

Committee Meeting of
May 15, 2024

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

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

Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee – Supplemental Material
#1 for Item 5B**

After the publication of the staff report for the above agenda item, staff received additional correspondence from members of the public.

Respectfully submitted,

ARAM CHAPARYAN
CITY MANAGER

By 
for Carlos Huizar
Management Associate

CONCUR:


Aram Chaparyan
City Manager

Attachment:

A) Correspondence

#1
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL
5B

From: Joel Fink <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 4:33 PM
To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>
Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

To whom this may concern,

I wanted to send this email to inform you of the significant improvement in the flow of traffic during the very busy 2023 Christmas season in our Sleepy Hollow neighborhood. In contrast to prior year there was a significant reduction in the number of people selling items and food in our neighborhood. This made our holiday season much less stressful for us trying to enter and/or leave our area in the evening hours.

I wanted to thank the Torrance PD code enforcement officers who participated in the 2023 season and made our lives bearable. Please do not lower their support to our neighborhood which will continue to enhance the reputation of the City of Torrance.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joel Fink
[REDACTED]
Torrance, CA 90505

From: BM <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 3:49 PM

To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>

Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting - Seaside Ranchos Cottage Food COMMENTS

My comments below pertain only to the Cottage Food ordinance and the exceptions created by the City last year, which allowed residents to sell from their driveways/front yards. My comments do not pertain to Sidewalk Vending which is its own issue.

I ask that the City reconsider its position on creating exceptions to the Cottage Food ordinance that has allowed residents to sell from their driveways/front yards. The ordinance as it currently stands, without variations/exceptions, is as neighborhood friendly as it can be. The exceptions created last year by the City Manager's office contradicted many of the neighborhood friendly provisions contained in the ordinance. I hope my comments below provide the City and its decisions makers some ideas for discussion.

We are a neighborhood that is severely impacted by traffic during the Christmas season. I don't understand the logic of adding more chaos and traffic to our neighborhood by allowing residents to sell from their driveways/front yards.

We are inviting visitors to get out of their cars to purchase snacks. Where are these visitors to park? We have eliminated half the parking spaces due to "no parking" signs/restrictions. The open curbs are precious to the residents. If we don't have adequate parking, we are creating a fast food drive thru experience. Cars can be seen lining up in front of driveways with vendors, where they idle until they can get their food/drinks.

We are bringing more visitors to the sidewalks. The intersections get jammed up with pedestrians in the streets/cross walks. In past years, we had more visitors enjoying the lights from their cars and less sidewalk visitors. Our sidewalks were always busy but there were NEVER this impacted. More sidewalk visitors means more congestion and slower car traffic at our intersections and ultimately, more traffic in the streets/intersections that feed into the neighborhood. More sidewalk visitors also means more trash in the neighborhood.

Where are these visitor supposed to eat and drink their purchased items? We provide no seating. We see them taking over other resident driveways to stand and eat, leaning against or sitting on bumpers of parked cars in driveways, leaning against fences or sitting on retaining walls.

We provide food and drinks yet no restrooms. We do NOT want portable restrooms in the neighborhood. But it seems counterintuitive to create a neighborhood farmers market without any sinks or bathrooms. My point is not to argue for restroom facilities but to point out this dynamic when working through the logic of allowing residents to sell from their driveways.

The City provides trash cans but there is never enough capacity. There is trash every morning surrounding the trash cans. Trash always littered in the gutters. What if it rains? The City spent a lot of money to force our cars off the curbs on street sweeping days. All because the City said we needed to improve our stormwater scores. How is this consistent with that goal? The City would

need to street sweep every morning in our neighborhood if stormwater is still a high priority for the City. Otherwise, trash to the ocean.

There is not adequate enforcement. Many residents do not follow the rules. Many of the rules that were created by the Cottage Food exceptions last year appeared to be regularly ignored. There is so much energy/noise on enforcement of Sidewalk Vending by our neighborhood and the City, yet it seems the residents get a pass when it comes to following rules. I do note and appreciate that non-compliance by residents is noted as an issue in the summary of recommendations by the City Manager's office.

The City was very concerned in years past about discriminatory code enforcement. Enforcing code on Sidewalk Vendors yet turning a blind eye or creating haphazard exceptions to ordinances for residents appeared to be a risk the City astutely cared about in years past. Enforce the rules against the Sidewalk Vendors and don't create more vendors with new legislation.

Cottage Food Ordinance:

Further thoughts/comments on the Cottage Food Ordinance.

Torrance City Ordinance 3852 Cottage Food has detailed operating standards as drafted and enacted in 2019. There are very specific parts of the ordinance that I believe are still an active part of this ordinance unless overruled by State law:

1. Direct sales only between the hours of 9am and 5pm (415.1.040 B6)
2. Direct sales shall not be conducted any place outside of the residential dwelling (415.1.040 B7)
3. Onsite dining and customer loitering prohibited (415.1.040 B8)
4. No more than one customer may be allowed at the site at any given time (415.1.040 B8)
5. Smell and noise provisions (415.1.040 B12 and B13)

The City did a good job of crafting the ordinance to meet State of California requirements yet still be restrictive enough to not change the character of a residential neighborhood. Section 415.1.020 of the ordinance defines several key purposes:

1. Owners/residents have certain limited rights to conduct an un-obtrusive cottage food occupation business
2. Preserve the residential character of residential neighborhoods
3. Preventing the operation of a cottage food home occupation business from transforming a residential neighborhood into a commercial one

The exceptions allowed last year and the resulting behaviors from visitors undermined the core intent of the ordinance as detailed above.

I do note and appreciate the City Manager's current recommendations regarding the Cottage Food ordinance. The recommendation is that if the City is considering allowing continued vending by residents from their driveways/front yards, the ordinance needs to be amended. No more ad hoc exceptions.

In my opinion, if there are attempts to codify another Pilot Program or carve-outs for our neighborhood as in years past, this undertaking needs a much deeper evaluation of the environmental impact to our neighborhood. The goals of a Pilot Program will contradict with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) conclusions presented in the ordinance.

Section 2 of ordinance states that it was judged by the City that this ordinance is not subject to CEQA. This determination was made, by the City, because

- (1) the ordinance created and allowed activities that would be conducted **inside** the personal residence and
- (2) because it was determined that there is no direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect **physical change in the environment.**

I believe it is a reasonable conclusion that what is happening each December, with residents vending from outside the house and the resulting crowds, that this activity creates a condition that significantly deviates from the CEQA conclusions as laid out in Section 2 of the ordinance.

Thank you for the time and consideration in reading my comments.

Regards

Brent Maille



From: Ruju Mehta <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 2:48 PM
To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>
Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting

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Pursuant to City Council Rules, here are my comments for tomorrow's meeting at 4pm: Based on Item 5B, it seems the City isn't planning to allocate enough Code Enforcement officers for holiday light safety. 2022 was chaotic with propane tanks everywhere and altercations between homeowners and illegal vendors, creating an unsafe environment. 2023 saw significant improvement. Increased Code Enforcement presence made the event safer and more enjoyable, according to residents.

Please continue dedicating Code Enforcement to the Holiday Lights to ensure safety. It would also be beneficial to extend their hours to align with the light displays, from 6-10pm. Regarding the Cottage Food Ordinance, it should be amended to allow driveway sales and adjust the hours to 5-10pm, in line with the light displays.

While the event costs the City money, it also boosts revenue. The holiday lights increase property values in Sleepy Hollow, raising property taxes. Additionally, local businesses benefit from the influx of visitors. Thank you for your consideration.

Cheers,

Ruju

From: Anne <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>
Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

Pursuant to this City Council Rules, I am including my comments here today before the meeting tomorrow at 4pm:

We are strongly urging the city to consider **reducing the time period of the holiday light display**. We've lived in the neighborhood since 2001. It used to be that the signs and blockades did not go up until the first weekend of December (the weekend after the Thanksgiving weekend). Now, as of some years ago, we are blocked off from right after Thanksgiving until after New Years! It is simply too long to deal with the crowds and the noise and the limited access to driving into our homes.

We are suggesting we start the first weekend in December, and end a few days after Christmas.

Many of us have other plans over Thanksgiving weekend and are not able to have our lights up by then anyway.

This would also cut down on city assistance. Speaking of which, we are also including some comments made by a neighbor in her email to you, as we agree. They are as follows:

Based on Item 5B attached, it does not appear that the City is planning to dedicate the Code Enforcement officers necessary for the safety of the holiday lights.

PLEASE continue to dedicate Code Enforcement to the Holidays Lights or someone is going to get hurt. In fact, I think they should start later and finish later to align more with the lights displays: 6-10pm.

I understand that this event costs the City money every year. But, this event also increases revenue for the City. The homes in Sleepy Hollow sell at a premium because of the holiday lights which leads to an increase in property taxes for the City. In addition, local businesses experience an increase in sales due to all the visitors coming to our City.

Thank you for your consideration,
Scott and Anne Salisbury

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Lisa VanSickle <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 12:01 PM

To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>

Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Pursuant to this City Concil rules, I am including my comments here today before the meeting tomorrow at 4pm

Based on item 5B attached it does not appear that the city is planning to dedicate the code enforcement officeres necessary for the safety of the holiday lights!

We live on Sharynne and we have fond memories of Christmas season in this neighborhood in times past, but not anymore.

2022 Civility went out the door the traffic and road rage when we try to come in or go out of our driveway. loud pounding music (wonder if there is an ordinance) and this is for all of December! We work at the nearest hospital and need to sleep. The trash and alcohol cans for example and not to mention ruining our landscaped yard regardless of fence is awful costly! Vendors on our property and police said they can do nothing when we called. People tresspassing on our driveway looking and touching our cars . We feel this is sooo intrusive so it hard to feel safe around her. We are confined to our homes literally and have adjusted to running errands before 4 pm to not deal with the 30-40 min to get back up. Changing the time if this continue should be looked into. suchas 6pm-9:30! I say 9:30 because the 10pm is not honored.

2023 was scary because of the multiple power outages and lots of people wal king around in the dark!

We bring revenue I understand to the city not to us by volunteering to do this; may want to do this Just for our families in our neighborhood to actually enjoy like all the other neighborhoods around us minus the circus

We love love this neighborhood minus December which is sad because we did not feel this way prior, it got out of hand. We hold our breath until January when its our neighborhood once again

My family has thought about not participating anymore

Good luck on helping us and thank you for asking us how we feel

Lisa V.

Lisa VanSickle

From: Bryn Zbyszewski <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 11:10 AM
To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>
Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

To whom it may concerns,

I understand the Council is discussing the Holiday Lights issue and we wanted to include our comments here today before the meeting this week.

Based on Item 5B we have read, it does not appear that the City is planning to dedicate the Code Enforcement officers necessary for the safety of the holiday lights. Please please reconsider and provide the officers. We need your help.

In all honesty, 2022 was a total nightmare.

There were vendors everywhere. Including many using propane tanks. They refused to budge. They felt emboldened. As Homeowners we felt unsafe. We felt helpless. We wanted to move. The vendors were a huge problem. But so also were the people visiting who stayed for hours after the lights went off....driving recklessly, making noise, and causing disturbances. It was disturbing for our family, for our pets and for many of our older neighbors.

2023 was definitely better. The presence of the Code Enforcement officers helped for sure. I spoke to many neighbors and all agreed it was an improvement. Thank you so much for that. We do really appreciate it.

PLEASE continue to dedicate Code Enforcement to the Holidays Lights . Without it residents feel unsafe. It's honestly an accident waiting to happen. We need help here. We truly do. If anything, they should start later and finish later to align more with the lights displays: 6-10pm.

We understand this is not a city sponsored nor city sanctioned event. We honestly wish it would go away. But since we can't control other people we can only ask for help keeping it safe and sane. And we need your help. Thank you for your support and help.

Bryn & Paul Zbyszewski
[REDACTED]
Torrance, CA 90505

From: Sabrina Terzian <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 10:49 AM
To: Le, Jamie <JLe@TorranceCA.Gov>
Cc: Sabrina Terzian <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee Meeting

Pursuant to this City Council Rules, I am including my comments here today before the meeting tomorrow at 4pm:

Based on Item 5B attached, it does not appear that the City is planning to dedicate the Code Enforcement officers necessary for the safety of the holiday lights.

2022 was an absolute nightmare. There were propane tanks on every corner. Homeowners were getting involved in altercations with illegal vendors. It felt extremely unsafe.

2023 was MUCH improved. Code Enforcement presence changed the game and every resident I spoke to afterward said it felt closer to the neighborhood event it used to be in the past...less chaos, cleaner and safer.

PLEASE continue to dedicate Code Enforcement to the Holidays Lights or someone is going to get hurt. In fact, I think they should start later and finish later to align more with the lights displays: 6-10pm.

Also, this is the first I am hearing about the Cottage Food Ordinance not being followed by homeowners. Everyone sells from their driveways (always has) and uses their home to provide the items to sell. This ordinance should be amended to reflect as such and the change in time (5:00 - 10:00) to align with the lights displays.

I understand that this event costs the City money every year. But, this event also increases revenue for the City. The homes in Sleepy Hollow sell at a premium because of the holiday lights which leads to an increase in property taxes for the City. In addition, local businesses experience an increase in sales due to all the visitors coming to our City.

I am willing to have a discussion with the City about doing a fundraiser in my driveway or a neighbors driveway to help out but the safety of the residents needs to come first.

Sabrina Terzian
[REDACTED]