

**SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2020
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Valentine called the Special Meeting of the SBCCOG Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

ATTENDANCE

In attendance were the following voting elected officials:

Cedric Hicks, Carson	Hildy Stern, Manhattan Beach
Drew Boyles, El Segundo	Kenny Kao, Palos Verdes Estates
Rodney Tanaka, Gardena	John Cruikshank, Rancho Palos Verdes
Olivia Valentine, Hawthorne (7:01 departure)	Christian Horvath, Redondo Beach
Stacey Armato, Hermosa Beach	Britt Huff, Rolling Hills Estates
James Butts, Inglewood	George Chen, Torrance
Bernadette Suarez, Lawndale	Janice Hahn, LA County District 4 (6:45 departure)
Jim Gazeley, Lomita	

Other elected officials in attendance:

Chris Pimentel, El Segundo	Frank Zerunyan, Rolling Hills Estates
Michael Kemps, Palos Verdes Estates	Pat Furey, Torrance
Eric Alegria, Rancho Palos Verdes	Aurelio Mattucci, Torrance
Bill Brand, Redondo Beach	Sharon Kalani, Torrance
Nils Nehrenheim, Redondo Beach	Mike Griffiths, Torrance
Velveth Schmitz, Rolling Hills Estates	

Also, in attendance were the following persons:

Martha Guzman-Hurtado, El Segundo	Anthony Zaller, CA Restaurant Assoc.
Suja Lowenthal, Hermosa Beach	Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG
Laura Guglielmo, Palos Verdes Estates	Steve Lantz, SBCCOG
Ara Mihranian, Rancho Palos Verdes	David Leger, SBCCOG
Ted Semaan, Redondo Beach	Natalie Champion, SBCCOG
Brandy Forbes, Redondo Beach	Collen Farrell, SBCCOG
Greg Grammer, Rolling Hills Estates	Julie Zaller, Public
Aram Chaparyan, Torrance	Madelyn Alfano, Public
Mike Bohlke, Metro Deputy to Mayor Butts	Selwyn Yossowitz, Public
Jacqueline Sun, Beach Cities Health District	Janet Young, Public
Tom Bakaly, Beach Cities Health District	John Tallichet, Public
Jeff Kiernan, CalCities	Ivan Vasquez, Public
Heidi Butzine, Lomita Chamber of Commerce	Terri Bloomgarden, Public
David Juarez, CA Restaurant Assoc.	

II. CONFIRM POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Jacki Bacharach confirmed that the agenda was properly posted in the City of Hermosa Beach.

Chair Valentine took this time to introduce LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn who joined the meeting to provide a brief update on recent actions taken by LA County.

Supervisor Hahn explained that new safer at home restrictions are being implemented today that will ban indoor and outdoor dining. It appears that too few people have been adhering to social distancing and mask requirements. Indoor gatherings amongst family and friends are the likely source of the current surge in COVID-19. She added that at this point, the discussion on restaurants is wrapped up in this entire discussion and goal to keep people in their homes. Supervisor Hahn went on to explain that she and Supervisor Barger had attempted to overturn the outdoor dining ban via a motion at the Board of Supervisors' meeting, but the motion was defeated. Supervisor Hahn went on to explain that she has not been provided evidence by the Health Department that shows the current surge is due to outdoor dining, and that the current ban will do more economic harm than good towards

reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Board Member Huff asked Supervisor Hahn if there were any efforts to end the “one-size-fits-all” approach to the outdoor dining ban and allow areas with lower numbers, such as the South Bay, to remain open. Supervisor Hahn explained that she and Supervisor Barger appealed to the Governor to allow for a more sub-regional approach in LA County but were flatly rejected by the Governor. She further explained that the Service Planning Areas within the county each have regional health directors, so it would make sense to continue advocating for this type of approach.

Supervisor Hahn went on to say that the current outdoor dining ban is a temporary measure, and that reconsideration will be granted in two weeks. However, due to continually rising hospitalizations statewide, there may be superseding State directives that would prevent outdoor dining even if the County does not extend its ban. Although death rates are lower than at the beginning of the pandemic, this is largely due to medical advances in treating patients as more knowledge is gained. Hospitals are nearing capacity and at this point, avoiding a collapse of the healthcare system is a top priority.

Board Member Horvath added that his wife is an ICU doctor in Torrance. She informed him that ICU beds were full, and the number of ER visits were only increasing. Caseloads have quadrupled week-to-week. Although businesses are suffering, doctors will argue that any space where people are unmasked is a high-risk activity.

Supervisor Hahn thanked the Board of Directors for convening this meeting and expressed her desire to continue working together. She departed the meeting at this point.

III. BEACH CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT COVID-19 HEALTH UPDATE FOR THE SOUTH BAY

Jacqueline Sun presented on the current COVID-19 statistics in the South Bay. She explained that there is a tremendous surge in average daily case numbers, deaths, and hospitalizations throughout the State. Within LA County, there was a 182% increase in daily new cases and 71% increase in deaths between October and November. At the BCHD testing facility, there has been a 33% increase in positive cases. She went on to review slides with more detailed information on South Bay cities.

Tom Bakaly then presented briefly on BCHD’s current efforts to study the opportunity to establish a public health department, that department’s legal responsibilities, and some initial arguments in support and opposition to the idea.

The full presentation is available online here:

https://www.southbaycities.org/sites/default/files/board_directors/meeting/Beach%20Cities%20Health%20District%20Presentation_11.30.2020.pdf

Councilmember Mattucci asked a question about fighting bad data, referring to an article he read that indicated only 3% of cases were coming from restaurants. Ms. Sun explained that those numbers tend to be employee numbers, as it is easier to determine that an employee may have been exposed while working a shift at the restaurant. It is almost impossible for a patron at a restaurant to say that they were exposed at a specific location. Workplace infections are a much easier metric to accurately track. Mr. Bakaly added that the outdoor dining ban is more about curbing people’s behavior, which is different than dealing with any other disaster we have faced.

Several Board Members discussed the possibility of forming a health department to oversee the South Bay. Mr. Bakaly explained that BCHD is looking into what it would take, but cautioned that it would be a long-term effort, not something that could be done in a week or two that would allow the subregion to remove itself from the LA County outdoor dining ban.

IV. UPDATE ON THE OUTDOOR DINING BAN AND WHAT EFFORTS CALIFORNIA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION IS CURRENTLY TAKING TO SUPPORT RESTAURANTEURS

David Juarez, Director of Local Government Affairs for the California Restaurant Association provided a brief overview of the impact of the pandemic on restaurants. Before the pandemic, there were approximately 90,000 restaurants and 1.4M restaurant workers in the State. In July, approximately 1M of those workers were employed, and approximately 30% of restaurants were temporarily or permanently closed. Of LA County’s approximately 31,000 restaurants, about 7500 are permanently closed, and another 7500 are temporarily closed. The balance are operating in a modified capacity. He cautioned that without further stimulus, these numbers will get worse.

Anthony Zaller, a lawyer and recently elected Chair of the Board of Directors for the California Restaurant Association Foundation, also shared that legal action has been taken against the LA County outdoor dining ban, asserting that the decision was arbitrary and not data driven. Mr. Zaller elaborated on the strain restaurants face, such as expenses to build outdoor dining facilities, permit fees, and more.

Ms. Madelyn Alfano thanked the SBCCOG Board for inviting restaurants. She shared that one other aspect of the situation is the issue of landlord relief. She explained that many restaurants have signed leases that include personal guarantees that would allow a landlord to pursue legal action against the individual in an attempt to collect rent. Without relief for landlords or legislative protection from these personal guarantees, many restauranters may never be able to financially recover.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

No additional public comment was received.

VI. BOARD DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Vice-Chair Boyles called for discussion after hearing the presentations.

Board Member Butts shared that he believes the South Bay should continue to evaluate local health departments.

Board Member Horvath added that similar to how the County has been dealing with the homeless service areas, perhaps using the Service Planning Areas to localize health department decisions could be an avenue for further evaluation. He also shared that the State is projecting a \$20B+ underestimation in tax revenue, so perhaps some of those surplus funds could be used to save restaurants via grant programs. Mr. Kiernan shared that the State authorized \$500M in additional grants for small businesses earlier today.

Mayor Furey shared that a few months ago, the idea of creating a South Bay health department was proposed at the Steering Committee, the idea was not supported at the time. Given the changing situation, perhaps further study of this idea, perhaps along the Service Planning Area as mentioned by Board Member Horvath is the proper long-term approach. However, it does not appear that this would be a near-term possibility. He added that lobbying incoming Supervisor Holly Mitchell to overturn the outdoor dining ban could be a short-term victory.

Board Member Kao added that getting the support of BCHD on SBCCOG efforts could carry weight.

Councilmember Pimentel suggested looking into the possibility of joining Long Beach or Pasadena Health Departments as a short-term solution.

Board Member Butts proposed the SBCCOG move forward with all ideas discussed during the meeting. He went on to specify his motion as follows:

MOTION by Board Member Butts, seconded by Board Member Hicks, to: 1) Further explore a South Bay Health Department, and if possible, accelerated to focus on retail/restaurants; 2) Continue advocating for additional funding to assist restaurants; 3) Send a letter to the LA County Board of Supervisors urging them to allow outdoor dining and/or consider an exemption for the South Bay; 4) Lobby Supervisor-Elect Mitchell to support overturning the outdoor dining ban; 5) Explore the possibility of joining the Pasadena or Long Beach Health Departments; 6) Seek Beach Cities Health District support. No objection. So ordered.

The following SBCCOG members were not present for the vote: City of Hawthorne; City of Los Angeles; City of Rolling Hills; LA County District 2; LA County District 4.

For more detail, the full meeting has been uploaded and is available for viewing here:

<https://youtu.be/MhGKLwSEbOw>

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Boyles adjourned the meeting at 8:08 pm to Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 6:00 pm. The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom until further notice.

David Leger, Assistant Board Secretary