

East Ventura Community Council

Minutes, 7/17/20 Zoom meeting

There were 45 people present on Zoom.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Marie Lakin at 7:02pm
2. Police chief Darin Schindler introduced himself as the new chief since 1/21. He has been in policing for 31 years, 26 in Ventura and 6 in Port Hueneme. His report for East Ventura crime is:
  - A.
    - a) 7 unlocked vehicle thefts
    - b) 6 stolen vehicles
    - c) 6 thefts
    - d) 3 commercial burglaries
    - e) 2 residential burglaries
    - f) 2 robberies
    - g) 1 aggravated assault
  - B. The fireworks, as we know were more abundant this year on July 4. The VPD received 500 calls. The situation was hard to address as location needed to be specific. Additional officers were on call.
  - C. Impact of COVID-19:
    - a) 16 officers are in quarantine; 3 have tested positive
    - b) The city budget impacted the department. No vacancies are being filled so the will have 137 officers from the allotted 143; an additional loss of 3 non officer positions. The current 4 vacancies of the 137 hope to be filled via the current officer recruitment and training. Hiring process takes 18 months.
    - c) New idea are on hold.
  - D. Staffing and priorities:
    - a) Staffing has changed. There is a new assistant chief and 2 new commanders ( 1 female was promoted).
    - b) The total of 7 commanders are now assigned a district. Each commander will be responsible for that district and for the follow up on events and activities in that district. Desire is to be more responsive to the constituents and with follow up investigative information. Goal to reduce response time for emergency (life threatening) calls and then disturbance calls and last loitering calls.
    - c) Community input indicates that homeless concerns, traffic and property crime are of major importance.
  - E. Youth Involvement:
    - a) Desire to increase support for and participation in the PAL program and with the Boys & Girls Club in W. Ventura.
    - b) Start an Explorer program (ages 14-17)
    - c) Continue with the cadet program (age 18)

- d) Hopefully this will introduce students to positive policing and also serve a recruitment tool.
- F. Wellness: The department has a wellness program that includes:
- a) Fitness program
  - b) Regular check-ins
  - c) Ongoing trainings on multiple topics including cultural concerns, responding to mental illness, new police tactics, etc.
- G. Department demographics:
- a) 28 officers are Hispanic, 69 Caucasian, 1 black officer; 1 other
  - b) 12% are female
- H. Questions:
- a) The chief addressed questions and reported information re: Citrus Glen School youth hanging out, Woodside linear park concerns, bike lane, Brown Barranca.
  - b) Response to protest re: Father Serra and BLM. The city officers, to the officer were sad and angry at what they saw on the George Floyd video. Because much of the protest include anger at law enforcement they did not intervene much unless someone was in actual danger. Goal was to allow for peaceful protest, First Amendment rights and re: the statue, safety of the Father Serra statue until a permanent plan is made and action completed.
3. At the request of the chair and Judy Alexandre, EVCC secretary and Co-Chair of the Ventura Social Service Task Force, the chief addressed the question re: homelessness and mental illness and the use of motels, known as Project Roomkey. Project Roomkey was a state, federal and county-funded program to address the homeless population during COVID. The fund in Ventura County ended 6/30/20. The program housed approximately 350 seniors and those with major disabilities for 3 months in 4 motels. When the program ended (rounded numbers) approximately 1/3 have been placed in some type of permanent housing, 1/3 have returned to shelters or have a county motel voucher and 1/3 are now back on the street. The county HSA has worked very closely with non-profit agencies, Whole Person Care and the Continuum of Care staff. Efforts are being made to identify a provider and a motel that can be made available for housing on a permanent basis. Funding from the state just became available. Judy did not know the amount available to Ventura County or City. In response to the question re: the number of people experiencing homeless in Ventura: the number is about 450 from the one-day point in time count. Specifics are available on the Continuum of Care website as are the specific statistics from Project Roomkey. About 1/3 of those that are homeless have serious mental illness. Housing for this population is a major gap. Currently our jail provides some of the best care.
4. Report from Councilmember Jim Freidman:
- a) Narrowing of the bike lane on Telephone Rd.: The goal is to slow traffic, provide bike lanes in both direction from Kimball to Johnson. The council voted 6-1 for approval. Jim

reported that he had 35 call or emails against the proposal and 5 for the proposal so he, representing the district, voted no.

- b) Father Serra Statue: Council received over 2,500 emails, 3,000 comments on social media and he felt that the divide in opinion was about 50/50. It is/was a very emotionally charged issue. Council is expecting to be sued no matter what decision was made. In other cities in the past few years, the statue of Father Serra had been destroyed and the council did not want that to happen. On a 6-0 vote council decided to move the statue to the Mission. The San Buenaventura Mission Catholic Church, the Chumash leadership and the city are working on the how. Mayor LaVere recused himself as he had already stated his opinion publically in a joint letter from the Chumash elder, the Church and himself.
  - c) Budget: The city addressed a \$11 million-plus shortfall primarily because of COVID. Employees will have furlough days, but no layoffs. Hiring is frozen except for public safety. Maintenance and Infrastructure projects will actually increase. Example: paving Johnson Dr. and hopefully Bristol Rd. which serve as gateways to District 5. Jim encouraged people to call if they have comments or questions via email or phone. His phone number is 805-407-8890.
5. Ashely Bautista, communications director for the county, provided a detailed COVID report. All information from the state and local orders are on the website as is the daily report of specific COVID numbers. Details can be found on [VCRecover.org](http://VCRecover.org) and you can sign up to receive the report
- a) We all need to wear masks, wash hands and keep social distance if we want to curb the spread of COVID
  - b) As of yesterday (7/16/20) there have been 4,968 cases and about 87,000 tested.
  - c) Testing is available in Ventura and throughout the county at no cost. There had been a delay and long wait in line as people were coming from LA and SB counties. Now only Ventura County residents will be tested. Ventura College is the closest site.
  - d) Tracking has been occurring from the start. A public health nurse will call if the results are positive and talk with the person to see with whom they have been in contact and then notify those individuals, have them tested and take necessary steps.
  - e) VCAAA has delivered over 1 million meal boxes. The county has provided funding to assist with the pop up food distribution sites.
  - f) Rental assistance of up to \$2,500 is available for those that qualify
  - g) \$5,000 in business grants for small business have also been made available to those that qualify and are randomly selected until the funds are allocated. More applications were received than funding available.
  - h) The COVID hotline, potential plans are posted on the [VCRecover](http://VCRecover.org) site.
  - i) The state completed a compliance check in Ventura and we were 99% in compliance. The gap was in improper mask wearing and not keeping distance.
  - j) Currently there are 101 hospitalized with COVID, 27 in ICU, 29 with suspected COVID. Ventilators are available, 8 ICU beds are available and 118 hospital beds are available throughout the county.

- k) New updated orders call for outside dining only, closing of gyms, county buildings to the public, non-essential offices, barbers, nail and hair salons. Details available on the website.
  - l) Specific attention and resources are available to farmworkers and growers. PPE is to be available to all farm workers.
  - m) If there are large gatherings and it is a disturbance then please notify the police. The social host is responsible if there is underage drinking etc.
  - n) The state and county leaders are in ongoing communication regarding orders and what is essential.
  - o) For details, please make use of the Recovers website.
6. John McNally, past EVCC chair, paid a tribute to Pat Pillow, an active EVCC member who recently passed away.
  7. Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 by Chair Marie Lakin

Submitted by

Judy Alexandre

Secretary