In my last Message from the Mayor, I listed some of the specific community resources, all related to emergency food distribution.

In addition to these services and others, ***the City has organized a dog food distribution site*** at the Solvang Visitor Center (1639 Copenhagen Drive). The dog food distribution program is entirely volunteer-driven, and the City is grateful for these efforts. If you are an unemployed dog owner, please stop by Sunday and/or Wednesday, 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM, for free dog food.

As part of the Monday night Council meeting discussion on Solvang's "re-opening" plans, Council made the decision to open Solvang City parks to vehicle traffic, if previously closed. As of earlier this week, Hans Christian Andersen Park's entrance has been un-gated, and the skate park is also open. We ask that all social distancing measures be adhered to in all portions of our parks, and all playground areas are still closed to use. While only a small step towards re-opening efforts, the City hopes that this move will help lift some community spirits while we are all still sheltering at home.

Speaking of sheltering at home, there has been some confusion over the "shelter-at-home" order instituted in downtown Solvang *last* Saturday night, due to the giant black bear which wandered into town and some misinformation posted online. The lifting of the shelter-at-home order later that evening, after the animal had been relocated, did NOT lift the Governor's shelter-at-home order which is in place due to COVID-19. All Solvang residents are to remain in the safety of their homes during the pandemic, and all downtown businesses are to remain closed, except for those allowed to continue as essential services.

Along these lines, I just want to clear up additional misinformation which surfaced this past week, which was that Solvang was re-opening to tourism in defiance of the County's and Governor's current orders. Solvang is not currently re-opening; we simply voted to draft a letter to the County and State, to start a real-time discussion of how the Council sees the challenges more relative to our community today, as well as what we will need during the recovery process. Every community has specific needs and we believe that we can help guide, and be proactive, to serve *our* unique community in its respective re-opening plans.

A number of other re-opening and recovery issues were discussed during Monday night's Council meeting, including the formation of a group at the County level which will work together towards plans for the County's re-opening. Representatives from Solvang will be assigned to participate in this group. Council also discussed the impending end to the City-imposed rental eviction moratorium, which finishes at the end of May 2020, and the possibility of extending that moratorium in light of the extended COVID closures and stay-at-home measures. We will most likely revisit the topic of Solvang's eviction moratorium during the Monday, May 11 Regular Council Meeting. **We highly encourage landlords and tenants to continue to find ways to work together during these challenging times.**

City Manager Xenia Bradford also mentioned during Monday night's Council meeting, that Santa Barbara County did not qualify to receive funds under the CARES Act because we are less than 500,000 in population. Due to this, the County is asking the Governor for additional funding to be able to address his six indicators for re-opening. On the same note, last Monday night Council made the motion to continue

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the \$5,000 emergency loan program under the initial "\$250,000" Emergency Funding Loan Program which we instituted for Solvang small businesses.

I also want to remind the Solvang business community, once again, about the actions which *can* be taken in the immediate, to cater to the COVID-19 measures.

The City urges Solvang businesses to take advantage of the expedited processes, which we have instituted during this time for deferred maintenance and specific waived permitting. We are highly encouraging all businesses to use this time to reinvest in their ventures. We want Solvang to be ready for recovery, the moment that it is here. Food and beverage businesses, please utilize this time and these opportunities to expand outdoor dining areas to accommodate modified social distancing, which is what we anticipate new guidelines will state upon re-opening. We are committed to helping our businesses shift, as best as we possibly can.

As we look towards recovery, we know that Solvang's tourism engine will need to be immediately ready to re-ignite our economy.

We hope that you can join us (virtually) for the next [City Council](#) meeting, scheduled for May 11, 2020. Instructions for remote meeting participation are located here: www.cityofsolvang.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/03302020-509. ***We welcome public comment in advance of the meeting, for presentation during the session.*** All Regular Meetings of the Solvang City Council may be viewed via live stream, on the City's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UC15ThpbeQv6NkgYrup61SfA.

Please know that the City is proactively addressing Solvang's specific financial challenges, and working on stabilizing City finances. We are doing whatever is within our power to keep things moving forward, to aid the community wherever help is needed, and to be the frontline of information and assistance as ***together***, we all move through this situation. We will keep **#Solvangstrong**.

Be well,

Solvang Mayor Ryan Toussaint