

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS II
Office of the City Clerk

City Council of the City of Napa
Regular Meeting

May 5, 2020

FOR THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NAPA:

AFTERNOON SESSION:

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

5.B. Proclamation of Local Emergency to Respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Email from Lowell Downey received on May 5, 2020.

**City Council Meeting
5/5/2020
Supplemental II - 5.B.
From: Lowell Downey**

From: Lowell Downey [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 3:03 PM
To: Steve Potter <spotter@cityofnapa.org>; Jill Techel <jtechel@cityofnapa.org>; Liz Alessio <lalessio@cityofnapa.org>; Scott Sedgley <ssedgley@cityofnapa.org>; mary@marylueros.com; Doris Gentry <dgentry@cityofnapa.org>
Subject: The pandemic and our response

[EXTERNAL]

Dear Mr. Potter, Mayor and City Council Members,

There is a lot to cover, so I'll try to make it brief.

Pandemic training and learning curve:

During this time, is the city evaluating its capacity for responding to the crisis should the second wave be as bad as the first?

- Are you considering the possibility of manpower, that responds to emergencies, will be critically weakened?
- If systems need repair and/or are damaged, and your manpower is not up to capacity to respond to fix the problem, do you have a pool of either retired individuals or support for manpower from other counties that can assist Napa is repairing critical infrastructure? Are you evaluating protecting essential systems, such as the water pumps and facility at Lake Hennessy, buying advanced equipment to have on hand, and protection from potential bad actors that would impact that resource? Have you done an evaluation of critical systems, their weaknesses, and the communication links? As we approach fire danger, along with the pandemic, where are we the weakest and most vulnerable? Is there an opportunity to begin creating a resource of trained individuals who can fill in the gaps, if needed? Unemployed students from the college may be a good resource for this training? I know that your budget is a critical condition. Are you allocating resources for the most critical areas that are life threatening and to which you and us need in critical times?
- * Are you doing a mental evaluation on staff so as to support them through the stress of these times, and during the potential of a devastating fire season?
- * Are you doing a mental evaluation of the City residents, and reaching out to them? Perhaps it would be good to have booths at the Fuller Park and other locations giving people resources. Perhaps you can be proactive and funneling money to build up the weakest link. Perhaps you can have mental health experts and police ride bikes through the town, or posted outside Walmart, La Tapitia Market on Brown Street, and other locations. We need to be proactive to protect our children and families and not let this get out of hand where the real cost hit us harder later.
- * Are you building a resource of community leaders who can support the Cities message and spread accurate information?
- * Are you going to monitor our sewage for the covid virus when that is available to you? Perhaps you can contact the Stanford researchers who are working on this and ask if Napa can be tested. If our

sewage has the virus in it, will the treatment that you are doing to the water for irrigation kill the virus? Can the virus be sprayed onto the vineyards in Carneros and have the potential to spread the virus? I know that there are time periods when the virus dies, but I believe this is a good question to ask yourself? Can the staff at the treatment plant be exposed to the virus? You can see where this goes.

This is a good time to let the community know what you know, what you are doing, planning and how you are there to help.

I recommend that you lead by example, as well. Walking on the street with fellow staff members and not wearing a mask is not leading by example. It has nothing to do with that you are not being safe, it is about sending a signal to others that you, too, are concerned, and are responding to the communities concerns.

Letting the gallery open, is a bad sign. On Friday, when Stage 2 begins and a few more stores are permitted to open, what's to prevent a hotel from bringing in hundreds for a convention and violating that stage if you are not willing to stand up and hold small businesses accountable from violating the laws? Can you simply say "Oh, Well?" The gallery's owners called out other businesses to join them and violate the pandemic closure. Ignoring this is not an option. This gallery makes it's money from tourists. They do not sell local artists. The artist they sell have other galleries. Their artists are not entirely dependent on them. If they are, they do not have a good business plan. Are you advocating more tourist to come in? How do you judge this when the all the scientists and pandemic experts are saying to stay closed for the near future? Allowing businesses to go rogue is not a good idea for city planning.

Covid-19 must be treated with scientific concerns over economic concerns. I say this with full awareness that my economic situation is in ruins. My jobs at wineries have been cancelled through November. Their willingness to give retainers and commit have ended. I'm not pretending that this doesn't affect my well-being and economic security. I live in this gig economy. For over 30 years, my business has made it through two recessions, industry changes, fires and earthquakes and other turmoil. I don't know if I can make it through this. Yet, I know that Covid-19 is not over. I know that I don't want my city government to join forces with those who protest the loudest and violate the health requirements determined by our health officials. I don't want to listen to arm chair doctors and pandemic experts. Many years ago, the City/County realized that we had never had an disaster while school was in session. I was on the City/County emergency preparedness committee that ran drills throughout the County to evaluate our response. I represented the parents. I remember our Health Director at the time say that her greatest worry was for a pandemic. Well, here we are. We may not be experiencing the full blunt at this time, but what is to say we will not? How open are you planning to permit businesses to go? We need a commitment on your part to protect the public at large. And mean it! Yes, there are businesses that can open in time. I do not trust that you can predict when that will be without conclusive science to back you up. I need the wine industry and the hotel industry to open up. Yet, I am not willing to advocate for that until I know that we are safe. Japan just had a second hit of covid. Italy is now worried as they start loosening control. The president just announced that he will probably end the pandemic response team soon, leaving it up to the states. This spells disaster. Who will you look to for answers? Who do we trust? If you are releasing restrictions based on economics, then that is a bad sign. Be smart. Be worthy of being our representatives.

And, lastly, this is a good time to reevaluate our economic foundation. Before and during the opening arguments for Napa Pipe, I advocated for the City and County to build a sizeable green manufacturing economy from Napa Pipe to the border of American Canyon. I urged the City to do an international call

for green manufacturing, to build a sizeable third economy that could 1) shore up a mono-culture that the City was determined to support, 2) create a high paying, union based, workforce that could afford to live here and would bring families and contribute to our communities. I believe this is an option that you can still advocate for before all the remaining space is filled with wine storage and wine dependent businesses. I urge you to create a task force to look into this again. We need a third economy now more than ever. Our schools are in serious trouble. Our workforce is in serious trouble. Our wineries can't hire enough workers who are willing to work for low wages, travel from out of the county through endless traffic jams. You have been to the same conferences and workshops that I have to for all these years that showed the signs of the economic hardship being experienced and to come. We need to build a resilient economy and not one tied to the hotel and winery industry. I know that goes against all that our City has preached and done for all these years.

Due to the budget crunch upon you, please let the residents know what is top priority, what the residents will have to put on the shelf, and how you will be responding for the next few years.

I teach at the college and I am learning daily of the unseen struggle my students are experiencing. Some of my students have told me how they do not have heat and have shared other hardships that are keeping them from completing college or making it difficult to do so. Remember those who are struggling. Be proactive and creative with your community outreach.

Respectfully,

Lowell

Lowell Downey

