



**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
SOLVANG CITY COUNCIL
FISCAL YEAR 2022-24 FINANCIAL WORKSHOP**

February 26, 2022
Saturday
10:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Uhrig called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, 1644 Oak Street, Solvang, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Charlie Uhrig; Mayor pro tem Mark Infanti; Councilmembers Robert Clarke, Claudia Orona and Jim Thomas

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Xenia Bradford, City Attorney Dave Fleishman, City Clerk Annamarie Porter

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Councilmember Orona

1. FISCAL YEAR 2022-24 FINANCIAL PLAN CITY COUNCIL GOAL SETTING WORKSHOP

City Manager Bradford introduced the item; addressed the agenda; discussed the General Plan and Financial Plan; talked about Council setting goals to set priorities for the next two years, the process for developing and pursuing goals and insights from other communities. Additionally, she discussed current Fiscal Year 2021-22 priorities and addressed the survey and results.

Mayor Uhrig invited public comments.

Scott Wenz, Cars are Basic, discussed the organization; referenced an email sent to City Council; reported the City of Santa Barbara shut down Main Street in favor of bicycles and eBikes and extending Solvang's main drag, and cautioned City Council to consider the matter, carefully.

Jim Richardson spoke about the need to address seniors, especially in terms of Solvang being a desirable place to live; noted that about one-third of the Solvang population are seniors and urged City Council to consider seniors as a priority.

Brenda Ball spoke about parking and suggested building a parking structure that fits in with other Danish architecture in town and using the top for solar panels.

Bonnie Jacobsen (via Zoom), President, Friends of the Library, urged City Council to consider the Library and its needs; noted their goal is to provide programs for children and adults; reported that the City of Goleta wants \$20,000 per year to operate the Library and asked for the City's help.

Mayor Pro Tem Infanti reported the GSA has a published plan that will be available through the Library and

stated it will be a source for the City to address the groundwater sustainability plan and is accessible to residents.

There were no other public comments.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of achieving water independence, enhancing local water supplies, maintaining the Wastewater Treatment Plan for recycled water, providing access to water, building reservoirs, making recycled water available for landscaping uses and the possibility of purchasing water from the State and private well owners.

Utilities Director Jose Acosta stated that the City should prioritize developing existing wells and moving forward with the river well development.

City Manager Bradford reported that staff is currently looking at engaging grant writers to seek available grants that are most fit for the project and noted that water can be purchased, but at a premium.

Discussion followed regarding adding the Wastewater Treatment Plan upgrade as a priority and goals related to traffic and parking.

Discussion continued regarding the possibility of building underground parking at Parking Lots 2 and 4, building an upper level to be used as additional recreation/housing/mixed use areas, identifying other parking lots that are unused during weekends (i.e., High School parking lot), implementing a shuttle service into town, improving Lot 72 and leasing private parking lots or public use.

Ensuing discussion pertained to adding a goal relative to improving circulation and developing multi-model transportation options including adding sidewalks, bicycle lanes, improvements to Route 246 (in coordination with Caltrans), including synchronized pedestrian crossings and traffic lights, estimated costs and Copenhagen Drive.

Mayor Uhrig invited public comments.

Jim Richardson referenced the last traffic study on Mission Drive; noted four different scenarios were considered; reported on the speed of traffic through the area; felt the only thing that will improve it is a bypass and urged City Council to consider the through-put speed when considering changes to the area.

Tracy Beard asked that before considering a bypass, City Council consider what has happened in towns, such as Sutter Creek, where by-passes have been built and how they have suffered through the years and voiced support for a wayfinding/sign program, including QR codes to identify the location of restaurants and shops.

Scott Wenz reported the City of Santa Barbara installed pavers and noted concerns with public safety and slipping.

Discussion followed regarding adding way-finding signs for vehicles and pedestrians.

City Manager Bradford discussed Fiscal Sustainability and goals under same.

Discussion followed regarding increasing Sales Tax by 1% specifically for infrastructure, exploring forming a Downtown Business Improvement District and considering funding significant public project with debt issuance.

Jim Richardson spoke on the possibility of increasing Sales Tax by 1% and discussed allocating some of the funds to CalPERS debt and the wastewater debt.

Bonnie Jacobsen (via Zoom) commented on the proposed tax increase as a way to fund the Senior Center and the Library.

With respect to Tourism priorities, City Manager Bradford listed broad goals and requested input from City Council.

Discussion followed regarding supporting and diversifying tourism, increasing mid-week visitor stays by accommodating business meetings, encouraging the private development of a small convention center, exploring working with the County to expand Vets Hall to improve the venue and Solvang-focused marketing.

Brenda Ball reported the Vets Hall seats 250 people and suggested enhancing and expanding the kitchen area for added break-out rooms.

City Manager Bradford listed suggestions under Law Enforcement and Safety.

Discussion followed regarding partnering with the City of Buellton for Law Enforcement services to reduce costs, the possibility of waiting until after the election to address the topic, investing in infrastructure benefiting enjoyment of Solvang for residents and businesses and exploring forming a Business Improvement District.

2. **COUNCIL CLOSING COMMENTS** - None

3. **ADJOURNMENT**- Mayor Uhrig adjourned the meeting at 12:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Annamarie Porter, City Clerk