



Winter 2021 – Q4 2021

Reflecting on the Holiday Cheer and Solvang Traditions

A Message from Xenia Bradford, City Manager

Solvang once again kicked-off this winter season with the **Julefest** celebration. It's been a pleasure to see this Solvang tradition back. While we continue to watch the pandemic conditions carefully to ensure the safety of our residents and visitors, Julefest has brought back cheer this holiday season.

Santa Claus is back in town to greet the children, Danish dancers fill the streets on weekends, and a variety of activities are offered such as Nisse adventure and Candlelight Tours for all to enjoy. The Julefest celebration was kicked-off with the well-attended Tree Lighting Ceremony, followed by the parade, and will end with the Solvang tradition of the **Tree Burn** on **January 7**.

A few fun facts about Danish traditions:
▪ Julefest takes place throughout the month of December. Jule Nisser – (one = nissa, multiple = nisser), the mischievous elves that visits during

the Christmas season although only the family cat sees them coming and going.

- Danish tradition is to leave a bowl of rice pudding for the nisser who are known to play tricks if forgotten.
- After family Christmas dinner, families dance around the Christmas tree. They hold hands and encircle the tree while singing Christmas songs, carols, and hymns. The dancing ends with “Nu er

Continued on Page 5



CITY COUNCIL

Charlie Uhrig, Mayor
▪ Charlie.Uhrig@CityofSolvang.com
▪ (805) 697-6584

Claudia Orona, Mayor Pro-Tem
▪ Claudia.Orona@CityofSolvang.com
▪ (805) 697-6583

Robert Clarke
▪ Robert.Clarke@CityofSolvang.com
▪ (805) 245-1860

Mark Infanti
▪ Mark.Infanti@CityofSolvang.com
▪ (805) 697-6581

Jim Thomas
▪ Jim.Thomas@CityofSolvang.com
▪ (805) 697-6579

To reach the collective City Council:
Council@CityofSolvang.com

IN THIS ISSUE:

City Manager Letter.....Page 1/5
 Planning Corner.....Page 2
 Recreation Roundup.....Page 3
 Public Works/Utilities.....Page 4
 City Administration /
 Calendar.....Page 6

General Plan Alternatives Report Issued

The City's comprehensive General Plan Update continues. Currently, the project is in phase three—alternatives analysis. In this phase, the project assesses future land use choices/mobility options in the Land Use Alternatives Report.

The Land Use Alternatives Report will soon be published on the City's dedicated General Plan website (www.plansolvang.com). The community is encouraged to access the newly published report and review it.

www.PlanSolvang.com

To read and comment on the Alternatives Report, register for upcoming workshops, or to subscribe to additional General Plan updates, please visit www.PlanSolvang.com.

The community is also encouraged to attend the next open house, which will be taking place on Thursday, January 13, 2022, at the Vet's Hall from 6 – 8 pm. Similar to the last General Plan open house held in April 2021, the public is encouraged to attend in person, with masks required. For this meeting, the interaction exercises will be limited to those attending in person.



SAVE THE DATE!
January 13, 2022
6:00-8:00 PM
Veterans Memorial Hall, 1745 Mission Drive

Solvang General Plan Community Workshop #3
The General Plan needs your input!

Join us! The City of Solvang is hosting a third community workshop, as an open house at the Veterans Memorial Hall as part of the General Plan Update. The goal of the open house is to receive your comments and ideas on the City's future, specifically related to future land use choices (alternatives) and circulation/mobility options as presented in the Land Use Alternatives Report, available for public review in mid-December 2021 at:

www.planSOLVANG.com

We look forward to presenting the Land Use Alternatives Report and hearing your feedback. Spread the word and mark your calendars!

Questions? Contact:
(805) 688-5575, CityHall@cityofsolvang.com

"Is parking in Solvang solvable?"



www.plansolvang.com | Participate!

"What is the future of Downtown?"



www.plar.solvang.com | Participate!

Copenhagen Drive Reopening

Copenhagen Drive will be reopening to vehicular traffic on **January 31, 2022**. Prior to the reopening, City officials will be removing the parklets, cleaning the street, and restriping the parking spaces. City officials continue to evaluate future permanent road closures in Solvang.

Current Development Projects Update:

Old Lumberyard Project

- The City continues to work with the developer to develop a project scope.
- The developer is proposing a mixed-use hotel/residential development.
- The project will be brought back to Planning Commission in February for conceptual review.

Potential Alisal annexation

- Alisal Guest Ranch has requested the City to consider annexation of land adjacent to existing Alisal Guest Ranch for expansion of existing use for "glamping units."
- City officials are evaluating the proposed project.

Senior Center

- Senior Center is moving forward with construction of a new, expanded Senior Center Building at the existing site.
- The \$3 million project is funded by community donors. To donate, call 805-688-3793 or visit www.solvangseniorcenter.org.

Tree Burn returns on January 7

The Annual Tree Burn is back this year! Join together on **January 7** from **5-7 pm** for the powerful end to the Julefest celebration. The event features a Fire safety demonstration by Santa Barbara County Fire Department as well as retirement of flags by local Boy Scout groups. Refreshments for sale at the event.

Tree Disposal:

Leave your tree free of stands, ornaments, garland, etc. at the curb of your residence on Waste Management service day **the week of January 3, 2022**. No flocked trees. Trees can also be dropped off at Mission Santa Ines in the empty lot (follow guidelines for disposal at the lot) any time after December 25. No trees dropped off after 4 pm January 7, 2022.



Winter / Spring 2022

Check out our website for the newly released calendar for our Winter / Spring Programs!

3 Ways to Register:

- 1) Visit our website at www.cityofsolvang.com
- 2) Call us at (805) 688-7529
- 3) Visit us at 411 Second St. (We are back in the Recreation Building across the street from City Hall.)

Recap of Haunted House and Turkey Trot Events

Community favorite events back after a one-year hiatus due to COVID

The 27th Annual Haunted House, put on by Solvang and Buellton Recreation Departments, was a great success! On October 29 and 30, nearly 2,500 people of all ages braved the haunt where participants encountered their fears of monsters, spiders, dolls, claustrophobic mazes and more.

The Solvang and Buellton Rec departments would like to thank the 40+ volunteers who helped make the event a huge success. The haunted house is normally held at the Solvang Festival Theater; however, this year's event was held in the parking lot of the Solvang Recreation building due to the current construction at the Theater.

"This was our first big event since Covid and it was really great to see the community come together and enjoy an all-time favorite event," Solvang Recreation supervisor Jenny McClurg noted.



Nearly 70 people gathered on Friday, November 26 to run off their Thanksgiving calories at the 10th Annual Turkey Trot 5K at Sunny Fields Park. Proceeds from the event go to the local chapter of the Salvation Army.



Utility Rate, Financial Plan Community Forums Planned

Public encouraged to participate in January, February events

The City is currently working with a consultant, HDR Engineering, to evaluate the City's water and sewer rates, which have not been modified since 2016. The City will be hosting a community forum on Saturday, February 12 to discuss the process, and field any comments and questions.

Additionally, over the course of the next six months, there will be numerous workshops and opportunities to discuss the City's next two-year financial plan, which will be presented to City Council for adoption in June 2022 and take effect on July 1, 2022. Take note of the workshop dates and join us!

Save the Dates

Save the dates and please join us...

- Financial Plan Workshop
 - Thurs, Jan. 27 – 6 pm (City Hall)
- Utility Rate Community Workshop
 - Sat, Feb. 12 – 10 am (Vet's Hall)
- City Council Financial Goal Session
 - Sat, Feb. 26 – 10 am (City Hall)

City Hall Drought Tolerant Landscape Installed

With the City facing Stage Two Drought conditions, the City transitioned its landscape to be an example of water conservation. Grass was replaced with a more drought tolerant landscape including decomposed granite and drought tolerant plants. Come check it out!



Grass was replaced with drought tolerant decomposed granite



The drought tolerant landscape also features a river rock trail.

Aeration Replacement Completed at WWTP

Construction completed recently on the \$3 million aeration system replacement project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project initially kicked off in May 2021. Operations of the new aeration system will be fine-tuned over the next year to achieve optimal treatment efficiency as well as energy efficiency.



Groundwater Sustainability Plan

On November 22, City Council approved the draft [Groundwater Sustainability Plan](#) for the Eastern Management Area (EMA) that includes the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin. The EMA will hold a public hearing on January 6, 2022, at 6:30 pm in person (location TBD) and via Zoom. Visit www.santaynezwater.org.

det jul igen” (“Now it’s Christmas again”) with the singing and dancing getting faster with each verse.

Food:

- *Holiday treats* – Cookies (Pebbernødder, klejner) and chocolate
- *Christmas Eve dinner* – Roast duck, pork roast, small caramelized brown potatoes, æbleskiver and rice pudding for dessert
- *Christmas Day* – Julefrokost – elaborate lunch that lasts most of the day and includes many courses with a variety of Danish open face sandwiches served in a specific order
- *December 26* – More food and fun with family and friends



City updates:

Earlier this year the community enjoyed welcoming back the Haunted House, marking record attendance, and the Turkey Trot.

The City’s economic recovery continues, and we are seeing tourism and retail revenues continuing to increase above pre-pandemic levels. This winter we will continue to work with the community on the General Plan Update. The General Plan represents the community’s aspirations for its future and intentions for community development. The general plan update will address important issues such as traffic circulation, housing, and sustainable economic development. The next **General Plan public workshop** will be held on **January 13** to discuss alternative choices. Please visit www.PlanSolvang.com for more information.

The temporary **Copenhagen Drive closure** has been extended through January 31, 2022. The City has received input from community surveys and will continue to work with the community through the General Plan update to consider permanent improvements.

This winter we will also engage the community to receive input for the next two-year **Financial Plan**. A **community workshop** will be held on **January 27** to receive public input on priorities for the next two years and the City Council will hold a **Goal Setting session on February 26**. A **Utility Rate Study Community Workshop** will be held on **February 12** to present preliminary results. The results of the Utility Rate study will set a plan for the community rates for water and sewer in order to pay for this critical service and infrastructure.

Please remember that California is experiencing extreme drought conditions. The City is currently under stage 2 drought restrictions. As the State allocation of water is extremely low, it is important to conserve water to sustain our water reserves and avoid further water restrictions.

Considering California’s legal framework, the City is transitioning to elections by district along with many other cities throughout the State. The City held three public hearings recently to receive input from the community and is currently working to develop draft election district maps. Please visit www.DistrictSolvang.org to learn about the process and provide your input. Draft maps will be posted for public review in early February and additional public hearings will be held to receive input on the maps.

Employee of the Quarter – Q3 2021

In January 2021, the City of Solvang implemented an Employee of the Quarter program. The recipient chosen for the Quarter 3 period (July–September 2021) is **Nathan Giacinto**.



Nathan has worked for the City of Solvang for 20+ years and serves as the Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor. Nathan is a team player and go-to-source to all staff for help. Nathan serves as the City's Union Steward and was also recognized recently as the SYV Foundation Youth Volunteer of the Year. Congratulations, Nathan!

Employee of the Quarter - Nominations

All City of Solvang employees (minus the City Manager) may be nominated for Employee of the Quarter by a fellow employee, Solvang resident, elected official, or other community member. Employees should be nominated for exemplary contributions in *Overall Work Performance*, *Leadership/Interpersonal Skills*, *Public Relations*, *Cost Savings*, *Teamwork*, and/or *Emergency Response*. For more information, or to make an Employee of the Quarter nomination, please visit www.CityofSolvang.com/EmployeeAwards.

New City of Solvang Employees Hired

With the current City budget, effective July 1, 2021, the City Council approved a reorganization to the City personnel structure.

The City has hired the following employees over the last six months. Welcome aboard!

- Annamarie Porter, *City Clerk*
- Sophia Checa, *Assistant Planner*
- Lisa Marie Fuog, *Human Resources Manager*
- Candice Libera, *Recreation Coordinator*
- Claudia Stephenson, *Accounting Technician*
- Rodger Olds, *Public Works Director*
- Matthew Goodwin, *Wastewater Collection Operator*

Solvang Election Districts

The City of Solvang, like other cities and school districts across the State, is transitioning to elections by District. Beginning in 2022, voters would vote for one City Council Member who lives in their district. This system would replace the current at-large elected system, though the Mayor will continue to be elected at-large. A separate website has been developed, www.DistrictSolvang.org that provides information on the process, outlines public participation opportunities, and provides a mapping tool to help form the districts.

Calendar of Events

January 2022

- **3** - CANCELLED - Planning Commission
- **6** - Tourism Adv. Committee (3:30 pm)
- **7** - Tree Burn (*Mission – 5 pm*)
- **10** - City Council Meeting (6:30 pm)
- **13** - General Plan Mtg (*Vets Hall - 6 pm*)
- **17** - MLK Day (*City Hall closed*)
- **20** - Design Review Committee (5 pm)
- **24** - City Council Meeting (6:30 pm)
- **27** - Financial Plan Workshop (6 pm)

February 2022

- **3** - Tourism Adv. Committee (3:30 pm)
- **7** - Planning Commission (6 pm)
- **12** - Utility Rate Workshop (*Vets Hall – 10 am*)
- **14** - City Council Meeting (6:30 pm)
- **17** - Design Review Committee (5 pm)
- **21** - President's Day (*City Hall closed*)
- **26** - Financial Plan Workshop (10 am)
- **28** - City Council Meeting (6:30 pm)

March 2022

- **3** - Tourism Adv. Committee (3:30 pm)
- **7** - Planning Commission (6 pm)
- **14** - City Council Meeting (6:30 pm)
- **17** - Design Review Committee (5 pm)
- **28** - City Council Meeting (6:30 pm)

All meetings at City Hall (1644 Oak St), unless otherwise indicated.

For more information on upcoming events, see the Calendar on the front page of the City's website (www.CityofSolvang.com).