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CALIFORNIA



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COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, September 24, 2020
2:00 p.m.

**Members of the public who wish to speak to the Commission during the meeting must submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Board Secretary prior to the commencement of the public comments for each agenda item of interest. Comments by the public on matters not identified on the agenda, but within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission will be heard during the item designated as "Public Comments Period." The length of public speaking time is two minutes, unless the presiding officer grants some other amount of time.*

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Meeting called to order at: 2:05 PM by President **Louie**. Commissioners present: **Alarcon, Garcia, Marez, Samarjian**. Also present: General Manager Arturo Chavez, Assistant General Manager Edgar Garcia, El Pueblo Staff Ailene Ignacio, El Pueblo Staff Darlene Lopez, and Deputy City Attorney Cheryl Soriano.

1. WELCOMING REMARKS.

Commissioner Louie welcomed those present to the meeting. El Pueblo Staff Darlene Lopez shared that the meeting was streamed on YouTube. The meeting stream was available at tinyurl.com/ep924. This is another method for the public to watch, however the livestream would have a delay. The public was advised that they must call in to the meeting to make any public comments.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM.

Commissioners Collado, DiCostanzo, and Thomas were absent. A quorum was established.

3. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

Commissioner Marez moved to approve the minutes of 09-10-20. Commissioner Samarjian seconded. Vote: Louie, Yes; Alarcon, Yes; Garcia, Yes; Marez, Yes; Samarjian, Yes. The minutes were approved.

Commissioner Louie requested that Mr. Adali Olivares of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area give a presentation to the Commission. Mr. Olivares shared that the National Park Service (NPS) occupies an office space close to the historic Pico House. Their headquarters are in Thousand Oaks with the space at El Pueblo serving as their Los Angeles satellite office. The NPS has been actively monitoring and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NPS has continually

adapted with plans to resume operations following CDC guidelines for a phased reopening. Currently, they are focusing on educational operations with livestreamed educational programs for LA and Ventura Counties. Mr. Olivares shared previous collaborations with both the United States Forest Service and El Pueblo. Commissioner Louie shared with his fellow Commissioners that this presentation was a continuation of efforts to introduce the non-profit partners who call El Pueblo home.

4. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT. Public Speakers: Jose Antonio Aguirre, Lisanne Magdaleno Lee, Emily Martinez, Pete Martinez, Valerie Hanley.

5. COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENT REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Commissioner Louie shared that this would be the appropriate time for representatives of the Olvera Street Merchants to make any announcements. Ms. Emily Martinez of Margarita's (C-7) shared with the Commission that she has created a panel of stakeholders intended to address issues and concerns that have not been addressed by other Merchant representatives. She noted the need for a code of conduct between Merchants and maintaining the historic integrity of El Pueblo. Next, Ms. Valerie Hanley of Casa California (W-10) and the Olvera Street Merchants Association Foundation (OSMAF) updated the Commission on their efforts placing three (3) banners stating that Olvera Street is open and a donation of papel picado to decorate the Kiosko. Ms. Hanley told Commissioners that the Neighborhood Council has only met for special meetings with twenty-four (24) hours' notice recently. She stated that a grievance has been filed regarding procedural issues within the Council. Finally, Ms. Joella Hopkins of City Council District 14 (CD14) addressed the Commission. She announced that the Civic Center Bridge Home has opened at the LA Mall. This facility holds ninety-nine (99) beds and will bring additional support to the area. She shared that with both the Bridge Homes open cleanup in the area will be stronger. She told Commissioners that Kevin de León will be sworn into office as CD14's new Councilmember His swearing in will allow direct representation to the Council with the ability to vote and make motions. Ms. Hopkins shared that Councilmember de León's primary concern will be homelessness and a return to comprehensive cleanups. Ms. Hopkins stated that it will be up to Merchants, El Pueblo Staff, and Commissioners to make sure that their desires and objectives are presented. New staffing information for his team will be available in the next thirty (30) days.

Public Speakers: Valerie Hanley, Peter Martinez.

6. GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT.

6.1.1. Mr. Chavez presented reports to the Commission regarding operations. He told the Commission that thirty to forty percent (30% - 40%) of Merchants are open Thursday through Sunday. He stated that there have been three (3) official Merchant closures and two (2) informal departures. He stated that the Department has not been given notice regarding the informal departures and are attempting to reach out to the Merchants. The Biscailuz Building is open with Staff on-site Monday through Friday on staggered schedules. He shared updates on filming activity and events. The City's El Grito telethon largely shot on-site at El Pueblo was viewed by sixty thousand (60,000) people and has raised \$27,000. He stated that the Department is in contact with OSMAF to determine a possible activation of the site for Dia De Los Muertos.

6.1.2. Mr. Chavez updated the Commission on Security incidents. He noted that August saw a spike in overall incidents from July. Of the two hundred and fifty-seven (257) incidents reported by Security, the majority of these involved loitering and panhandling.

6.1.3. Prior to the pandemic Staff sent out nomination ballots for the Merchant Advisory Committee. Due to the pandemic the nomination process was halted. Mr. Chavez stated that in the near future El Pueblo Staff would be sending out nominating ballots via mail and email. He said the Department would wait two to three (2-3) weeks to determine the nominations before sending out voting ballots.

Mr. Chavez told Commissioners that the operating expenses of the Department are on budget. He reminded them that the Department has no revenue from Merchants. He stated that there has been a slight increase in revenue from parking and events. He stated that moving into the next budget period there is a three percent (3%) cut to be made across all Departments, possibly involving lay offs and furloughs. Commissioner Louie inquired about a more in-depth report on revenue and expenditures and a full copy of the Security Incident Reports. Mr. Chavez stated that he was waiting on approval to release the Incident reports. Mr. Chavez explained the waiver of rent that was passed by the Council. He stated that there has not been action on the motion put forth by Councilman Huizar, but that discussion was continuing.

Public Speaker: Lisanne Magdaleno Lee, Valerie Hanley.

7. ACTION ITEMS.

7.1 Commissioner Louie proposed the creation of two (2) Ad-Hoc Committees. He said that, with new Management in place, the Commission was presented with an opportunity to take significant steps in fulfilling policies they would like to see at El Pueblo. Commissioner Louie stated that he would like to see the Commissioners take an active leadership role.

7.1.1. First, Commissioner Louie presented the notion of an Ad-Hoc Committee dedicated to the COVID-19 response. He said this group would be involved in creating strategic plans to address the safety of employees and visitors.

7.1.2. Next, Commissioner Louie proposed an Ad-Hoc Committee to address Historical and Cultural concerns. He stated that there are major opportunities for El Pueblo with the Metro projects beginning to connect Union Station and the Monument. He stated that the history, architecture, planning, and landscaping would all play an important role in how El Pueblo is viewed by visitors. He stated that the Commission should have input into this expansion project.

Commissioner Louie asked Commissioners for guidance on how they would like to move forward with these proposals. Commissioners Alarcon and Garcia expressed interest in participating in the COVID-19 Response Ad-Hoc Committee. Commissioner Garcia requested guidance from Mr. Chavez on how the Commission could best support the Department on these items. Mr. Chavez and Ms. Soriano told Commissioners that any Ad-Hoc Committee meetings held would be subject to the Brown Act, requiring the same steps and public meetings as an official Commission Meeting. Mr. Chavez suggested that any specific discussion or action on these items could be placed on to the Commission Agenda for regular meetings. Commissioner Alarcon asked if these Ad-Hoc meetings would have a fiscal impact on the Department. Mr. Chavez stated that the impact would be on Staff hours as Commission meetings require much of the limited Department Staff to participate. Commissioner Samarjian stated that the questions highlighted that everyone involved is under enormous pressure. She stated that the keyword in these discussions should be "grace." She proposed that the Department and Commission explore creating a framework on how to better engage and communicate. Commissioners Alarcon and Garcia agreed, with Commissioner Garcia looking for the most efficient way to support the Department with less bureaucracy. Commissioner Marez echoed Commissioner Garcia's sentiment and requested more in-depth reports and metrics. Commissioner Louie stated that it might be best to lay out the

Commission's expectations in writing and decided to table the discussion of the Ad-Hoc committees. Commissioner Louie expressed concern with the historic preservation of the park. Mr. Garcia stated that it has always been the Department's intention to provide robust updates on the work being done regarding History and Collections.

Commissioner Samarjian left the meeting at 3:40 PM.

Public Speakers: Edward Flores.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS. None.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Commissioner Louie announced that he has been engaged by the team working on the Gondola project to acquire property to build tower sites. He stated this project would begin at Union Station and likely impact El Pueblo. He stated he would recuse himself from any discussion and actions on the Gondola Project.

10. REQUESTS AND MOTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS. None.

11. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.