



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Postpones Evening City Council Meeting Where Proposed St. Michael's Housing Project Was to be Discussed

Only meeting on March 17 will be at 1 p.m. and focus on COVID-19 items

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside has postponed the evening portion of Tuesday's (3/17) City Council meeting that included a hearing on the proposed St. Michael's housing project. The change was made to provide more time to determine how to proceed with heavily-attended public meetings while also taking steps to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Community Development Partners is seeking to build 50 affordable and supportive housing units and other facilities at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 4070 Jackson Street. The 6:15 p.m. hearing on Tuesday evening had been advertised for weeks, and several dozen people were expected to speak on the project. The item is now continued at least a week.

"This project has been the source of a great deal of interest in the community, and many folks had March 17 circled on their calendars," Mayor Rusty Bailey said. "But the safety of the community is paramount, so this continuance is warranted."

One of the most effective ways to avoid the spread of COVID-109 is social distancing, which calls for people to stay at least six feet away from each other. If meeting were held in the City Council chambers, only about 25 people would be able to attend while observing social distancing. The City discussed moving the meeting to a much larger room at the Convention Center at 5th and Main streets, which would allow for 225 members of the public to enter with chairs placed six feet apart. But the decision ultimately was to wait at least a week to determine what other measures can be taken.

As a result, the only time the City Council will meet Tuesday is at 1 p.m. in the City Council chambers, 3900 Main Street. The only items that will be heard are an opportunity for the Council to ratify a local emergency that previously was called by the city manager; a proposal by three Council members to suspend discontinuance of water, electric, sewer, and refuse utility service for non-payment for at least 30 days as a result of the pandemic; and for city staff members to give COVID-19 updates.

“Social distancing and other methods to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are absolutely essential if we are going to limit the spread of this virus in our community,” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “It is encouraging to see us take the additional time to determine what other steps can be taken to accommodate the public in a safe manner.”

The City of Riverside has proclaimed a local emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has closed most city government buildings to the public, including City Hall, libraries, senior centers and community centers. In addition, all events at city facilities, except for essential city meetings, have been cancelled. Police, fire, water and power, and trash services are not be affected.

[Online services](#) will remain available throughout the closure and can be found on the City’s webpage. The Riverside and Alvord unified school districts are closed. Refer to each district’s webpage for more information.

As a result of the health advisories that have been issued, the City has examined how it can continue to serve the public while taking steps to slow the spread of COVID-19. For example, the city Charter requires two City Council meetings per month, but only essential staff will be present at Council Meetings. Every City Council meeting will include a discussion of “Pertinent health, safety, and security updates,” and agendas for all public meetings will focus on essential items of business. City Council Committee meetings have been cancelled, as have most Boards and Commissions.

The public is encouraged to use e-comment and other forms of communication, such as emails, phone calls and letters. Public comments can be emailed to city_clerk@riversideca.gov or mailed to the attention of the appropriate person or department at: City of Riverside, 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522.

A calendar of public meetings, live streams of meetings, the e-comment feature and minutes of City Council and other public meetings can be found at <https://riversideca.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Every City Council meeting and most other public meetings may be watched at RiversideTV at <https://www.riversideca.gov/videos/>.

For more information about COVID-19 including guidelines, closures, business planning resources, and local updates, please visit RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19.