



City of San Marcos

Meeting Minutes -Final City Council

Thursday, May 28, 2020

4:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

This meeting was held using conferencing software due to the COVID-19 rules.

I. Call To Order

With a quorum present, the special meeting of the San Marcos City Council was called to order by Mayor Hughson at 4:08 p.m. Thursday, May 28, 2020. The meeting was held virtually.

II. Roll Call

Mayor Pro Tem Mihalkanin arrived shortly after roll call.

Present: 5 - Council Member Melissa Derrick, Mayor Jane Hughson, Mayor Pro Tem Ed Mihalkanin, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Mark Rockeymoore and Council Member Maxfield Baker

Absent: 2 - Council Member Joca Marquez and Council Member Saul Gonzales

PRESENTATIONS

1. Receive status reports and updates on response to COVID-19 pandemic; hold council discussion, and provide direction to Staff.

Bert Lumbreras, City Manager, provided a brief introduction and turned the presentation over to Chase Stapp, Director of Public Safety. Mr. Stapp provided status reports and updates on the COVID-19 response.

Known Cases - as of today

1,662,414 U.S. cases with at least 98,261 fatalities (Nearly 25,000 new cases since yesterday)

***source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

56,560 (22,446 active) cases in 229 Texas counties with 1,536 fatalities

***source: Texas Department of State Health Services**

297 in Hays County with 3 fatalities (129 active and 165 recovered)

-3,621 tests returned negative

-28 active and 50 recovered in San Marcos (1 fatality)

-28 cases have required hospitalization, 5 current

Last 7 days have set new records for active cases

***source: Hays County Health Department**

The following Updates have been made to Governor Abbott's Actions:

May 20 - State agencies and institutions of higher education to reduce budgets by five percent

May 21 - Phased re-opening of driver license offices, Limited services being offered by appointment only, Local offices re-opening May 29 with limited services

May 21 - Terminate all air travel restrictions related to COVID-19

May 22 - Suspend in-person visitations in county, municipal jails, does not apply to visitation by an attorney meeting with client or member of clergy

May 26 - Expanded services and activities that can open under Phase II

Water parks at 25% capacity - May 29

Adult recreation sports programs - practices on June 1, games on June 15

Driver's education programs - immediately

Mall food court dining areas - immediately, with similar guidelines as restaurants

The following efforts have been made to date:

Internal and external recovery groups continue to meet and some facilities will open with limited capacity in the coming weeks.

Processed Late Fee Exemptions for 135 commercial utility accounts and 91 residential utility accounts since implementation on March 26.

-Set up payment arrangements totaling over \$289,277 for 1,137 utility customer accounts over that same time period

Work continues on grant applications

-CDBG-CV update: 4 applications were received totaling \$541,130. The amount allocated is \$425,261

-\$65,000 must be maintained for administrative costs

-Council will consider allocations on June 2 followed by public comment and action on June 16.

Nursing home tests were conducted locally around the County. 967 employees and residents tested. Results indicated zero active cases.

Mr. Stapp provided an update on the Memorial Day weekend river park opening. He stated there was an increase of marijuana usage near the river, 328 contacts made by enforcement officials with 295 warnings issued, 15 citations and 2 arrests made. These were mostly alcohol and ordinance violation related issues.

The City is looking at a phased in approach to re-opening City services and public facing counters.

There will be a large food distribution Saturday May 30th from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 300 Vista Ridge Dr (Smiles Direct) in Kyle, conducted by Central Texas Food Bank.

Council Member Baker asked when demographic shift happened? Has the epidemiologist indicated what is driving the increase for the 20-29-year-old age range and what contact tracing are they doing with these active cases?

Mr. Stapp stated that the 20-29-year-old was not leading in cases, but the last 2 weeks there have been changes. Uncertain at this time why the increase, but the largest number of this age group is college age students and they may have returned. Many of the contract tracing indicates that most people are staying home and not participating in any high-risk activities, but there is still a rise in cases. He will obtain additional contact tracing information from the epidemiologist.

Over the past weekend there were 5 staff, working 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. picking up trash and cleaning restrooms in the river parks. Twelve Easter Seals staff were also picking up trash and cleaning restrooms from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and they would come lock the restrooms at night. Amy Kirwin and her team were out educating citizens on trash and recycling receptacles. Melani Howard and staff picking up trash in the river.

Mr. Stapp indicated the struggle staff had with the orange fencing being cut, mostly at Children's Park and Bicentennial park near the construction zone. Mayor Hughson asked if a fine is associated with cutting the fencing when it is up for safety reasons. Mr. Stapp indicated there is a fine associated with this but no one was caught so there were no charges. It would be a criminal mischief charge but it would be an eligible offense for cite and release if it rose to the level of a class B misdemeanor.

Council Member Derrick asked if staff was prepared to deal with 295+ warnings over the weekend and to keep up with the crowds? Staff did not indicate they were overwhelmed. She also asked if the staff from Easter Seals staff were wearing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) during pick up of trash and when coming in contact with citizens. Mr. Stapp stated they were wearing PPE in the parks and also in city facilities when cleaning.

Council Member Baker inquired about the grant money and asked about the proposals and next steps. Will this come before council and will select who it goes to? Council will see this presented on June 2 and June 16 Council will provide their recommendations. Regarding the \$65,000 administration fee, Michael Ostrowski, Assistant Director of Development Services stated this 20% is associated with administration cost as they ensure compliance with applications and follow up with reporting. Mr. Ostrowski stated that city staff who work with these grants are primarily funded by grant dollars and not by the general fund.

Council Member Derrick expressed her appreciation to staff for dealing with the crowds and things went better than expected.

Mayor Hughson stated that much of Rio Vista is under construction, otherwise more people would have been in that park.

Council Member Derrick noted that we have discussed paid parking in the parks previously. Mayor Hughson noted that is still due to come back to Council.

Mr. Lumbreras stated this was a phase of re-opening and the numbers and staffing are good based on the river park and the active piece. The construction near the park did affect the capacity. Staff was considering the phased opening approach and a way to ease ourselves into it. We expected large crowds to show up and a prudent opening.

The re-opening plan will be sent over to Council when this is finalized.

Council Member Derrick stated that a lot of emails have been sent and people wanting our City to do what other cities have done regarding the requirement to wear masks. Since the Governor only issued guidelines and has not made this a requirement, is the City allowed to enforce this? Michael Cosentino, City Attorney stated that the City cannot impose a fine on anyone that fails to follow the guidelines in a public place. It is up to private business owners as to whether they would like to require customers to wear masks in their facility.

Mayor Hughson stated that not everyone believes in six foot spacing, but many of your friends and neighbors do, so please be kind to others and give people their space.

Council Member Baker asked about hospitalization rates and asked if patients

are going to other hospitals since they are not taking up beds in San Marcos. Mr. Stapp stated there is a regionally dedicated hospital as the primary COVID center. We are still in a green zone here if hospitalizations were to rise. He also asked if the task force has identified a number of locally hospitalized cases that would encourage them to revert back to stricter guidelines. Mr. Stapp stated that representatives from the hospitals are on the weekly calls and they rely on the hospital staff to inform us if they are concerned with capacity. So far there is no concern.

III. Adjournment.

Mayor Hughson adjourned the Special Meeting of the City Council on May 28, 2020 at 4:38 p.m.

Tammy K. Cook, Interim City Clerk

Jane Hughson, Mayor