



December 22, 2020

To all Solvang residents and businesses,

Thank you for your concern about this past weekend's demonstrations in town, and for taking the time to reach out to the City to voice those concerns.

The City of Solvang is currently following all State and County guidelines with regards to permitted events, and is in fact not permitting any events of any sort, at this time -- including this past weekend's two different happenings in Solvang Park.

The City is working with the Sheriff's Department and the County to appropriately address such situations within the framework of all applicable laws and regulations. Should things escalate to the point of necessary intervention, the Sheriff's Department is ready. However, these groups are all exercising their First Amendment rights, and we cannot as a City pick and choose whom we "allow" to exercise those rights, and whom we do not. We have had a number of peaceful gatherings in Solvang Park since the beginning of the pandemic, none of which were planned or authorized by the City.

We did turn off the electricity to the Park for Sunday's rally, and have done this in the past during other such gatherings.

Sheriff Bill Brown, Chairman of the Santa Barbara County Law Enforcement Chiefs, stated as follows according to one of the recent County of Santa Barbara news press releases. "When Santa Barbara County became subject to the State's new Stay-at Home Order, the police chiefs and I committed to continuing our direction and intent that our agencies' approach to health order violations is to make every effort to use discretion, education and encouragement to achieve voluntary compliance. Enforcement options will remain a tool to be used in cases of repeat or egregious violations which endanger public safety."

In occurrences such as this past weekend, the City of Solvang posts additional signage in the area of Solvang Park reminding all locals or visitors that masks are required, and that social distancing should be maintained. The Park as it is deemed a public space and both State and County Public Health Orders do not call for closure of parks. However, please know that *our* primary concern in these situations is always community and our citizens.

Once again, we appreciate the continued concern and the communication,

Xenia Bradford,  
City Manager