

Santa Barbara Happenings



Terry A. Bartlett – Reetz, Fox & Bartlett LLP

County Planning Department Opens New Online Permitting System

The new online permitting process for the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department began in July. Applicants must now apply for permits online through the Accela Citizen’s Access Portal, which has already been in use for cannabis business licensing. The county is planning to expand the usage of Accela to other departments.

Upcoming Changes as Downtown State Street Withers

An \$11 million project to revitalize the State Street undercrossing (which still allows vehicle traffic) that leads to the waterfront by adding bike lanes, art, and lighting was approved by the City Council.



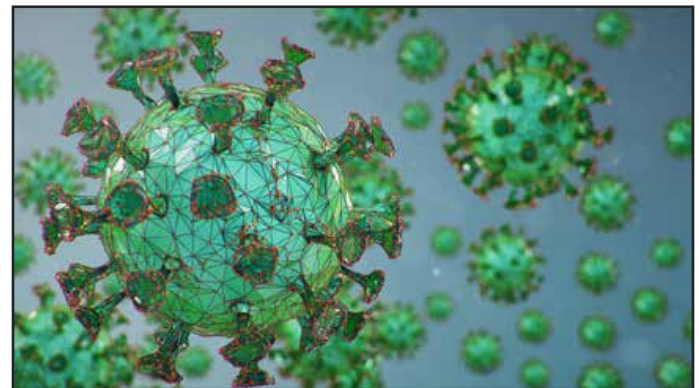
(image Noozhaw.com)

The City Council has also recently discussed State Street’s closure as well as disbanding the current State Street Interim Operations Ad Hoc Council Committee. The members of that subcommittee had recommended a deep cleaning of the project area, only two blocks closed to vehicles, a lower speed limit, allowing one way drop offs in front of the Granada Theatre for shows and allowing the Historic Landmarks Committee to have input in the design.

Turns Out: Free Speech Increases Tolerance for Diverse Views

Glenn Harlan Reynolds, a professor at the University of Tennessee College of Law, recently criticized the state of free speech on college campuses. Free Speech allows not only for self-expression but, also, increased open-mindedness in a society by forcing people to face and consider beliefs that are different

from their own. This is why the defense of our first amendment right is important, even when the result of doing so is unpleasant for some people. As an example, Reynolds used an anecdote related by a former law professor who describes her experience as a high school student waiting for members of the American Nazi Party to finish their Holocaust denying speech so that she and her friends could use historical evidence to “tear them to shreds” during the Question-and-Answer period. Reynolds maintains that this method of patiently waiting to debate a person whose ideas you may even find completely repulsive or dangerous is an exercise that is necessary for a free and diverse society. It’s called the market place of ideas, and, inevitably, the best ideas rise to the top of people’s consciousness.



COVID Lockdown Benefits Dwarfed by Social and Economic Costs

U.S. Government Ordered to Cease Censorship of Social Media

According to a study published by professors Jonas Herby, Steve H. Hanke and Lars Jonung, the strict COVID lockdowns and restrictive measures adopted by many countries likely did not have a significant positive effect on COVID related mortality rates. Specifically, voluntary social distancing alone appeared to prevent more deaths, as evidenced by countries like Sweden, who chose not to impose lockdowns but did implement social distancing and masks.

Prior to this, in October 2020, three professors (Dr. Martin Kulldorf, a professor of medicine at Harvard who specializes in epidemiology, infectious disease and vaccine safety, Dr. Sunetra Gupta an Oxford professor who also specializes in epidemiology and

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infectious disease and vaccine safety, Dr. Sunetra Gupta an Oxford professor who also specializes in epidemiology and infectious disease, and Dr. Jay Battacharya a professor at Stanford University Medical School, physician, epidemiologist, health economist and public health expert) co-authored the Great Barrington Declaration, which was then signed by other doctors and professors. In it they expressed concern about the mental and physical impacts of then "prevailing COVID-19 policies". Instead of total lockdowns they suggested more moderate measures. Since COVID-19 was approximately a thousand times less dangerous to young, healthy people, they argued that young, healthy people should be allowed to live their lives and socialize as normally as possible, to get infected and then overcome the infection thus hastening herd immunity (a stable rate of new infection).

Recently, Wall Street Journal columnist Holman W. Jenkins, Jr. discussed how balanced assessments like those presented in the Great Barrington Declaration were "shelved" and replaced by "a bandwagon frenzy." Holman points out that many dissenting opinions about COVID-19, such as the ones expressed in the Declaration, were censored.

Battacharya states that the Barrington Declaration's proposed COVID response was censored on all social media sites and that now there is evidence that this response (similar to that of Sweden) would have done less harm socially and economically and likely also have resulted in fewer fatalities. He explains that as a scientist he has tried not to be political in order to remain objective but that he acted in this case because the government was abusing its authority and infringing on our rights.

The federal Court of Appeals has since found that the U.S. government had likely engaged in censorship of ideas and ordered that the government "shall take no actions, formal or informal, directly or indirectly, to coerce or significantly encourage social media companies to remove, delete, repress, or reduce....posted social media content containing protected free speech."

Rent Control Ultimately Increases Rents

As rents are regulated by government, property owners take their rented units out of circulation (sell the homes) causing a decrease in supply of rentals. Demand then increases for those units which are still available.

As the economist Thomas Sowell explains: prices indicate value and incentive and when price controls are enacted by the government it leads to a valuation that doesn't reflect the actual supply of, or demand for, the goods in question. There is already less housing in California than the demand for housing requires and *if we don't allow the market to determine the price (value and incentive) in regards to housing this gap will widen further.*

Scientists Turn Tables on Climate Emergency

John Clauser, a Nobel Prize laureate in physics, has joined Ivan Giaever who won the Nobel Prize for a 1973 physics discovery, and other scientists and professionals in signing the "World Climate Declaration." The World Climate Declaration points out errors in the prevailing science around climate, both the causes and the effects of climate change, as well as against the tendency to politicize climate science.

The scientists specifically point out that current models ignore the role of clouds. And that the IPCCs climate models fail to accurately predict climate changes over the last century because the scientists who created them did not account for the influence of cloud cover and the interaction between clouds, sunlight, the ocean, and how all of this effects the levels of atmospheric CO2. Clauser states that a slight increase in cloud cover can counterbalance most of the temperature raising effects of atmospheric CO2. He also notes that CO2 is beneficial to plant life.

Clauser and the other signers of the World Climate Declaration believe that climate change is not drastic enough to be an emergency nor is necessarily the result of human activity and that these types claims are mostly used in order to gain leverage in the area of politics.

Delta Airlines Returning to Santa Barbara with Flights to Atlanta and Salt Lake City

With the addition of Delta, Santa Barbara Airport's overall passenger capacity will increase significantly. Welcome back Delta!



(image Independent.com)

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