



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

May 22, 2020

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To the Citizens and Businesses of Solvang:

With great sense of relief, we enter the next stage of post-COVID-19 and get to embrace life in Solvang, once again. We are moving into the next stage of re-opening of our economy while maintaining precautions and modified social distancing guidelines. Our community must now take the leadership to honor Solvang's character, and re-ignite our spirit of entrepreneurship and Solvang brand built by generations. It will take all of us – businesses, residents, and tourists – working together, to restart our economy, get back to work and school, and to build our future. We do have community members who will continue to be in need while the job market regains momentum, and we are thankful to our community volunteers, non-profits, and churches for spearheading the efforts to help those people.

Business community, thank you for your impassioned readiness to get back to work. We must collaborate to ensure the vitality of our community. We get it, the phased [re-opening plans and guidelines](#) for Santa Barbara County businesses and industry are confusing. On a positive note, we made it: we are at the threshold of entering Stage 2 "B" of the County's phased re-opening plan. In this second part of Stage 2, our dine-in restaurants are allowed to re-open with all necessary modifications to service and by following a COVID checklist meant to keep everyone safe.

Also, we could possibly see the re-opening of wine tasting rooms in the Santa Ynez Valley – with some very specific stipulations as pertain to required on-site food service. Since wineries were not initially included in Stage 2 "B" of California's re-opening guidelines, wineries and wine tasting facilities which wish to re-open at this point, must ensure the ability to operate essentially, as [a dine-in restaurant](#).

Bringing back these two hospitality elements will be a significant boon to our region, as they will require that a portion of our workforce finally return to work, even if in a modified situation. Re-opening of our food and beverage sectors, again, even if modified, will also encourage day-trippers and locals to patronize these establishments, putting some much-needed funds back into our local economy.

The City of Solvang (www.CityofSolvang.com) is planning a conference call TODAY, Friday, May 22, 2020 at 4:00 PM, for all Solvang businesses. On the call, which will include a Q&A session, we will discuss the new re-opening guidelines and what they mean to our business community. We will hold a **second call with the same agenda on Saturday, May 23 at 11:00 AM.** We recommend that all Solvang businesses attend either of these calls, and ask that you bring questions as pertain to your own, individual business and sector. Please email Media@cityofsolvang.com for the call-in details for either of the calls.

We do ask that you please familiarize yourselves with [the State's current guidelines for re-opening](#), and with the Santa Barbara County Reopening in Safe Environment (RISE) Guide: recovery.sbc.org/the-rise-guide. ***The City of Solvang is highly interested in any form of accommodations, and education, we might be able to undertake for our businesses, in order for the City to be successful, to feel safe to both residents and tourists, while abiding by the necessary State guidelines for re-opening.***

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As I mentioned in [my last Message from the Mayor](#), we have the next [Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council](#) on **TUESDAY, May 26, at 6:30 PM**. In that meeting, we will discuss the current City of Solvang rental moratorium, and will consider community-voiced issues which currently exist on this topic. The Council will introduce and adopt, if the affirmative votes exist, an Uncodified Emergency Ordinance of the Council of the City of Solvang extending the temporary moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent by residential and commercial tenants who have been harmed financially as a result of COVID-19.

During Tuesday night's Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council, we will also have a public hearing to consider the addition or enlargement of outdoor seating for restaurants, bars and wine tasting rooms in Solvang's Tourist Related Commercial District (TRC), in response to the new COVID guidelines to which these businesses must adhere. As part of this, the City Manager will present proposed modifications to, and street closures in, the TRC to better accommodate social distancing. Council will be asked to authorize the City Manager to implement recommended street closures and temporary structures to expand business operations to outdoor spaces.

We also welcome our business community to help us, help *you*. On Tuesday, May 26, the City will launch a business survey through the SolvangResources.com website to help gather information on your needs, as a business community. As you may recall, the City has partnered with National Development Council (NDC) to develop small business assistance recovery efforts. The City and NDC are looking for your input in order to best develop a program.

Also on **Tuesday, May 26**, we will hold a [Special Meeting of the Solvang City Council](#), at **4:30 PM**. The Special Meeting is being called to discuss City of Solvang Economic Development.

The Council will hear recommendations for development of an opportunity site at and near the Veterans Memorial Hall into a blended-use project encompassing residential units, hotel, dining, and Community Center. The proposed project concept builds upon Solvang's unique "Danish Capital of America" character, which has been fostered for generations. The proposed development's Community Center would ensure continued support by the City and County for providing public good services, and would include a Library, Senior Center, Veterans Hall and City administration. The City and County are also working collaboratively to accommodate and improve the Sheriff's Sub-Station and Courts space needs. **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.

Council will also explore citywide economic development opportunities, first of which is Solvang Park – the 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.

We hope that you can join us (virtually, of course) for the next set of [City Council](#) meetings on Tuesday, May 26, 2020. 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.

Once again, ***we welcome public comment in advance of the meetings, for presentation during the sessions.*** Please, if you have comments or questions of any sort, submit them to the Council prior to the meetings by emailing Council@CityofSolvang.com.

Together, we rise.

Solvang Mayor Ryan Toussaint