

Santa Barbara Happenings



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Federal Eviction Moratorium Extended

On August 3, 2021, an order from the CDC extended the federal eviction moratorium until October 3, 2021 for certain communities with substantial or high levels of community transmission of COVID-19. For California this is less noteworthy since Governor Newsom already extended California's eviction protections. California's moratorium (which has carve outs for non-COVID related evictions), if not extended, expires on September 30, 2021. The path to lifting these restrictions remains unclear. However, a group of landlords and real estate companies filed a legal challenge in a Washington DC District Court after President Biden's comments on the CDC order's lack of constitutionality.

Currently, certain qualifying households may receive assistance of up to 100% of back rent owed. This assistance can be applied for by landlord's or property owners. More information and an application to apply for back rent can be found at <https://housing.ca.gov/>. Hopefully the moratorium on evictions will be lifted prior to the money running out for programs like this.

Poll: Majority of Likely California Voters Want Yes on Newsom Recall

A new poll conducted by SurveyUSA for the San Diego Tribune shows that 51% of respondents would vote to recall Governor Gavin Newsom. This comes after an Emerson College poll showed extremely close results. Newsom's unpopular COVID-19 restrictions were given as the most important reason to recall him by 34% of the voters in the poll. The ballots for the election will be sent out in mid-August with two questions on them: first, a question about whether Newsom should be recalled; second, a list of 43 candidates to replace him. The new candidates only need a plurality of the vote if a majority votes to recall Newsom.

City Council Relocates Homeless to Hotel at a Cost of \$1.6 Million Dollars

In June, the Santa Barbara City Council voted to temporarily rehouse 50 individuals for 120 days at the Rose Garden Inn on State Street. The total cost is a whopping 1.6 million dollars.

Understandably, the plan has many critics. One major issue raised is that the hotel relocation plan only lasts for 120 days. Additionally, local residents are concerned about potential safety issues in the area surrounding of the hotel. The City Council claims that their non-profit partner CityNet will provide security that will decrease crime at the hotel. The City Council characterizes the 1.6-million-dollar program as just a starting point. The City Council concedes that this program only houses 50 of what they estimate to be 300 homeless individuals currently living in camps in Santa Barbara. An additional issue not cited by the City Council is what happens if/when the homeless, that are relocated to the hotel, refuse to stay in the hotel. Is the money refunded? Probably not.

The issue of homelessness continues to be a major issue in Santa Barbara. Spending well over a million dollars to house approximately 1/6 of the supposed homeless population for only four months is not a sustainable solution.

Santa Barbara County Declares Local Emergency Due to Drought

Santa Barbara County is currently in the midst of a drought according to a new U.S. Drought Monitor map. The County has many sources of water including investments in desalination plants in Montecito and Santa Barbara. These plants, combined with the traditional water supply portfolios of groundwater and the Lake Cachuma Reservoir, allow Santa Barbara County to rely less on dwindling State Water Project allocations which have gone down to historic lows of 5%.

Proposed Apartment Project Faces Community Backlash

The debate over high-density rental housing continues in Santa Barbara with the proposed development of a 21-unit, four-story apartment building on 825 De La Vina Street. The council approved the average unit-sized density (AUD) incentive program in 2013, which allows developers to build high-density housing projects as long as they are rentals. The proposal includes 23 parking spaces and 32 bicycle spaces, as well as

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having two of the units designated for moderate-income households, with the rest at market rate. In reviewing the project, the Architectural Review Board has emphasized the need to create additional affordable housing. Playing its part in this process the Architectural Review Board approved the project.

Community members who live near the proposed development are unhappy with the decision with nearly 30 of them showing up at the site to protest the decision. Locals claim that the four-story building is much taller than others on the street and could potentially block the views from other houses. Concerns about the aesthetics of the neighborhood and noise of construction were also raised by some residents.

Santa Barbara Tourism Bounces Back

During the COVID-19 pandemic, City of Santa Barbara hotels lost over \$170 million in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). These losses also impact the restaurant and service industry in Santa Barbara, but since the relaxation of guidelines for vaccinated people, the numbers have increased dramatically.

The Visit Santa Barbara campaign spent millions on ad buys for a targeted marketing plan and used incentive programs to entice guests. Just the month of May alone resulted in \$1.9 million in hotel room TOT taxes. The month of June brought 30% more hotel bookings than any other year before the pandemic which resulted in an economic boom for the City.

The success of hotel rooms signals positive growth of the economy as the City hopefully exits the pandemic. Though, with new mask mandates back in place and the potential for additional local restrictions on business, who knows.

Disney Moves 2,000 California Jobs to Florida

California has lost another job migration out of the state. Disney is moving 2,000 jobs from California to Florida. Disney executives praised the business-friendly environment in Florida, pointing out the lower cost of living and lack of income tax as benefits to employees. Disney also blasted California for its unnecessarily strict handling of the pandemic.

Disney joins the ever-growing, long list of Fortune 500 companies and major celebrities, like Elon Musk and Joe Rogan, that have abandoned California in search of lower taxes and a friendlier business climate. California's population declined in 2020 as wealth, businesses, and people continue to pile out of the nation's wealthiest state. California has the second-worst business climate in the nation and the results clearly show that business

owners are choosing economic freedom and lower taxes over big government regulation.

Initial Fundraising Reports Foreshadow a Tight Santa Barbara Mayoral Race

In the Santa Barbara Mayoral race, the incumbent Santa Barbara Mayor Cathy Murillo is facing a stiff challenge from Former Council Member Randy Rowse. Despite having over \$50,000 (for a total of over \$139,000) carried over from 2020, Murillo has raised only about \$8,000 more than Randy Rowse has in just a third of the time. Additionally, Rowse has more cash on hand than Murillo (approximately \$124,000 to \$114,000).

With the numerous major decisions that the Council has made recently, including imposing additional tenant protections above those already significant protections imposed by the state, the November 2021 local City Council races are very important for anyone owning residential rental property in Santa Barbara.

Nina Johnson Runs for City Council in Santa Barbara District 6

Nina Johnson is a late entry into the council race for the seat representing Downtown and West of State Street, but is very experienced as the current assistant city administrator. She wants to fill the void in the leadership gap between the Mayor and City Council while also focusing her energies on the needs of Downtown. On housing, Johnson has indicated interest in finding compromise between landlords and tenants.

Barrett Reed Runs for City Council in Santa Barbara District 4

Barrett Reed is running for City Council District 4, which represents the Riviera, Upper East, and San Roque. Reed leads fundraising efforts among all candidates in the November election.

NOTE - This is a retraction from the prior month's article. Highlight it in a separate box on the page.

Update to July 2021 "SANTA BARBARA HAPPENINGS: Voter Fraud Claim at UC Santa Barbara" Joseph Holland, the county's clerk recorder, assessor and registrar of voters, told the News-Press that all California election laws were followed in the 2020 election and that it was the most secure election in county history.

....Mr. Holland also refuted additional allegations of election fraud that have circulated in recent weeks, including the alleged ballots sent to UCSB dorms in the fall. <https://newspress.com/residents-allege-election-fraud/>