Camarillo Makes Tough Decisions About Community Programs and City Services Amidst COVID-19 Emergency

Camarillo, California – On March 25, 2020, the Camarillo City Council made some tough decisions to cut cherished community programs, due to the current public health emergency. There will be no interruption of critical services, including police, fire, water, sewer, and trash services, during this time.

**Summer Concerts**
The summer concert series, which were scheduled for June and July of 2020 at Constitution Park in Camarillo, have been cancelled.

**Fourth of July Fireworks**
The Fourth of July Fireworks event has been cancelled for 2020.

In addition, the City Council confirmed previous decisions regarding the City’s properties and programs that use those properties.

**Camarillo Ranch**
Both the office and property at the Camarillo Ranch, a City-owned property, are now closed to the public. Signs have been installed about the closure and no weddings or events are scheduled in the near future. Reservations for future weddings and events are taken remotely. Any scheduled weddings and events are subject to postponement or cancellation depending on public health conditions at the time of the event.

**Farmer’s Market**
This is a privately-run event on City property. Livingston Memorial, who operates the Camarillo Farmer’s Market, will continue to implement social distancing measures at the open-air market which is slated to remain open during its regular day and time: Saturdays from 8am until 12noon, in Old Town Camarillo.

**Camarillo Public Library**
The library remains closed until the health emergency is declared over by the Ventura County Public Health Officer. The Friends of the Library Bookstore and the on-site Giant Steps Café are also be closed during this time. All events and meetings in the Community Room are cancelled.

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Materials can be returned in the drop box outside of the Camarillo Library where they are kept in a recommended three-day quarantine period before being handled and re-shelved. No fines and fees will be assessed during this time period. During the closure, online materials are available: http://camarillolibrary.org/content/closure-notice.

The City Council also made decisions about the following services:

**Utility Payment Penalties and Shutoffs**
The City will waive utility payment penalties for non-payment and will not shutoff water or stop refuse service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Late penalties assessed before the City's emergency declaration will be tolled, not waived.

**On Street RV and Vehicle Parking**
The City's Municipal Code currently prohibits on-street parking of RV's without a permit, and also prohibits vehicles from parking more than 72 hours on the street without movement. The City Council decided to allow RV parking on the street, and also to allow vehicles to park for longer than 72 hours on the street, during this declared emergency, so long as the vehicle is not obviously abandoned. The discretion about whether or not the vehicle is abandoned is left to the Camarillo Police Department.

**Banners for Restaurants**
The City's Municipal Code currently requires a Banner Permit to be issued for any banner posted in the City, and there are size requirements and time limits associated with each banner permit. Given the COVID-19 emergency, and in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order and the Ventura County Public Health Stay Well at Home order, all restaurants are closed for dining, but some are offering take-out and delivery services. In many cases, in order for restaurants that are open for take-out and delivery to communicate this to the public, it has become necessary for businesses to hang banners outside to alert the community of their status. The City Council decided to allow restaurants to hang banners without a banner permit, as long as the banner conveys to the public that it is open during the public health emergency, and as long as the restaurant or business is not abusing the privilege. The discretion about whether or not the banner is an abuse of privilege is left to the Community Development Department's Code Compliance Division.

**Street Sweeping Services**
Street sweeping services will continue during this time.

**Public Transit System**
The Council supported the City Manager’s decision to continue free fares on Camarillo Area Transit during the public health emergency. The following decisions were made in regard to public transit service:
- Continue with fixed route service, free of charge during the declared state of emergency.
- Continue ADA/Senior (55+) dial-a-ride service, free of charge during the declared state of emergency.
- Suspend trolley service, effective Friday, March 27, 2020.

In addition, the City Council discussed the following two items:

**Receiving Public Comments at Council Meetings**
Public Comments may only be submitted by email or phone, as the Council Chambers are not open to the public at this time. Comments can be emailed to cityclerk@cityofcamarillo.org

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no later than one hour before the meeting. For those who wish to speak to the City Council over the phone on an item, call the City Clerk at (805) 388-5397 no later than one hour before the meeting. The City Clerk will call the member of the public when the time comes for them to comment on the item, and they will have three minutes to finish their call unless otherwise determined by the City Council.

**Budget Development**
Assistant City Manager Tully Clifford explained that nearly all City revenues will be detrimentally and significantly affected by this COVID-emergency, including utility funds. The City Council decided to defer most, if not all, General Funded CIP projects to conserve cash, and also to adopt a one-year budget this year, due to the uncertainty of revenue flows.

**Camarillo City Hall, Public Works Corporate Yard, and Sanitary District Offices**
Camarillo City Hall, Public Works Corporate Yard, and Sanitary District Offices were closed to the public on Thursday, March 19, 2020, and the closure has been extended through April 19, 2020, upon which time the closure will be reevaluated in coordination with Ventura County Public Health directives. City staff are still working, and City services are available online, over the phone, and some planning and permitting services are available by appointment only. Available services are discussed in detail on the City’s COVID-19 webpage.

**Social Distancing**
As the current public health emergency evolves, the City of Camarillo implores everyone in our community to continue practicing social distancing, using the CDC guidelines for health and safety during flu season which include:

- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Maintain a six-foot minimum separation from others.
- Wash hands with soap and water often for 20 seconds minimum.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands, bump elbows, touch toes – just say hello and wave.
- Cover your mouth/nose with your elbow (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
- If you become sick, stay home. Stay away from work, school and other people.
- Wipe down surfaces like counters and doorknobs frequently.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (dry persistent cough; high temperature; shortness of breath; muscle fatigue or weakness) should call their health provider first before going to a medical office so that appropriate precautions can be taken.

For updates on closures, cancellations and city services available online or by phone, links to public health notices, and resources available to businesses and community members, visit the City’s Hot Topics webpage for COVID-19.

Please visit www.vcemergency.com for the latest updates on the situation in Ventura County.

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