

City Council Regular Meeting - May 27, 2020

## Agenda Item No. 8 – Public Comment

### CONSENT CALENDAR

8. Discussion of Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce's Request for a Local Variance, from Los Angeles County, for an Accelerated Stage 2 Reopening

STAFF REFERENCE: ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER HAMBURGER

Email Correspondence (13)\*  
*(listed in the order received)*

*Jennifer Brunner  
Melissa Riches  
Patricia Ahmad  
Bryan  
Bunny and Preston Beckman  
Joe Gall  
Honey Bencomo  
Beth Barouch  
Jordana Walsh  
Gail Berkowitz  
Dana Miller  
"M"  
Monty Morton*

*\*The attached email(s) were received after the printing and distribution of the regular Agenda Packet, distributed to the City Council and posted to the City's website.*

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**From:** jennybrunner@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 4:46 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Please open up Agoura Hills businesses

Please consider Agoura Hills for reopening all small businesses. Everyone here practices social distancing and we are all worried for our local small businesses that are hanging on by a thread. People have given up their entire lives and finally were able to enjoy success, for most they worked decades to get where they are. Please don't continue to shut them down. Open them back up today- they worked for it, and deserve it. It's the American dream, please don't stomp on it.

Best,  
Jennifer Brunner

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**From:** MELISSA RICHES <melissa.riches@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 5:07 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Open Agoura Hills and WV

In regard to the recent email sent I am requesting all businesses be opened including restaurants, hair, nails and malls immediately. We need to join Ventura and get businesses going again. This MUST happen to protect all of our small businesses and get people back to work. Enough is enough. Please bring our beloved city back to productivity again.

Melissa Riches

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Patricia Ahmad <pleasesaycheese@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 5:55 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** covid

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To all Council Members

Thank you for the updates and trying to bring a semblance of peace during this chaotic time. Since we cannot get coherent responses nationally it is important to be updated and know we are in good hands. We would all love to be back to normal including the local businesses that must have lost so much. We are so grateful to be living in our beautiful city where we have been able to keep the covid cases down to 33 for the last few months. Let's hope it stays that way.

Thank you for reminding everyone to adhere to the guidelines.

Another phase is coming soon and this virus being unpredictable we cannot help to feel some apprehension once we start opening more businesses. It would be nice to wait a little while and see how other counties are doing and if not make sure everyone follow the guidelines from CDC and County.

Thank you all for your care and updates.

Kindly

Patricia Ahmad

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**From:** Bryan <btn7025@dslextreme.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 6:35 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Reopen Now

Time to move forward and join Ventura County and reopen on their timeline. Our city is not like the city of Los Angeles and is closer to Ventura County in density. No action and no plan is not acceptable. Do your job!!

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**From:** bunnygbeck@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 7:30 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Cc:** Illece Buckley Weber; Deborah Klein Lopez  
**Subject:** Comments For Agoura Hills City Council Meeting: Wed., May 27, 2020

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Our family has been very impressed with the flow and sharing of information provided by **Mayor Buckley Weber** on a regular basis since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic Guidelines were instituted; and have shared those communications with friends who do not have the good fortune to live in our city. In addition, we applaud **Councilmember Klein Lopez** for her monthly newsletters to residents of A.H. throughout her tenure, which are chock full of valuable information on our city 'happenings'. We especially appreciate her issuance of the "COVID-19 Resource Page", "Local Coronavirus Updates", and most recently, "Changes to Safer-At-Home Orders".

The City of Agoura Hills (as well as the L.A. County portion of Westlake Village) absolutely should be following L.A. County's Phase 2 "Roadmap to Recovery", **without exception**. The real concern is that if everyone rushes back too hastily to what they consider pre-COVID-19 'normalcy' - aka 'The Good Old Days' - we are likely going to see a sizable spike in the spreading and number of NEW CASES of this dreaded virus. This can throw communities back to Day 1 of "Stay at Home" and closure of non-essential businesses once again.

We all need to be prudent and realistic that this health crisis is far from over. Baby steps are necessary to protect all citizens, no matter what age. And if Ventura County has been permitted to " ... continue its Phase 2 reopening at an accelerated pace ... including inside malls and shopping centers, as well as inside and outside dining," they may live to regret the

impact of this accelerated return to business before it is truly safe to do so.

Our city should not be pushing to jump on the bandwagon of an unwise decision on the part of Ventura County, at a time when L.A. County does not meet the criteria for a similar variance. In the scheme of life, we recommend our city taking the more cautious route now, as it will likely lead to a shorter "Safer-at-Home" seclusion. We believe that "better safe than sorry" is the better philosophy.

Thank you for your e-ears!

*Bunny and Preston Beckman  
5771 Carell Avenue  
Agoura Hills 91301*

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**From:** Joe Gall <editoon@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 9:32 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Agoura joining



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**From:** editoon@sbcglobal.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 10:43 AM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Re: Agoura joining

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Yes. Thank you.

Although I don't like the idea of folks from more infected areas flocking to Agoura Hills it does make sense to include us with Ventura County when it comes to opening things up. In most ways we are much more like Ventura than Los Angeles.

It's also encouraging to see that in Agoura Hills we have had only two new Covid cases in the last few weeks and, knock on wood, no fatalities overall.

Thank you for encouraging input.

Joe Gall

Sent from my iPhone

On May 26, 2020, at 10:12 AM, Comments <Comments@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us> wrote:

Good morning! This email confirms receipt of your email; did you have any comments to submit?

**From:** Joe Gall <editoon@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 9:32 PM  
**To:** Comments <Comments@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us>  
**Subject:** Agoura joining

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**From:** HONEY BENCOMO <danhoney@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 10:18 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Reopening

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As a resident of Agoura Hills for 45 years and due to our proximity to Ventura County...I live just one block from Oak Park, I fully support the city joining Westlake Village in approaching L.A. County to approve reopening. L.A. officials should consider there are approximately 80+ cities in the county and each one has differences including the ability to meet the criteria to obtaining a variance like Ventura County did.

Honey Bencomo

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**From:** Beth Barouch <bethbarouch@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 23, 2020 1:03 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** COVID-19

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Hello,

Thank you for your recent update regarding Agoura Hills and Covid-19. Just like to add my voice to those that want an \*immediate\* and \*full\* reopening for all stores & businesses. My heart is broken for business owners and workers unduly affected by the lockdown. Clearly everyone in a more sensitive health situation can be more careful — and not at the expense of all! Enough already!

Thank you for your extra work and I imagine, increased stress levels at this time. Nobody really signed up for handling this so your work and dedication to beautiful Agoura Hills is appreciated!!!

Best,  
Beth Barouch  
Resident

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Jordana <jordana91301@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 24, 2020 10:01 AM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Reopening Agoura Hills- it is time to speed up opening! !

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To Whom It May concern,

In light of what I have observed personally, and professionally, I believe it is time to follow at a minimum Ventura County and start to speed up the process of reopening. In light of what we know about the virus, and the original reasons to close the country (not to overwhelm hospitals, flatten curve) the time is now. the Damage done by the closures will be severe, in my opinion more severe than the virus. If we do not reopen faster, the damage will be exponentially worse that it will already be. Please at a minimum, follow the faster Ventura County reopening schedule. This virus will not be fully eradicated, as we have not eradicated the flu. We cannot stay closed any longer. Thank you for your consideration.

Jordana Walsh, Esq.

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**From:** Gail Berkowitz <gbtplss@pacbell.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 24, 2020 10:51 AM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Opening agoura hills

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My name is Gail Berkowitz. My family moved to agoura hills from the valley for a better life. I am very upset that we are being included in the Los Angeles county mess! Our city deserves to open our restaraunts and businesses. I expect out city council to fight for us and get us joined with Westlake village. If you don't this is a huge mistake. We will look like a ghost town.

I have lived here 34 years. Original owner of my home. My kids went thru the Lvusd school district. I worked for the district for 16 years. I have had conversations with my husband about moving. I won't be the only house for sale if you do t fix this. Thank you

Gail Berkowitz

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone

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**From:** tennis.girl@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 24, 2020 3:26 PM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** Fwd: Opening Small Business

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Oops...sent original message to the wrong email.  
Please see below!

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

To: comments@ci.ahoura-hills.ca.us <comments@ci.ahoura-hills.ca.us>  
Sent: Sun, May 24, 2020 2:04 pm  
Subject: Opening Small Business

Hello,

I am a longtime Conejo Valley resident, very concerned over the fate of small business/restaurants in the Agoura WLV area that are LA county. How much longer can these businesses survive the shutdown, especially when right up the street, Ventura Co restaurants are open. Please consider allowing small businesses and restaurants in Agoura to open immediately with the same guidelines that are in place for Ventura County. This is insane that they are mandated by LA County rules when they are really part of our Conejo Valley.

Please help them.

Thank you!  
Dana Miller

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**From:** Visionary Enterprises, Inc. <office@visionary-enterprises.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 7:41 AM  
**To:** Comments  
**Subject:** EXODUS

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All I can say is, I am glad I got the hell out of Ventura County CA in 2013 and moved to Texas, this COVID debacle is just the tip of the iceberg.

M

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**From:** Deborah Klein Lopez  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 26, 2020 10:52 AM  
**To:** Comments  
**Cc:** Kimberly Rodrigues; Nathan Hamburger  
**Subject:** Fwd: FR: Monty Morton RE: Council Meeting  
**Attachments:** CouncilMembers.pdf; ATT00001.htm

In case this didn't get to you.

Respectfully,

Deborah Klein Lopez, Councilmember  
City of Agoura Hills  
818.597.7373  
dlopez@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "mtn723@aol.com" <mtn723@aol.com>  
**Date:** May 26, 2020 at 10:50:01 AM PDT  
**To:** Denis Weber <DWeber@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us>, Linda Northrup <lnorthrup@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us>, Deborah Klein Lopez <dlopez@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us>, Chris Anstead <CANstead@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us>  
**Cc:** Ramiro Adeva <radeva@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us>  
**Subject:** **FR: Monty Morton RE: Council Meeting**

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The situation is very serious...some tenants are questioning their ability to re open....Please see attached.

Thank you,



# THE KANAN GROUP

29395 AGOURA ROAD, SUITE 204  
AGOURA HILLS, CA 91301  
818-879-4800 PHONE  
818-879-4808 FAX

May 26, 2020

Dear Council Member,

As I have written to all the Council Member before, I am not too sure if another missive is going to have a demonstrable effect. However, here goes!

Over 36 years ago, my then Partner and I, developed, built, and have managed the Agoura Hills City Mall. We carefully chose each tenant, screening for the appropriate tenant mix with the proper attendant capabilities. The majority of our tenants, as most of you might know, are hard-core 'Mom and Pops.' In other words, their business is their only viable means of support. And while, as a Landlord, I have used a combination of rent deferral or abatement, the question begs itself, "How long can these people survive without any income?" Excuse me if I have to make it personal, but "how long could you survive?" We have been in 'lock down,' and for the vast majority of our tenants, no income since about March 15<sup>th</sup>, with no end in sight.

At the inception of the pandemic, everyone eagerly complied, as we were told that the objective was to flatten the curve. Then the goal became to have the proper amount of masks, gloves, ventilators, and other medical supplies, along with hospital capacity. The curve has long since flattened, and is now downward, and we have excess hospital capacity.

Over these past two months, I have been very active in communicating with my tenants, sending information from the L.A. Department of Health and other governmental agencies which detailed the requirements that would be necessary when some form of business is resumed. In fact, Agoura Deli hired an expert to come to their restaurant and prepare the store for a retro-fit which complies with social distancing, and other necessary safety measures.

The current standards are simply impractical. For example, our restaurants cannot do enough take-out to even cover their expenses. As to those businesses that would qualify for 'curbside delivery,' none of those establishments have opened; as the task of implementing 'curbside' is simply unworkable. To illustrate, how can a woman shop for clothing if she cannot go into the store and browse? Should these businesses be able to open, consider the fact that there is usually only one or two customers in the establishment at a time, plus the owner/employee. And consider that the smallest store is 1100 square feet, thus providing plenty of space for social distancing.

AGOURA HILLS CITY MALL

# THE KANAN GROUP

29395 AGOURA ROAD, SUITE 204  
AGOURA HILLS, CA 91301  
818-879-4800 PHONE  
818-879-4808 FAX

As an aside, the new "best estimates" provided by the CDC, is that the fatality rates for Americans infected with Covid-19 symptoms is 0.4%. That's less than ½ of one person per hundred. And for people under age 49, the agency estimated that 0.05% of symptomatic people will die. That is virtually statistically irrelevant. On a local basis, Agoura Hills has had 33 total cases of COVID-19, and 0 deaths. Certainly, we have been lucky, but our merchants, not so much.

So, where are we? We are, or have approached critical mass. It *is not hyperbole*, when I say, "these tenants are hanging on by a thread." Yet, there is another side to this equation, and that is the Landlord.

Our revenues have been down well over \$100,000+++ per month. How long can I sustain the shortfall? I too have a mortgage payment, and other expenses, and we are slowly eating up our reserves. I cannot impress the issues any more succinctly.

I ask that the Council adopts the standards being used by the City of Westlake Village, and allow our tenants the ability to resume their living, and ensure that our residents shop locally.

Sincerely,

THE KANAN GROUP, LLC



Monty Morton

General Manager

AGOURA HILLS CITY MALL