

Honorable Chair and Members
of the Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: City Manager – Review and Provide Direction on Appropriated Resource Contributions and Cottage Food Ordinance related to the Neighborhood Coordinated Seaside Ranchos Holiday Lights Display. Expenditure: None

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the City Manager that the Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee:

1. Review and Provide Direction on the Appropriated Resource Contributions to the Neighborhood Coordinated Seaside Ranchos Holiday Lights Display
2. Provide Direction to the Cottage Food Ordinance as it relates to the Neighborhood Coordinated Seaside Holiday Lights Display.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

For several years, residents in the Seaside Ranchos neighborhood in Torrance have elaborately decorated their homes for the holidays. The annual neighborhood coordinated light display in the Seaside Ranchos area of Torrance is not a city-sponsored nor a city-sanctioned event. The decision to do, or not to do, these displays is entirely upon each of the homeowners and the City is not in any way involved in that decision-making process. Over the years, this neighborhood event has attracted large crowds and has created potential safety hazards. Although not a City event, the City of Torrance does have an obligation to address public safety concerns.

2022 Holiday Season

During the December 2022 Holiday Season staff provided the following resources:

- Temporary no stopping signs on one side of the street in the Seaside Ranchos neighborhood all season during the holiday lights display from 5 p.m. -10 p.m. Posting of holiday directional signs in and around the Seaside Ranchos neighborhood. Monitoring of no stopping and holiday directional signs all season during the holiday lights display.(Expenditure: Estimated \$600)
- 20 trash bins and coordinated additional pick-ups with the residents (Expenditure: Not-to-Exceed \$2,062.85)
- Two illuminated light boards to assist with traffic control and inform visitors of parking restrictions (Expenditure: Estimated \$3,231.19)
- Public Works Page for Seaside Ranchos Residents and Visitors that included information regarding:
 - City Contact
 - Parking Violations
 - LA County Public Health Mobile Food Program
 - Sanitation/Trash Bins
 - Traffic and Signage

In addition to the listed resources, the Cottage Food Ordinance Pilot Program expired in January 2022. This Pilot Program designated for residents of the Seaside Ranchos area bounded by Sepulveda Blvd., Anza Ave., Calle Mayor, Pacific Coast Hwy., and the west boundary of South Redondo Beach and Palos

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Verdes Blvd., allowed residents to sell approved food items from their driveway in accordance with the Cottage Food Home Occupations Ordinance if they obtained the following requirements:

1. City of Torrance business license;
2. Home occupation permit; and
3. One (1) of the following:
 - a. A Class A cottage food operation registration from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health; or
 - b. A Class B cottage food operation permit from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

As a courtesy, The City allowed for the 2022 holiday season to educate vendors of the Pilot Program expiration with the intent to administer citations during the 2023 Holiday Season. An Environmental Quality Officer, as scheduling permitted, roamed the Seaside Ranchos Area educating illegal street vendors, including residents in the area, of their inability to vend, as well as provided educational material on how to become a legal vendor and answer any questions.

2023 Holiday Season

In 2023, the City distributed approximately 200 informational doorhangers to the residential properties within the Seaside Holiday Lights Neighborhood regarding cottage food permits and vending violations.

The Community Development Department provided Code Enforcement Officers (CEOs) for the Seaside Holiday Lights from December 1st to December 30th. The hours of coverage were 5 pm to 9 pm, daily except on December 24th, 25th, and 31st due to the holidays. The total public contact during the event was approximately 80 interactions (most repeat violators).

Challenges included:

- **Cottage Food Non-Compliance**
Residents possessing a cottage food permit did not follow the regulations which created difficulties in maintaining order and ensuring food safety standards were met.
- **Limited number of CEOs to work the area.**
It was not uncommon for a CEO dealing with one issue to be flagged down by someone wanting them to go to a different area to address another issue. CEO's had a difficult time keeping up with the unpermitted vendors, as well as the complaints received by the residents.
- **Lack of Enforcement Abilities**
CEOs do not have the authority to confiscate merchandise. Lack of consequences for balloon vendors who did not comply with regulations made it challenging to enforce the rules effectively.
- **Identification Refusal**
Mobile Vendors refused to provide identification. Without proper identification, the CEOs could not hold the vendors accountable for any violations they may have committed.
- **After Hours Violations**
Code enforcement staff would leave at 9 pm. Vendors would return and continue selling throughout the night.

It is also important to note that CEOs worked this area exclusively for the month of December from 5 – 9 p.m. due to the number of issues within the Seaside Holiday Lights area. If calls were received for other parts of the City, there were no CEOs available to attend to those complaints. As a result, the cost of the CEOs time dedicated to the Seaside Holiday Lights event, was approximately \$13,000.

SUMMARY

The City maintains the position that the annual neighborhood coordinated light display in the Seaside Ranchos area of Torrance is not a city-sponsored or city-sanctioned event. The City's sole obligation is to implement measures to protect the health and safety of the community at large.

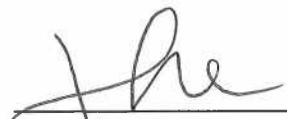
The following resources are anticipated for the 2024 Holiday Season.

- Temporary no stopping signs on one side of the street in the Seaside Ranchos neighborhood all season during the holiday lights display from 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Posting of holiday directional signs in and around the Seaside Ranchos neighborhood. Monitoring of no stopping and holiday directional signs all season during the holiday lights display.(Expenditure: Estimated \$900)
- 20 trash bins and coordinated additional pick-ups with the residents (Expenditure: Not-to-Exceed \$2,400)
- Two illuminated light boards to assist with traffic control and inform visitors of parking restrictions (Expenditure: Estimated \$5,000)
- Public Works Page for Seaside Ranchos Residents and Visitors that included information regarding:
 - City Contact
 - Parking Violations
 - LA County Public Health Mobile Food Program
 - Sanitation/Trash Bins
 - Traffic and Signage
 - Code Enforcement

Based on the 2023 Season, we anticipate an increase in labor cost predominately due to Police and Code Enforcement. Labor costs are not included in the budgeted resources for the Seaside Holiday Lights, as they have historically been considered part of normal operating costs. However, 2023 was the first season the City dedicated CEO's to the area. It should be noted that at previous Council meetings, the Council had asked if the Seaside Neighborhood Association and/or Seaside Ranchos residents have ever considered covering some of the cost for the display (i.e. fundraising, providing traffic control, etc.). The most recent survey did not show interest in pursuing this option at this time.

One further issue that needs to be addressed is the Cottage Food Ordinance. Direct sales are not allowed from an attached garage, accessory residential structure, or any place outside of the residential home. Additionally, the hours direct sales are only allowed from the home is 9 am to 5 pm, daily. For the period of December 8, 2023 to January 1, 2024, the City Manager made an exception to allow cottage food sales within the front yard of the property from 5 pm to 9 pm. However, if this is something that the City Council would like to continue, then this ordinance needs to be amended.

Respectfully submitted,



 Jamie Le
 Assistant to the City Manager

CONCUR:



 Aram Chaparyan
 City Manager