



MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JESSICA MATSON, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

**SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
AGENDA ITEM 7 – JUNE 9, 2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COMMUNITY COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

DATE: JUNE 9, 2020

Attached is additional correspondence received after 4 PM.

cc: Acting City Manager
Police Chief
City Attorney
City Clerk
City Website (or public review binder)

From: Christopher Zepeda
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: The Pit
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:48:50 PM

Good evening good people of Arroyo Grande and the greater Central Coast. I'm writing regarding John Hakleman, The Pit and other businesses that were associated with the armed rooftop response to the peaceful protest. First I'd like to state that anything that is not for #blacklivesmatter is against the movement and deemed racists. If we have learned anything in the last weeks of the protests, it's that our country has deep, hidden, racism that needs to be addressed. John Hakleman, the Pit and any other business that took arms against a peaceful protest has an agenda that does not belong in the community. Hiding behind a second amendment right is cowardly. As we have seen in Minneapolis, New York, Los Angeles and Oakland fear can divide but it can also show us who is truly racists. I urge the good people of Arroyo Grande to make an example of John Hakleman and other cowardly business owners and revoke their business license. We are trying to build a new and better system. There is no place for hate. We can not budge on that.

In Solidarity,

Chris Zepeda

Sent from my iPhone

From: Cody King
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: public comment
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:46:49 PM

Arroyo Grande City Officials,

As a lifelong citizen of our community I want to express the ugliness that has reared its head as a result of local demonstrations. Pretending that the plague of xenophobia is not and has not always been present in our community is naive. The frenzied mobilization of armed men had no purpose other than to intimidate and threaten the diverse coalition of people demonstrating their free speech rights.

The Arroyo Grande City Council should examine AGPD practices and their duty to protect all citizens. Dan Dow and Ian Parkinson have openly advocated for people to disregard legally binding recommendations related to COVID 19 last month. Were they the people consulted regarding the legality of these men inciting terror in peaceful demonstrators.

This issue will not go away on its own. The council must protect the rights of all of its citizens,

Cody King

From: Bill Ridge
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: public comment on the incidents involving firearms being brandished during a peaceful protest
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:46:01 PM

When one's business is not simply a way to produce income but a culture, a way of life, and what keeps you whole and sane as a person, one can only imagine the frustration at having it closed and having no control of when it will re-open. Add to that the frustration that others, in other situations, be that a protest or shopping in a Walmart, are quite often in similar close proximity to one another as they would be in your gym, and that frustration could easily turn to anger and mistrust.

It is in this context that I completely condemn the brandishing of assault weapons on a peaceful protest that included families, priests, and community leaders. A protest that in fact did not even pass the businesses where this occurred and in a context whose motivation for these actions could clearly be seen as intimidation more than protection of life or property. One wonders when exactly these men felt the taking of a life would be justified; after an insult, a broken window, damaged floor mats? At what point did these men feel their actions of simply brandishing assault weapons would not be enough but they would be justified taking a life or multiple lives.

This action is terrifying and wrong and I urge the city to create laws so this can never happen again.

I urge the city to find a way forward that clearly makes it unacceptable and illegal to brandish assault style weapons on the rooftops of any business or location during a protest or at any time, I acknowledge the frustration of someone who is denied their way of life by the shutdown order.. For the safety of all and the maintenance of our society I urge the city to not allow the brandishing of weapons or the threatening and intimidation of other citizens in any public or private space.

Bill Ridge
Grover Beach

From: Bev Gularte Harben
To: [public comment](#); [Arroyo Grande City Council Member Jimmy Paulding](#)
Subject: I support Black Lives Matter; the Pit owners acted irresponsibly towards peaceful citizens
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:39:56 PM

Dear Arroyo Grande,

Comments for the AG City Council meeting June 9, 2020:

I marched at the peaceful Black Lives Matter rally on June 5 in Arroyo Grande to support Black Lives Matter and to protest police brutality and police killings of unarmed black citizens across the country. There were many anti-march people present at the Burger King and Vons parking lots, revving their engines and heckling. Since they were heckling the peaceful marchers and were obviously against the rally, does this mean they are pro-police brutality and pro-systemic racism? Sadly, that seems to be the logical conclusion.

Upon learning that The Pit and Grover Barbershop owners had armed gunmen on their rooftops (purportedly to protect their businesses from their imagined upcoming riots), I was completely shocked at this outrageous behavior. I was born here, my family lives here, and I am dismayed that this would happen in my hometown. This was a peaceful march, and no one exhibited violent tendencies except the people against the march. The Pit owner called people opposed to his actions "f___ing idiots" and he was hateful and enraged in videos that are still available. I couldn't even finish watching the videos, they are so hateful.

When the mayor told the community that the gunmen acted legally, and that she was going to give the peaceful protesters "tough love" by telling us to respect the gunmen's rights, it was condescending and trite. Do not talk down to us as though we don't understand the constitution. This isn't about a well-armed militia; this is about hate and violence. This incident needs to be more fairly and completely investigated; can we be 100% certain that the guns were not loaded before the police arrived at the Pit? Were there other businesses that attempted to intimidate the peaceful marchers?

I appreciate Jimmy Paulding's letter to the townspeople, and am heartened by his support and encouragement to hold business owners and law enforcement responsible for their actions, as well as we protesters. His comments were thoughtful and promising, I look forward to hearing more from him.

I agree with the Race Matters SLO:

Peaceful protesters must not be harassed and intimidated.
Armed people stationed on rooftops are threatenings and will not be

tolerated.

Local law enforcement must thoroughly and fairly investigate this incident.

We are watching you.

Very sincerely,
Beverly Gularte Harben

From: Chris Bersbach
To: [public comment](#)
Cc: Brittany Coates
Subject: public safety threat during peaceful demonstration and police use of force in Arroyo Grande
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:35:47 PM

Mayor Ray Russom and City Council Members,

I am a resident of Arroyo Grande, and during the past two weeks I've participated in peaceful demonstrations for racial justice and police reform in San Luis Obispo County. I'm writing to you today to express my concern that the ongoing peaceful demonstrations are being threatened by armed civilians in our City. Even our trained law enforcement has shown a propensity to escalate non-violent public demonstrations - we saw tear gas used by police on marchers in San Luis Obispo just last week. Allowing armed civilians on rooftops to threaten a lawful, peaceful protest is not a Second Amendment issue - it is a direct threat to our public safety.

I'm requesting the City Council immediately investigate this recent threat to the safety of peaceful protestors, and to provide a transparent report to the citizens of Arroyo Grande detailing what the City is doing to protect our safety while we are exercising our rights to free speech and public assembly.

In addition to addressing this specific incident, I hope the City Council will examine our police use of force policies. The Police Use of Force Project (useofforceproject.org) has identified eight common-sense limits on police use of force that provide meaningful protection against police violence. When fully implemented, these policies can reduce killings by police by as much as 72%:

1. Requiring officers to de-escalate situations by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force;
2. Implementing a use-of-force continuum that limits the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance;
3. Banning chokeholds and strangleholds;
4. Requiring officers to give a verbal warning before shooting at a civilian;
5. Restricting officers from shooting at moving vehicles;
6. Requiring officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to deadly force;
7. Requiring officers to intervene and stop excessive force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor; and
8. Requiring officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians.

For the sake of all our community members, but especially for our black and brown brothers and sisters who are disproportionately impacted by systemic police violence, I'm asking you to immediately implement all eight of these common-sense policies for our local policing.

With respect,
Chris Bersbach
[REDACTED], Arroyo Grande

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Chris Bersbach

mobile: [REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]

Links contained in this email have been replaced. If you click on a link in the email above, the link will be analyzed for known threats. If a known threat is found, you will not be able to proceed to the destination. If suspicious content is detected, you will see a warning.

From: Alexandra Riggle
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: Please agendize letter of opposition to Exxon oil trucking project
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:31:46 PM

I'm writing to ask you to agendize a letter of opposition to the Exxon oil trucking project ASAP.

I volunteer at a wildlife rescue center and have seen firsthand what oil spills do to wildlife. In March of this year a tanker truck carrying 6,000 gallons of oil overturned and spilled into the Cuyama River near Santa Maria. It wasn't long before oiled wildlife started to show up at our rehab center.

If Exxon's permit request is approved, it'll allow oil trucking between midnight and 6am on routes that include narrow, windy, and accident-prone stretches of two-lane highways. This is simply too risky. And it's only one of many, many risks.

Please don't sacrifice the citizens and wildlife of the Central Coast so some Big Oil fat cats can get even richer.

Alexandra Riggle
[REDACTED] (mobile)

From: Andrea Steil
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: Comments for council meeting 6/9
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:28:11 PM

The scene last Friday with hackleman and the barber shop we're ridiculous. Brandishing guns on the roof of your business is a threat and meant to intimidate. Ok so it's supposedly within their rights to do so but it's wrong and not what arroyo grande is about! There was no threat. I can't believe those pictures were from my home town and my city. Not ok. NOT OK!!

- peaceful protesters must not be harassed.
- armed men on the roofs of business are threatening and should not be tolerated.
- has this incident been thoroughly investigated, and investigated fairly?

Andrea Steil

Sent from my iPhone

From: Megan Doty-DeLay
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: Re: The Pit Militia
Date: Tuesday, June 09, 2020 4:24:06 PM

Good evening,

Regarding the vigilante/militia that stood watch with assault rifles and tactical gear during the peaceful protest:

1. The protest was organized and advertised as a peaceful one, and they worked alongside GBPD.
2. The protest was 2-3 blocks away from where these armed vigilantes stood watch due to “fear of looting and vandalism.”
3. It was deemed legal for them to be up there because it was private property...
 - They weren't the actual owners of the property, just the business. Would they have needed permission from the actual owner of the property in order to brandish said firearms?
4. Since this was deemed legal due to being on private property... Is it safe to assume that the next time I am worried someone might come onto my property I can sit up on my roof dressed in tactical gear and toting my assault rifle like I am on a military mission in Kabul?
 - Would the police, who would no doubt be called, be totally cool with me being up there with my weapon? “Oh ya, no problem ma'am! Please, carry on!”
 - If I were black instead of white, would SWAT or at the very least multiple units of back-up not be called? Would I not be arrested for brandishing a firearm?
5. What about every child who saw those men up there and cried “They're not going to shoot us are they mommy?!”
6. If they were THAT afraid of their businesses being looted by a PEACEFUL protest that took place several blocks away... Do the responsible thing... BOARD UP, call the police and ask if they would please keep an eye out for your businesses because you're worried, Sit outside... Maybe empathize with the protesters... Maybe march with them! But if need be, if truly threatened have your weapons INSIDE in case you need them.

Thank you.

Megan DeLay