

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

6:30 pm

Members Present: Thomas Lang, Tom Owens, Melinda V. McLain, Joe Sarapochillo, Mikki Norris, George Cleveland

Members Absent: Jim Hermann, Shirley Rosenthal-Winston

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm, roll call was taken,

Presentation Items

P.1 Presentation by Supervisor Gioia. Supervisor Gioia started by reminding residents that Contra Costa County along with five other Bay Area counties were the first in the country to order a shelter in place order on March 16th. In response to Covid-19, the County spent \$100 million dollars between March and June. There is no guarantee, the hope is the federal government will refund most of that \$100 million. The County, in conjunction with State and Federal partners, have setup an additional 250 beds at the Ford Building in Richmond to handle any surge of Covid-19 patients. Fortunately, there hasn't been a need for the beds. The County has also rented about 600 hotel rooms to relocate homeless individuals from shelters and encampments. The County is also exploring purchasing some hotels to house people after the pandemic ends.

Supervisor Gioia discussed the County's rent freeze and eviction moratorium. He shared that the Board of Supervisors at their next meeting would discuss extending the rent freeze and eviction moratorium beyond the July 15th expiration. Through the Board of Supervisors emergency powers, the Board was able to extend the moratorium to cover properties in all of the cities in the county in addition to the unincorporated areas.

The response to Covid-19 has caused an increase in demand on the County's social and health services. Sup. Gioia thanked and acknowledged all of the front-line workers in Social Services, Health Services, Public Works and all of first responders who have been working nonstop since March to provide services to the residents of Contra Costa County.

Supervisor Gioia spoke about the proposal he is developing with Supervisor Glover to setup an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. This would link and expand upon the equity work the county is currently doing. There will be a community process to help decide what the focus of the office will be. Sup. Gioia spoke about the community response to an El Sobrante resident who uncovered the swastika in the front yard of his home. He's working with Not In Our Town to begin a campaign to address hate in El Sobrante.

P.2 Presentation by Contra Costa County Health Officer Dr. Chris Farnitano.

Dr. Farnitano stated that we are in a second wave of our first virus wave, and that he was concerned about the numbers of new cases, the positivity rate and the number of people in the hospital with Covid-19. There were 137 new cases of Covid-19 across the county on the day of the ESMAC meeting.

While the actual numbers are low in El Sobrante, there is a higher rate per 100,000 than many of the cities in the county. El Sobrante has 74 cases with one third of them happening in the two weeks leading up to the meeting.

In communities where there is more diversity, we have seen a larger number of cases, specifically in our Latino/Latinx community. There are a number of factors contributing to this, but some of this could be related to more dense living conditions and related to residents working in the service industry or industries where there is high contact with the public.

The number of tests each day is steadily increasing and the Health Services is close to reaching their target number of tests each day which is 2 tests per 1,000 residents per day. The number of residents testing positive has slowly risen from 3% in May to 7.1% on the day of the meeting. A significant number of those are asymptomatic, roughly 40% of those that test positive.

There were 6 large outbreaks at residential care facilities, such as nursing homes and assisted senior living facilities at the time of the meeting. There were an additional 7 facilities that were being investigated where one resident has tested positive. The Health Services Department has a team that goes into these facilities and does testing of the residents, arranges testing for the staff, reviews infection controls and ensures there is adequate PPE and other tasks. The County has been working closely with hospital partners like John Muir Health and Kaiser on increasing testing. Dr. Fanitano shared that the best way to protect our elders is to keep the community rate of Covid-19 down by wearing a mask and staying socially distant.

The trend across the nation and locally is that the highest rates of transmission are being seen at gatherings (small and large) at homes for parties. Family get togethers, contact sports and religious services have also contributed to transmission of Covid-19. To help flatten the curve we have tools like universal masking and social distancing and there is more and more evidence that wearing a mask when around people not in your household helps reduce transmission.

There have been some supply chain issues related to testing materials and the wait time at some of the commercial labs has gone from a few days to a week. Health Services knows that the longer it takes to get results the less useful the tests are. Health Services is advocating to the State to let them know we need their assistance in supporting the labs.

P.3 Presentation by Lt. Buford, Bay Station Commander for the Sheriff's Office. Lt. Buford was unable to attend.

P.4 Presentation by Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. Personnel were responding to an emergency and not able to attend.

P.5 Presentation by California Highway Patrol. Unable to attend.

P.6 Presentation by James Lyons District Coordinator with Sup. Gioia's office. Mr. Lyons encouraged residents to sign up for the Counties Community Warning System (CWS) at <https://cwsalerts.com> and for Nixle at <https://local.nixle.com/register/>. Sarah Dunham with Not In Our Town (NIOT) El Sobrante spoke briefly about the campaign, Raise Your Voice: West Contra Costa County Against Hate. The campaign was organized in response to the swastika that had recently been uncovered. Ms. Dunham requested residents record 10-15 seconds clips of themselves speaking out against hate for the campaign.

Discussion/Action Items

D.1. No applications for the Council to review.

Standing Committees:

Illegal Dumping – Mikki Norris encouraged residents to continue emailing Public Works the locations of illegal dumping sites. Residents should report illegal dumping to lynn.clark@pw.cccounty.us. Include an approximate address along with the nearest cross street.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Minutes prepared by Office of Supervisor John Gioia.