



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

June 2, 2020

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To the Citizens and Businesses of Solvang:

Words cannot express how much we, as the [Solvang City Council](#), appreciate your enthusiasm for this town which we call “home”. Your dedication to the community is admirable, and we thank you for your participation in last Tuesday night’s set of [Special and Regular City Council Meetings](#). We captured a host of takeaways, which we will bring back to the table in future public discussions and upcoming Council Meetings.

To that end, the **City will hold Community Workshops on Saturday, June 27, 2020** to discuss, and receive input on, economic development and concepts for improvements to the area at and near the “Old Lumberyard” and Veterans Memorial Hall sites, and Solvang Park-adjacent public parking lot. We will be reaching out to you with all details for the workshops, which will be held at the Veterans Hall, but they will be held as a series of smaller groups on that date to better accommodate social distancing. The workshops will be staffed by the City and the proposed developer, Ed St. George.

Based on the public input received so far, Ed St. George has created alternative, proposed concepts which incorporate the Large Hall of the Veterans Memorial building as a centerpiece. During the June 27 workshops, the public will have an opportunity to review, in sketch form, the alternative concepts and ask questions. Each of the sessions will be held in a structured agenda format, and similarly-structured public input by topic, will be recorded utilizing feedback cards. Depending on public input on June 27, additional, future workshops may be scheduled. At this point, this is an open-ended process, and we are still at the beginning of a conversation.

As you know, Solvang is pushing forward through Santa Barbara County’s phased re-opening plan. We are solidly in Stage 2B, and many of Solvang’s shops and restaurants have re-opened – albeit, with COVID guidelines and modifications in place. Santa Barbara County issued [an updated Health Officer Order](#) effective as of 5:00 PM on May 26, 2020, requiring face coverings or masks for everyone over the age of 13. While face coverings are not ordered for individuals engaging in outdoor exercise, they are recommended. You do not need to wear your masks if you are alone in your car, or in a vehicle with your family unit. Please remember, mandatory face coverings do not replace social distancing of at least six feet, which should be maintained when out in public. And of course, please keep up those hand-washing and sanitizing routines.

Some positive news out of last Tuesday night’s Council Meetings, was that many of our local businesses have been approved to begin their respective re-opening processes. As per *another* updated Santa Barbara County Health Officer Order, also effective as of 5:00 PM, May 26, 2020, places of worship, and barbershops and hair salons may begin to re-open. Graduations may also occur now, but must follow the new guidelines for these types of celebrations. The Health Officer Order and new guidelines, are here: countyofsb.org/uploadedFiles/phd/PROGRAMS/Disease_Control/Corona/HOO%202020-8-3.pdf

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We also have [further updates and information for our wineries and wine tasting facilities](#), which are also [allowed to re-open now](#) as long as very specific, and required, food service guidelines are followed. If you are in the wine industry in Solvang, please **review the updates** as pertain to your specific business.

Along these lines, IDK Events presented to the Council last Tuesday night, their proposed concept for temporarily closing sections of Copenhagen Drive to vehicular traffic in order to create an inviting pedestrian space, allowing for additional social distancing opportunities. As part of that plan, IDK will be instituting the installation of “parklets”: essentially, a sidewalk extension into a street which provides more space and amenities for people using the street, such as additional seating for enjoying food and/or beverages. Copenhagen Drive’s cross-streets, such as First Street, will remain open under this temporary plan to allow for local traffic flow. The Council authorized the City Manager to begin implementation of the Copenhagen street closures from Alisal to Second Street, and the creation of temporary structures to expand business operations to outdoor spaces.

Also during Tuesday night’s Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council, Council acted on an “Urgency Ordinance” effective immediately, which modifies and streamlines outdoor space expansion permitting for restaurants, wine tasting rooms and bars. The ordinance allows these types of businesses to expand into up to two (2) parking spaces, with a payment of “in lieu parking fees” if expanding beyond two (2) spaces.

In addition to the permanent expansion of patio spaces allowed by the modified ordinance, the City recognizes potential need for businesses to expand their operations to outdoor space to accommodate social distancing guidelines. Therefore, the City allows for a streamlined application process for expansion of operations or placement of signage in the public right of way. The City has placed a [Temporary Combination Encroachment-Sign Permit application](#) on [SolvangResources.com](#); completed applications may be emailed to businessqa@cityofsolvang.com. Once permitted through this expedited process, businesses may expand into right of ways and may post new, and necessary, signage meant for use during the continuing pandemic. We have also provided a [Signage Template](#) for all Solvang businesses, for compliance with the new COVID guidelines.

In other, business-related news, the City and IDK Events have posted a simplified version of the Santa Barbara County re-opening (RISE) guide on [SolvangResources.com](#). It was also announced that IDK and NDC will be conducting surveys of Solvang businesses as part of NDC’s Business Assistance Program, in an attempt to create a program which best suits our businesses’ loan funding needs.

Last Tuesday night, City Council also acted to extend Solvang’s temporary moratorium on both residential and commercial evictions, through July 31, 2020. The current, temporary Solvang eviction moratorium would have ended on May 31. Please note that the moratorium is on eviction, and not on payment of rent. The moratorium protects renters from being evicted for non-payment during this time. Any non-paid rent is due to the landlord but the ordinance allows for six (6) months’ repayment term from the time that the moratorium expires, equal to 1/6 of unpaid rent due each month during that period.

Finally, the Council also extended a waiver of fees and penalties for failure to pay utility bills and City Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT).

As a reminder, we have a [Special Meeting of the Solvang City Council on Saturday, June 6, 2020, at 10:00 AM](#), to discuss the 2020-22 Preliminary Financial Plan development. We will then host our [next Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council on Monday, June 8, 2020](#), during which we will receive further COVID-19 staff updates and will discuss the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Initiative. The City congratulates the UGB Initiative for receiving verification of the UGB petition, confirmation of which will be presented to the City Council at our June 8 Regular Meeting.

Virtual participation in all Meetings of the Solvang City Council is highly encouraged; instructions for virtual participation are located here: www.cityofsolvang.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/04272020-521. 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.

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Once again, *we welcome public comment in advance of the Council Meetings, for presentation during the sessions.* Please submit comments to the Council prior to the meetings by emailing Council@CityofSolvang.com.

#AlmostThere,

Solvang Mayor Ryan Toussaint