

City Council Meeting Recap – 3/9/2021

Laguna Beach Neighborhood And Environmental Protection Plan Passes 5-0

This wide-ranging piece of legislation provides solid programs for improving the quality of life for residents and the community.

These recommendations need further study and will come back to be approved in the months to come as new ordinances or revisions to existing ordinances.

Policy Recommendations

- Single-use plastic containers and straws to be banned on the beach.
- Restaurants to convert from plastic containers to paper, bamboo or other bio-degradable materials.
- Feeding the pigeons or other wild animals to be prohibited.
- Oversized, view-blocking tents and other shade structures to be banned on all beaches.
- Bicycles to be parked in bike racks rather than along the beach.
- Abandoned personal property on beaches and in parks to be removed.
- Non-coastal community parks to increase hours until 10 p.m.

Public Works Improvements And Parking

- Thirty-five city water fountains to be converted to include bottle filling stations at parks beaches and trails.
- A park gate to be installed at the Tyrol Drive entrance to Alta Laguna Park.
- Neighborhood improvement signs to be erected, reminding visitors not to litter.
- Parking at Top Of The World to be improved with input from the TOW Neighborhood Association and the City's Parking Traffic And Circulation Committee.
- City to meet with Coastal Commission to lobby for neighborhood parking permits.
- Docents for county trails to be made available from May1 to Labor Day.

Enhanced Cleaning And Trash Collection

- Neighborhood litter pick-up service to increase in South Laguna, North Laguna, and Top Of The World.
- City to improve trash collection from public trash cans and increase the number of trash receptacles.
- City to track assets such as damaged facilities and full trash cans. Residents may report issues by scanning QR tags.

Beach Safety Improvements

- Year-round lifeguards to be posted at Crescent Bay Beach, Shaw's Cove, Victoria/Lagunitas, and Treasure Island, plus augment lifeguards at South Laguna County Beaches.

George Weiss: Kudos to Mayor Bob Whalen, Mayor-Pro-Tem Sue Kempf, Deputy City Manager, Shohreh Dupuis, and supporting City Staff for providing these welcome resident serving services. These will help improve resident's quality of life and benefit visitors as well. To learn more, visit:

https://lagunabeachcity.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1323&meta_id=102871

Proclamation Recognizes Arnold Hano's 99th Birthday

Mr. Hano sponsored one of the first ballot initiatives in California history. That initiative gave birth to the City Council approving a citywide 36 ft. height limit on buildings. This put a stop to any potential high-rise developments Downtown or along the coastline. A baseball fanatic and writer of six books on baseball, Mr. Hano also helped found Village Laguna, which celebrates its 50th year in 2021. See their website and join if you believe in their mission:

<http://www.villagelaguna.org/>

George Weiss: Arnold set a standard for political activism in his day. He helped make Laguna Beach a better place to live. Don't we all want that? I suggest that residents follow his example and get involved in one of the city's many civic, environmental, or social organizations. You'll meet good people and – like Arnold – make Laguna a better place to live. Please feel free to contact me for any information about becoming more active in our town.

Carmageddon II Coming April 1 – Passes 5-0

Remember when the downhill length of 3rd Street was closed? Expect more of the same as two lanes on Pacific Coast Highway between Broadway and Ocean streets will be closed 24/7 from April 1 until May 15-30.

The City Council has approved a proposed agreement with Traffic Management, Inc., to fund traffic management systems that will help with traffic flow during this time.

The City has a thorough traffic mitigation plan that will be using many traffic control personnel to direct traffic around the site using surface streets.

This plan, which authorizes spending well over \$200,000, was approved by the Council 5-0.

George Weiss: I've left this previous post up to help residents set their expectations and prepare their travel schedules between April 1 and potentially through the end of May.

City Council Censures Peter Blake – Vote 4-0

The City Council voted 4-0 (Councilman Blake abstaining) to censure Mr. Blake for violations of the City's Rules of Decorum and Civility.

George Weiss: I took no pleasure in writing this agenda bill or initiating the censure motion. However, after so many incidents of egregious behavior have been allowed without consequences over the past two years, I believe there was no other option. I am hopeful that Mr. Blake will change and treat everyone with respect. Civil behavior supports democracy and collaboration, which makes for better decisions that positively affect residents, businesses, and visitors. Let us hope for the best.

Trolley Service To Return, 2021 Summer Parking Management Plan Passes 5-0

Good news: The trolleys are likely to be back in operation along Coast Highway and into Laguna Canyon Road starting on June 25. For details, see:

https://lagunabeachcity.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1323&meta_id=102834.

The City is also exploring a pilot program for Fall 2021 that will provide pick up and delivery of passengers for residents and visitors. This service would replace the residential trolley service on the three routes which have been suspended – Bluebird Canyon, Top of the World and Arch Beach Heights. From the initial discussions, this service will compete with ride sharing services and has the potential of reducing the need for residents to drive downtown and other areas within our town.

George Weiss: This is a potential game changer. Residents would be able to hail a ride by using an app on their phone, get picked up by a 6-10 seat van, and be delivered to a destination in town. It is not yet clear whether passengers would be able to use this service to visit a friend across town or whether there would be a charge or a seasonal pass for this service.

Laguna Canyon Foundation Request For Naming Rights Agreement Passes 5-0

The Council voted unanimously to approve naming the Laguna Canyon Foundation headquarters site "The Michael and Tricia Berns Preserve." This is conditioned upon a million dollar grant to the Laguna Canyon Foundation from local residents Michael and Tricia Berns. The monies will be used to improve the area around the LCF site and serve as an educational and recreational resource for the community.

George Weiss: I spoke with Michael Berns, and he said he had reached a stage in his life where he wanted to give back to the community. As a dedicated environmentalist, he saw the need for educating kids and adults about nature, native plants, and the value of open space. Bravo and many thanks to Michael and Tricia Berns for their generous grant.