



**Legislative Advocacy Forum
August 26, 2020
Agenda**

Chair: Melanie Vollbrecht
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM, Zoom

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| I. | Call to Order | Melanie Vollbrecht |
| II. | Self-Introductions | Melanie Vollbrecht |
| III. | Approval of Minutes | Melanie Vollbrecht |
| IV. | <u>Legislative Updates</u> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senator Feinstein• Congresswoman Brownley• Congressman Garcia• Senator Stern• Assemblywoman Smith• Supervisor Huber• City of Simi Valley• Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District• U.S. Chamber of Commerce• Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce• Southern California Edison• Simi Valley Unified School District• Metropolitan Water District of Southern California• California State University Channel Islands• Southern California Gas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Becca ChannellMegan BlandCharles NavarroNicholas GainesRyan ValenciaJoel AngelesSamantha ArgabriteElaine FreemanVartan DjihanianSamantha ShapiroRudy GonzalesJason PeplinskiJacque McMillanCelina ZacariasMaria Ventura |
| V. | Other Business | |
| VI. | Adjourn | |

Next meeting: September 23, 2020 – 8:00 AM

Disclaimer: The Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce Legislative Advocacy Forum is a committee of the Chamber of Commerce. The Committee acts as a forum for discussion about legislative activity and provides the Board of Directors with recommendations for decisions. Comments made at committee meetings do not represent the views of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce or the Board of Directors.

Present: John Tolson, Samantha Shapiro, Melanie Vollbrecht, Amy Corneau, Jason Peplinski, Kathi Van Etten, Charles Navarro, Ryan Valencia, Robert McDonald, Rudy Gonzales, Jennings Imel, Elaine Freeman, Harry Van Dyck, Karen Troop, Megan Bland, Tricia Johnston, Joel Angeles, Suzette Valladarez, Samantha Argabrite, Maral Kirakosian

Call to Order – 8:02 AM

Minutes: Rudy Gonzales made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2020 LAF meeting. The minutes were approved.

Legislative Updates

Congresswoman Brownley – Megan Bland

- Megan Bland, District Director, reported on behalf of Congresswoman Brownley. Robert McDonald, District Rep, was also present.
- The Congresswoman is in D.C. this week and next working on legislation. Currently she is working on legislation related to women’s veterans and assistance for small business related to COVID.
- The office is still available for anyone who needs assistance related to case work, and can be reached at 805-379-1779

Congressman Garcia – Charles Navarro

- Charles Navarro reported on behalf of Congressman Garcia. He will be working out of the district office.
- The congressman was appointed to two committees: transportation and infrastructure and science and technology
- He is currently in DC and they will be discussing legislation
- He is working on meeting with different businesses, agencies and leaders in the district
- He met with Milgard Windows, visited the Santa Susana Field Lab, and met with the Chief of Police in Simi Valley
- Their Simi Valley office is open; they encourage calling to make appointments prior to the meeting

Assembly Member Christy Smith – Ryan Valencia

- Ryan Valencia reported on behalf of the Assembly Member
- They have been in recess and will be returning on the 27th to take up legislation; it is a much smaller legislative package than they anticipated
- The assembly member’s bills AB 1837 and AB 3267 passed through the Assembly
- The Governor approved the budget; the legislature was able to avert many of the budget cuts that were proposed to education
- In the district, they have been working with their Veteran Services Task Force on launching a veterans multi services center. They are forming a non-profit to work on this project specifically

Supervisor Bob Huber – Joel Angeles

- Their main area of focus right now is COVID; they are working with businesses to inform them who is allowed to be open and who must be closed

- Things still restricted include: public events and gatherings, festivals, indoor play centers; dine in restaurants, bars, wineries, personal care services, and fitness facilities are closed for indoor activities
- The state is releasing prisoners in August; there will be 110 prisoners in Ventura County released; they must be tested for COVID before
- The county has been on the state's monitoring list; our hospitalization has achieved the criteria needed in the state
- Of the cases in the last 14 days that have been hospitalized, 70% of those have been in Oxnard; only 14% have been from Simi Valley
- The Board approved extending rental assistance another month
- The Board received 5,300 applications for the business assistance and will only be able to award 2,000. The supervisor hopes they will be able to extend the grants to all businesses that applied and are eligible using the CARES Act funds the county received
- Funding will be issued to selected businesses on August 12th
- The planning commission approved the general plan

City of Simi Valley – Samantha Argabrite

- There will be a city council meeting on Monday; council meetings are still closed to the public. The public can submit comments via email to be distributed to the council
- They are working on outdoor permits for hair salons
- In the city, they have 81% of ventilators available so the city's hospital system is not in trouble
- The census has been extended through November and the Simi Valley library is available for those who have no access to a computer to complete the census
- Neighborhood councils will now be aligned with the city's new districts
- Neighborhood Council and YES are accepting applications

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District – Elaine Freeman

- RSRPD has found that special districts are not clarified at the federal level so they are struggling with the lack of clarification and need to be recognized federally
- The district is now debt free and has paid off their building
- Their priorities include: completing the activity center in the new building, upgrades to Rancho Santa Susana Park, and opening the skate park on August 11th

U.S. Chamber of Commerce – Jennings Imel

- The phase 4 Coronavirus package is being discussed currently
- Senate Republicans and House Democrats have very different ideas of what they want to see and where they need to be for this new package
- Possibilities that have been talked about for the new package include capping the amount at \$1T, a second round of individual checks, payroll tax relief, etc.
- Liability protections is a major issue including exposure liability, health care liability and product liability
- They need to bring more assistance to small businesses and need bi-partisan support to really get this through
- PPP applications expire on August 8th and unemployment benefits expire on July 31st
- The US Chamber submitted their list of priorities to Congress last week

Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce – Samantha Shapiro

- The Chamber joined the "California for a Safe Reopening" coalition along with many other chambers of commerce and business associations

- The Chamber has been working with the county and city on the business recovery taskforce; the chamber is working to connect businesses in need with the resources they need
- A major concern from businesses is their PPP funding running out and the need for additional funding to keep operating
- With any additional funding, the Chamber would like to see liability protection, a lesser amount given for unemployment benefits, and more forgivable funding. They also want to see 501c6 organizations included in businesses eligible for these benefits
- The chamber is hosting a Community Connections webinar with Dr. Peplinski of SVUSD on 7/30 at 6 PM. This will be a series of community updates with additional speakers to be announced
- Startup Simi is hosting a webinar speaker series featuring two new local entrepreneurs who are discussing starting and growing a business through a pandemic

Southern California Edison – Rudy Gonzales

- They are continuing their wildfire mitigation work
- They are trying to be careful and mindful when doing this work; with schools being remote in the fall, they will be working to transition their work to the evenings when students won't be needing power
- They are still offering bill assistance programs to those in need
- Rudy encouraged everyone to continue referring businesses to SCE who need help and he will connect them with the right contact
- They are continuing their work on the Royal substation, including landscaping to upgrade the work

Simi Valley Unified School District – Dr. Jason Peplinski

- Schools will need to be included in any indemnification related to liability protections; the district can't take on that potential liability when they bring their students back on campus
- They received federal and state funds for COVID related expenses, but are looking for clarification on approved expenditures; the funds have to be used by December and they will be reimbursed, so they need clarification so as not to spend on items without receiving those funds back.
- Their ultimate goal is to have kids back on campus but certain things will have to be addressed before reopening in person learning
- There is an issue with vaccines and whether it will be required for students to come on campus; that is something that should be discussed now rather than once it's released
- The district won't be able to sustain a hybrid system which incorporates both distance learning and in-person instruction; it would require an additional "school" of teachers and staff for distance learning
- There is a discrepancy with the child care requirements and schools – child care services can be in person and many of them run on school campuses, so they can have children on campus but students can't be on campus for in-person instruction
- There needs to be more clarity on that topic, as the optics are confusing
- They are looking at vacant properties off campus for the child care services to be housed
- Through the county, 90% of superintendents want students to return on campus but there are so many issues that come with that, that starting online was really the only option
- Remote learning isn't the ideal solution, but the program the district will be following is much more robust than the one that was put together in the spring; all students will have live instruction with a teacher for 3 hours a day, will have attendance, assignments, etc., along with office hours for students and parents to connect with teachers
- All students will be assigned a school issued chromebook along with their textbooks and any student who does not have internet access will receive that capability from the district

Adjourn – 9:20 AM