



Staff Report

File #: 20-0280, Version: 1

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council Special Meeting of May 26, 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

Good evening Councilmembers. As you know, we re-opened the Strand on Friday and had larger crowds on the beach than the previous weekend. But the crowds were not unmanageable.

Hermosa Beach Police Department was prepared for the three-day holiday weekend. They had additional officers on duty and the security guards on the job over the weekend, helping the police educate the public about physical distancing and avoiding congregating. I will have the Chief LeBaron and Peter Ahlstrom address enforcement further in their own reports.

We know our local businesses are eager to re-open for customers to enter their stores and shop - rather than just relying on curbside delivery. We understand their impatience, especially with the larger retailers, like Costco and Target, being open and selling similar goods. As you know, the Public Health Order determined these were essential businesses that should remain open because they also sell food.

We are encouraged that the state Department of Public Health issued new guidance this weekend that makes it possible for counties to level the retail playing field by allowing our small businesses to safely re-open to customers. We are waiting to see if Los Angeles County amends its Public Health Order to allow this.

We understand how difficult these closures have been for our businesses. At the City, we are committed to collaborating with our local businesses and advocating for them to maintain our community's character and culture -and create a more resilient and thriving business community in the long-term.

As you know, the City's commitment has been demonstrated through the time spent with our businesses and through the myriad of regulatory relief measures and support the City has enacted for our businesses over the last two months. We have:

1. Extended Business License renewal due dates
2. Extended Parking Permit renewal due dates
3. Delayed Parking Citation unbilled late fees
4. Waived Temporary Banner/Sign permit fees

5. Suspended Restaurant Encroachment fees until further notice
6. Created 15-minute parking zones to facilitate takeout/delivery
7. Enacted a temporary moratorium on foreclosures and evictions
8. Prepared grant applications to support safe use of outdoor space by businesses
9. Walking tour with City Council and business representatives

Last week, we also announced the formation of a new Economic Development Committee comprised of City Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners as part of their ongoing efforts to assist the community's COVID-19 economic recovery.

The Committee will initially focus on economic recovery efforts and will begin meeting June 1. It will seek input from the community and local businesses to develop and implement recovery programs as public health orders are amended.

We agree with our business community that expanding available outdoor areas for conducting business will be an effective way to help our local businesses to meet physical distancing and safety standards - including accessibility and liability requirements. We are working diligently to quickly launch such a program for all businesses. We will be discussing our proposals for expanding businesses into outdoor areas later tonight.

The Council had also asked about re-opening our Farmers Markets. We have been working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary, which sponsor our two Farmers Markets. We have heard back from both that they cannot resume the markets at this time.

Rotary has lost both of its Farmers Market managers, so it is unable to produce the event at this time. We have also been informed that it is financially unfeasible for the Pier Plaza market to operate considering the combination of restrictions on it.

As you may know, we re-opened the City's tennis courts at the Community Center on Thursday with new temporary policies in place to support safe use of the newly resurfaced tennis courts. Players are adopting to these policies and the new membership program and policies adopted by City Council last Tuesday.

We are planning to re-open the tennis and pickleball courts at Clark Field and should have additional information on the timing of that by the end of the week. We are also looking at what we need to do to safely re-open City Hall and other City facilities. We will be updating you as those plans are finalized and dates set.

As a friendly reminder to residents within the parking permit district, the City will continue to honor expired 2019-2020 parking permits through May 31. On June 1, the 2019-2020 permits will no longer be valid and a current 2020-21 permit will be required to be displayed on your vehicle. The City's website has additional information on how to obtain or renew your residential parking permit.

The City is also resuming street sweeping enforcement on June 1. As you know, sweeping our streets is essential to the health and safety of the community and to ocean water quality. Initially, our officers will be issuing warnings to vehicles parked in street sweeping zones. But we will transition to citations on June 8 (Date was changed to June 15) because we need the street side parking areas to be open so that our machines can be effective in sweeping the streets.