

CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO PORT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 19, 2020 EMERGENCY PORT COMMISSION MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Port Commission President Kimberly Brandon called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The following Commissioners joined the meeting remotely: Commission President Kimberly Brandon and Commissioner Gail Gilman. Commission Vice President Adams and Commissioner Makras were present. Commissioner Woo Ho was absent.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS – The Port Commission Affairs Manager announced the following:

- A. Announcement of Prohibition of Sound Producing Electronic Devices during the Meeting: Please be advised that the ringing of and use of cell phones, pagers and similar sound-producing electronic devices are prohibited at this meeting. Please be advised that the Chair may order the removal from the meeting room of any person(s) responsible for the ringing of or use of a cell phone, pager, or other similar sound-producing electronic device.
- B. Announcement of Time Allotment for Public Comments: Please be advised that a member of the public has up to three minutes to make pertinent public comments on each agenda item unless the Port Commission adopts a shorter period on any item.

Please note that, during the public comment period, the moderator will instruct dial-in participants to use their touchtone phones to register any desire for public comment. Comments will be taken first from in-person participants then followed by dial-in participants.

Audio prompts will signal the dial-in participants when their audio input has been enabled for commenting. To comply with the declaration of local health emergency regarding COVID-19 and the order of the health officer, it is strongly advised and encouraged that members of the public maintain an arm's length distance between others.

We are not requiring speakers to fill out a card. But rather, speakers can go up to the podium one at a time or queue up in line. But please, maintain the social-distance requirement. Please state your name for the record. The three-minute comment period still applies.

4. DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY PORT COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Brandon – Thank you, everyone, for joining us today whether in person or by phone. The mayor, the State of California and the federal government have declared that the coronavirus pandemic is a public health emergency and ask that people stay at home, which is where I am. The mayor's office has determined that the Port Commission has an urgent need to take action on the matter before us to ensure public health, safety and essential government operations and has authorized the Port Commission to meet on this matter.

Commissioner Brandon - I move that we hold this emergency meeting because the coronavirus pandemic is an emergency that severely impairs public health and safety. The matter before us demands prompt action and is necessary to ensure that there is no disruption or threatened disruption to the public facilities.

Commissioner Gilman – Seconded the motion.

All of the Commissioners were in favor.

5. REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

- A. Request approval of a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to amend a Memorandum of Understanding between the Port and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to expand the bed capacity of the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center due to the need for additional beds during the Coronavirus outbreak. (Resolution No. 20-16)

Randy Quezada, director of communications for the Port of San Francisco - I will provide an overview of the proposed amendment to the Port's MOU with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing for operations at the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center on a portion of Seawall Lot 330.

The commission approved the existing agreement between the Port and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing at the April 23, 2019 meeting. In declaring a local emergency and calling for all efforts to protect the health and safety of the public, the mayor's office is asking the Port and HSH, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, to revisit the agreement for operations of the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center specifically pertaining to the ramp-up period.

The proposed amendment calls for one change to the existing agreement. The proposal is to change the ramp-up schedule articulated on page 10, section 11.1 of the agreement under permitted usages to allow HSH to expand bed capacity beyond the ramp-up limit to accommodate the citywide emergency coronavirus response.

All other terms and conditions originally agreed to on April 23, 2019 would remain the same and not change. Emily Cohen from the mayor's office will

provide a short presentation articulating the urgent need for the amendment as well as an update on Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center operations since the facility started serving people experiencing homelessness on December 29, 2019. After Emily Cohen's presentation, we will both be available to answer any questions.

Emily Cohen, the mayor's policy advisor on homelessness - Thank you for convening today. Thank you for the members of the public who have joined either in person or via phone.

I'm going to walk you through a brief presentation. As Randy said, we are proposing an amendment to the MOU between the Port of San Francisco and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. As many folks know, the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center, which is operated by Five Keys, opened the end of December. It is currently operating at a capacity of 130 people each night.

During the first two months of operations, all placements into the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center were made by the homeless outreach team working in the designated outreach zone in the immediate area of the Navigation Center. San Francisco HOT has two two-person teams working in the outreach zone full time. They have an additional two-person team working the swing shift and one two-person team working on the weekend.

This area is being heavily outreached to, and folks are being invited into the Navigation Center. We've had a tremendous amount of success in engaging folks on the street in the area and inviting them indoors. As folks may remember from the original MOU, we've designated both a safety zone and an outreach zone. Within the safety zone, which is smaller and immediately surrounds the center, SFPD has deployed beat officers to the zone seven days a week.

Five Keys, as I mentioned, is the operator. They've made a phone number available where neighbors can call or text with concerns about the immediate area, the perimeter of the Navigation Center. As everyone in the room or on the call is well aware, we are facing a public-health crisis, the COVID-19 or coronavirus. In response, Mayor Breed declared a state of emergency in February. When I put this presentation together a few days ago, there were 23 positive cases in the city of San Francisco. This, of course, has continued to evolve.

San Francisco has taken serious steps to mitigate the impact of coronavirus on our community including the most recent shelter-in-place ordinance issued by the health officer earlier this week as well as, of course, declaring the local emergency, closing schools, restricting visitation to hospitals and nursing facilities. The big area, of course, for me in my work has been focusing on the potential impact of the coronavirus on people experiencing homelessness or living in other congregate facilities.

We've allocated funding to enhance cleaning and services at permanent supportive housing sites, drop-in centers, shelters, Navigation Centers and other congregate environments. As you can imagine, the coronavirus epidemic represents a significant health risk for people experiencing homelessness. When folks reside in public spaces and in congregate shelters, they have high risk of exposure. People experiencing homelessness also have limited access to preventative measures being recommended including hand washing, home isolation, avoiding high-touch surfaces, etcetera.

People experiencing homelessness are far more likely to have chronic underlying health conditions that make them more vulnerable to the virus. As I mentioned before, we are taking proactive steps to protect the vulnerable populations within the homeless population including expanding shelter, expanding cleaning, resource centers, expanding hours of programs, enhancing meal delivery for people in permanent supportive housing or single-room-occupancy hotels who have been advised to not go out because of their underlying health conditions.

We're expanding a lot of this operation not just to the publicly funded supportive housing but also to privately-owned SROs and then are really increasing our outreach. We've deployed 30 hand-washing stations throughout the city for folks who are unsheltered and then are also bringing online RVs and hotel rooms, places where people can isolate and self-quarantine if they've been exposed to the virus that don't have homes.

Part of our need and part of our strategy for protecting people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco is to expand our shelter capacity. We want to make sure that people experiencing homelessness have safe places to be, ability to access services, hygiene facilities, meals and other basic healthcare.

As Randy mentioned, there are currently 70 empty beds at the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center due to the gradual ramp-up schedule that was outlined in the MOU. So as I mentioned earlier, there are 130 beds currently in operation. That was the agreement for months one through three of the Navigation Center. We're due to expand to 165 beds for months four through six and then up to 200 beds in month seven, which would be July. Given the need we have to expand shelter capacity, we feel we cannot wait until July to have access to the beds -- to additional beds.

The mayor's office, HSH and the Port are requesting an amendment to the MOU to allow HSH to expand the bed capacity beyond this ramp-up limit to accommodate the citywide emergency coronavirus response.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you, Randy and Emily, for your presentation. Is there any public comment in the room?

Elgin Rose - I work for Code Tenderloin. We do outreach with hundreds of homeless people in the Tenderloin community, not just that but it's outreach into

tents and things like that. Seventy beds that's open that could be filled with people that could get rest and could take in information is very important. I think just making people feel like they're part of the population is a key to wanting to get better and take this COVID-19 thing serious.

I definitely am here to support just getting more people in those beds. If anything else that Code Tenderloin can be supportive of as far as addressing the health concerns, we are definitely interested in doing it.

Donna Hilliard - I'm the executive director for Code Tenderloin. And since this crisis hit, we have not shut our doors. We have a serious crisis on the streets. We have people who are out there who don't even know what's going on. We're out there educating them. We're teaching them how to wash their hands. We're giving them soap and water, hand sanitizer. A lot of these people are elder people. These are grandmothers. These are grandfathers. These are handicapped people in wheelchairs. They need some place to go. I walked through the Tenderloin this morning. I saw easily 100 people within two blocks that are living on the street right now who were dirty, who are being exposed. I walked here. I'm walking through the farmer's market. We need to help these people. We need more beds. We had a young man who came to us to our pop-up and said, "You know what? I've been on the street for three years, but I'm scared right now. I want to go somewhere. Where can I go?" We cannot get him into a shelter. That 22-year-old man who finally had a revelation that he wanted to change his life is now still on the street. I'm here in supportive of expanding the beds. I hope that we can move this forward.

Joseph Norris - I also work for Code Tenderloin. I've lived in San Francisco for 26 years. On Monday, I was asked to come to work to get material so that I could work at home. On the way to work at the corner of Golden Gate and Hyde, which is one block from the federal building, there were tents. There was a shooting gallery right on the street. So anybody that's gone through the Tenderloin in the last few years or along Market Street, the BART stations know that San Francisco has been the site of a national health crisis for quite some time and in the last couple weeks have become exponentially worse. Common sense says that, if our most at-risk individuals who already have a compromised immune system cough on our barista -- because thank goodness our Starbucks and Peet's Coffee are still open -- we're all vulnerable. I'm here to say that, as with my coworkers at Code Tenderloin, we work with the most vulnerable and underserved people that are in our city. They need beds. The canary in the coal mine are at Golden Gate and Hyde and Taylor and Jones and Cal Street BART station. We need help.

Justin DeMatra - I'm also an employee at Code Tenderloin as the education coordinator. I'm also a pastor. I'm here to support this, of course, for compassionate reasons. Like Donna mentioned earlier, walking through the Tenderloin not just recently but just walking through the Tenderloin in general having worked in this area for over a year and a half, I see a lot of disparities. I see a lot of crime and pain and hurt. I see a lot of people who want to find a way

into a better life, into a better situation. With what's happening with COVID-19, now they're in even further danger. Every population, every culture, and I feel like the homeless situation in Tenderloin, that's a culture within itself, that environment. It's not just the Tenderloin. You've got people in the Bayview where I grew up. I grew up in San Francisco and people are hurting. Right now, COVID is going after the elderly more than anyone else and especially the homeless. I want to support this effort and say that we should move forward with expansion of the beds and with helping these people as much as possible. At Code Tenderloin, we want to know how it is we can also help this effort.

Amy Quesada - Commissioner, that's the last speaker in the conference room.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you everyone from Code Tenderloin and all that you are doing.

The in-person public comment is now closed. We will open up the phone lines to take public comment from members of the public who are joining us on the phone.

Tedman Eng - Thank you, President Brandon. At this time, we will open the queue for anyone on the phone who would like to make public comment.

Phone Operator - This conference is now in question-and-answer mode. To alert the speaker that you have a question, press one, then zero.

Tedman Eng - Please dial one zero on your phone, and the system will add you to the queue. You will be entered into the system in the order that you dial one zero. The system will let you know when the line is open. Others will wait on mute until their line is open. As with in-person public comment, comments will be limited to three minutes per person. The queue is now open. Once again, please dial one, zero if you wish to make a public comment.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you, Tedman. Do we have anyone on the phone?

Tedman Eng - President Brandon, there are five public comments via telephone.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you. Please open the line to the first caller.

Dana Tedesco - I am a community member in Rincon Hill. I am an immunologist. While I completely understand the need for expanding and the compassionate use of the Navigation Center and from a humanistic standpoint I can be on board, however my biggest concern lies from a public-health standpoint. Specifically, if someone in the Navigation Center tests positive, what is their containment plan? Are all the exposed individuals confined to a containment or an isolation area of the Navigation Center? And do they have an appropriate isolation infrastructure, for example like a pod or some sort of isolation tent?

Additionally, if these individuals test positive or have an exposure, how will they be kept inside and liable to stay inside of the Navigation Center or whatever facility they're in? They obviously should not be allowed to come and go as they please, which includes leaving for drug use. Obviously, this will present a host of health, withdrawal and addiction-care issues on top of the infection, to add to vulnerabilities and put further strain on the immune systems. To my knowledge, I'm not aware of any data about how withdrawal would influence the course of a coronavirus infection or another respiratory virus infection. With that said, I agree that this is a vulnerable population but it could ultimately turn into more of a risk and potentially an epicenter of a new wave of infections in San Francisco. My question for the Port or my question just in general is, what is your plan? How are you going to mitigate any risk?

Tedman Eng - We're moving on to the next question.

Bruce Goldetsky - Does this new amendment allow the city to put more than 200 people in the Navigation Center? Or is it just to expand up to 200? Is there a sundown period? I guess it won't matter. If it's just up to 200, then it doesn't matter because it can stay up at 200. But if it can go over 200, is there a sundown period, in other words, does that end at a particular point in time?

Tedman Eng - Moving on to the next caller.

Florence Du - I have the same concern that the first caller had about the crowding situation in the Navigation Center. Right now, there is a lot of tents on Main Street, as you can see. Most of the residents there are concerned about the virus spreading if they go into a shelter. I'm really concerned about their health situations if they were to be packed in even more, and more beds were to be added. I would like to understand what kind of risk mitigations and procedures are going to be taking place if there are beds that are going to be added.

Tedman Eng - We'll continue to the next caller.

Julia Wen - I am a neighbor of the Navigation Center. I live at the Watermark. I wanted to echo what the callers have stated already. I am also in support of expanding shelter capability in general to help the homeless. But I think that the Department of Homelessness needs to have a plan to mitigate risk to the homeless population while they reside in these shelters. Specifically for the Navigation Center, is it going to be reconfigured to keep the six-foot distance for residents while they're sleeping or interacting? What are the health checks that's going to take place to keep the residents and the staff safe, to determine if they're starting to show symptom? And then also to echo the quarantine issue, if they do start to show symptoms, how are they going to be quarantined and kept separate from the other guests? What are we going to do about the estimated 50 percent of Navigation Center residents that are drug users? If they start exhibiting symptoms or need to be quarantined, do the staff have the capability to treat possible withdrawal symptoms? How are the rules of the Navigation Center going to change to comply with our current shelter-in-place order?

Because even earlier this week, we were seeing needles and people outside using drugs. Those are my questions. I hope Emily can address them.

Tedman Eng - We are moving on to the final phone-in caller here.

Katy Liddell - Good morning. I actually sent a letter in yesterday. I do have some of the concerns that previous speakers have. But in the meantime, we've got 135 people who are there already. We really do need to help these people out. I am also a neighbor. I walk by quite often. It's very quiet over there. I've been inside a couple of times because I've taken over some donations. They've been a very good neighbor. It's been well run. I do encourage you to let Executive Director Forbes give her permission to up the ante to 200.

Tedman Eng - President Brandon, at this time, there are no more members of the public on the phone wishing to make public comment.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you, Tedman. Seeing no more public comment, all public comment is closed.

Randy Quezada – President Brandon, I have an additional letter from Wallace Lee, who I would like to read into the public record with your permission.

Commissioner Brandon - Okay.

Randy Quezada - The letter is dated March 18, 2020. It was presented to President Brandon and the Port Commission. "I am writing on behalf of Safe Embarcadero for All regarding the authorization of an amendment to the MOU for Seawall 330 to allow for the accelerated expansion of the Embarcadero Navigation Center. "We support the actions that the city believes are necessary to control the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 during this public health crisis. We do not oppose the accelerated expansion of the Navigation Center given the circumstances. However, we would be remiss not to bring to the commission's attention the many problems that the Nav Center has brought to the neighborhood even at its current size: a sharp increase in open drug use and improperly discarded syringes; public urination by guests of the Navigation Center; frequent use of Brannan Street Wharf for drug sales and as a chop shop; new encampments from people who say they moved from out of the area to be near the Navigation Center as well as from those who say they have a space in the Navigation Center but prefer to sleep outdoors. Further details about these and other issues can be found in the periodic reports attached, which are also available under the update section of our website, www.safeembarcaderoforall.org. The city and Five Keys must work to keep its commitments to the neighborhood, all the more so with this accelerated expansion. Sincerely, Wallace Lee."

Attached to his letter are several pictures, which have all been provided to you and can be uploaded to the Port's website. And that is the end of Wallace's letter.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you. Randy or Emily, do you want to respond to any of the callers' comments or any of the public comment?

Emily Cohen again - I'm happy to respond to some of the questions. There are some excellent questions around the safety of people in the Navigation Center. I want to assure folks that the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing is working very closely with our Department of Emergency Management and Department of Public Health to improve the safety of all of our congregate facilities including this Navigation Center. So what that looks like is certainly enhanced cleaning of the site, disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, hand-washing stations, encouragement of good hygiene within the facility. We're also working with the Department of Public Health to deploy a health-screening protocol for people coming in to the Navigation Center. So if folks come in, they will be asked a series of questions. If they answer yes to a certain number of them meaning that they have some symptoms, they will be isolated and in an isolated area where they will wait for a health worker to come on site and do a deeper assessment of their healthcare. If they are determined to have symptoms of COVID-19, they will not be permitted into the congregate facility but will be offered alternative housing in a self-quarantine isolation area unless their symptoms warrant hospitalization.

We have procured some RVs, some trailers for this self-quarantine as well as procuring hotel rooms for people who have been exposed to the virus and cannot self-quarantine so folks who live in congregate facilities like homeless shelters. The intent is to do everything we can to remove anybody from the Navigation Center that's displaying symptoms, to have quarantine spaces available for them should they not warrant hospitalization. Of course, if somebody is exposed to the virus, similar precautions will be taken. We absolutely hear that call. We share everybody's concern around the congregate environment. We are working on social distancing within the shelters across our shelter system.

And that will mean generally that we could lose capacity at a number of shelters. That's why we're working to identify so many more facilities where we can spread people out to. These are, of course, for folks who are asymptomatic who have not been exposed to somebody with the virus. For folks who are symptomatic or have tested positive for the virus, we will have an alternative intervention for them. Again, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing is taking the lead from the Department of Public Health on all of these protocols.

We've issued new policies and protocols to all of our shelter management organizations, Five Keys included, so that they are aware of all the resources that are available to them, how to interact with somebody that demonstrates symptoms and how to get them the care that they need. Of course, access to supplies remains a challenge. We're all moving as quickly as possible. But we have deployed hand-washing stations on the street as well as to some of the

shelters that don't have as many sinks and showers as we would like. We're trying to bring in supplemental services.

Randy Quezada - I'd also like to add one additional point to clarify some of the questions about the amendment and what it means. I wanted to reiterate that the proposed amendment calls for only one change to the existing agreement. And that's a change to ramp-up schedule as articulated in section 11.1 under permanent uses. In the presentation, Emily alluded to what that ramp-up schedule would look like. The existing agreement calls for 130 beds for months one through three and for months four through six up to 165 and beginning in month seven up to 200. The proposed amendment would change that ramp-up schedule so that additional beds could be used now. No other terms or provisions of the existing MOU would change.

Elaine Forbes - Just to clarify, there would be no more than 200 beds.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you, Emily and Randy. Is there any other information that staff would like to share before I open it up to the commissioners?

Emily Cohen - As we've been moving very quickly to put this together, I would like to give a huge thank you to the Port staff for putting together this emergency meeting so quickly. I did have the opportunity to talk with the vast majority of the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center advisory group members yesterday letting them know about this amendment. Everyone I spoke to was largely supportive of this work. I want to appreciate the neighbors who recognize that we're in unprecedented times right now and need to pull every lever within the city family to make space available for folks who are experiencing homelessness.

Commissioner Brandon - Thank you so much, Emily. Thank you for all of your work and all your outreach and all that you're doing to support this measure. For the record, I would like to state that Commissioner Woo Ho had a conflict today. But she would like to express her support for more rapid ramp up in the capacity of the Navigation Center given the dire need to help the homeless community in this crisis. I want to make sure that that is part of the record.

Commissioner Gilman - Thank you, Commissioner Brandon. First of all, I want to thank all of our front-line nonprofit workers who are continuing to go to work every day, particularly our emergency services staff. Too often, nonprofit workers are not thought of by the public as first responders. But they're the ones keeping our shelters, our Navigation Centers and our supportive housing operational every day. I want to thank Emily and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing too for your work. I am fully supportive of the item. I just have one question for Emily. Emily, this is just more a sort of prioritization policy question. The governor announced yesterday \$150 million in emergency funding to the counties mostly to procure hotels, as you articulated, for people who need to self-quarantine or who are symptomatic. But he did also call for the

prioritization of people who are more vulnerable to this illness, as example individuals with preexisting health conditions or folks over 60 in the homeless population to be sheltered first. My question is, are you looking at that population first for prioritization into the Navigation Center? Or are you going to continue to use coordinated entry as your tool?

Emily Cohen - That's a great question. Thank you, Commissioner Gilman. We are looking at the governor's guidance that came out yesterday and working with the Department of Public Health to put together our prioritization tool. But absolutely, people in these vulnerable populations, people with pre-existing conditions, people over 65 are our priority to serve shelters and Navigation Centers.

Commissioner Makras - I support accelerating the occupancy for the Navigation Center to the maximum of 200.

Vice President Adams - First of all, I want to thank the community for coming out. I want to thank Mayor Breed for her leadership and for Governor Newsom. This is a situation we must act swiftly. We saw that, with this coronavirus-19 the federal government refused to move in a swift manner. That's why we're behind the eight ball. In San Francisco, this is something that we must do. There was a lot of good questions and a lot of good concern. But this coronavirus is an enemy. It's an enemy that we can't even see it. And this is the life-or-death matter that we're talking about. It's not only a city crisis. It's a national crisis. It's a global crisis. We're talking about our community here. We must act swiftly. I live a block from the Navigation Center and we must provide for the beds and we must move. If we don't, there will be a price to pay for our inaction. I support it. I would ask my fellow commissioners to support it unanimously. Let's send a strong voice that we're united behind our mayor and our governor and the people of San Francisco.

Commissioner Brandon - Emily and Randy, thank you again for this presentation. Thank you for all the work that you've done to bring it to this point. I would like to thank Mayor Breed for having the foresight to have this facility available for our very vulnerable population and to show the need for so many more beds. This is a crisis. Hopefully, we can get out front of this and make sure that this population is taken care of along with all of our other city residents. It's a small part that we can play. I want to thank the community. I want to thank our advisory group. I want to thank everyone who is supporting this item because we really need it.

Amy Quesada – President Brandon, we need to have a roll-call vote for Resolution No. 20-16.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Kimberly Brandon – Aye
Commissioner Adams – Aye

Commissioner Gilman – Aye
Commissioner Makras - Aye

Commissioner Kimberly Brandon - Resolution 20-16 has passed.

6. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Commissioner Adams moved approval to adjourn the meeting;
Commissioner Makras seconded the motion. All of the Commissioners were in favor.

Port Commission President Kimberly Brandon adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.