

JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EL CAJON CITY COUNCIL/HOUSING AUTHORITY/SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO THE EL CAJON REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



MINUTES

CITY OF EL CAJON EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA

August 28, 2020

A Joint Special Meeting of the El Cajon City Council/Housing Authority/ Successor Agency to the El Cajon Redevelopment Agency, held Monday, August 28, 2020, was called to order by Mayor Bill Wells at 3:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, 200 Civic Center Way, El Cajon, California.

ROLL CALL

Council/Agencymembers present:	Goble
Council/Agencymembers via virtual platform:	Kendrick and McClellan
Council/Agencymembers absent:	None
Deputy Mayor/Vice Chair present:	Ortiz
Mayor/Chair present:	Wells
Other Officers present:	Mitchell, City Manager/Executive Director DiMaggio, Assistant City Manager Foley, City Attorney/General Counsel Cortez, City Clerk/Secretary

Mayor Wells lead the **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG** and **MOMENT OF SILENCE**. (The Courts have concluded that sectarian prayer as part of City Council Meetings is not permitted under the Constitution).

1. Enforcement of COVID-19 State and County Health Orders

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council discusses the City's role in enforcing State and County COVID-19 health orders, and provides direction to staff.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Wells stated he finds the COVID-19 State and County laws and regulations unfair in allowing big box stores, grocery stores and soon, schools to be open, while nail salons, restaurants and churches have been shut down. Mayor Wells proposed that the El Cajon Police Department (ECPD) not enforce the State and County laws regarding masks, non-essential businesses and social distancing in the City of El Cajon. Mayor Wells added that people are suffering from financial ruin, depression, isolation and other emotional and spiritual issues as a result of the government overreach to deal with the pandemic.

He added that he supports mask wearing and social distancing if the individual feels unsafe about the current situation. He expressed concern about the high suicide rate as a result of the laws and regulations dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

City Manager Mitchell stated that staff does not have a recommendation on the Item, and presented data from the State and County Health Orders regarding number of cases in San Diego County and in the City of El Cajon. In addition Mr. Mitchell shared information on mandated closures and re-opening orders.

The following people submitted online comments to strongly oppose Mayor Wells' recommendations:

Stephen
Samantha A.
Madeline C.
Michael Hagan
Susan Davison
Cheryl Tade
Jean Brittain
Andrea Reyes
David Barkhimer
Greg Barr
Walter Weisman
Kevin Schrader
Joel Kmak
Victoria T.

Enforcement of COVID-19 State and County Health Orders (Continued)

Moline Schrader
Jason Brittain
Anne
Juliana Majcher
David Chenoweth
Patrick Grillot
Tyrone Johnson
Mohamed Hassan
Tamoor Sial
Mohammed Tuama
Charles

Twelve more comments were submitted anonymously opposing the recommendation by Mayor Wells.

The following people submitted online comments to support Mayor Wells' recommendations:

Allen
Michelle Metschel
Betty
Julie Griggs
Bill Marchant

Mayor Wells clarified that he is not promoting to stop mask wearing or social distancing. He stated the City of El Cajon has issued zero citations for not obeying the current laws regarding COVID-19. He expressed that his concern is for people losing jobs, businesses and their mental health. Mayor Wells' purpose is to give the local businesses and citizens hope and encouragement.

Councilmember Kendrick expressed confidence in the Chief of Police's judgement to determine what needs to be a priority in the City of El Cajon, including issuing citations regarding COVID-19 laws.

To clarify a question by Councilmember Goble, Mayor Wells stated he would make a recommendation to direct the City Manager to consider State and County COVID Health Regulations as a low priority, allowing local business to re-open in a safe manner.

Councilmember Goble stated that the City Council's role is not to manage staff, including the Chief of Police. He added that the City Manager and Chief of Police have used sensible judgement in dealing with appropriate response to COVID-19 situations in the community.

Enforcement of COVID-19 State and County Health Orders (Continued)

Mayor Wells stated his resolution for the meeting would be to direct the City Manager to continue to prioritize issues as he has been doing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilmember Goble clarified that the Council's direction should not prevent the City Manager or Chief of Police from using the law to stop an individual or business who blatantly defies the current State and Health orders, and creates a dangerous situation for the community.

MOTION BY WELLS, SECOND BY GOBLE, to INSTRUCT the City Manager to continue to prioritize the COVID-19 enforcement in the City of El Cajon, and to consider the City Council's desire to treat people gently and with consideration of their situation.

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Adjournment: The Joint Special Meeting of the El Cajon City Council/El Cajon Housing Authority/Successor Agency to the El Cajon Redevelopment Agency held this 28th day of August 2020 was adjourned at 4:14pm, to Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

ANGELA L. CORTEZ, CMC
City Clerk/Secretary