

Palm Springs Together

Greetings!

Here's the latest on the Palm Springs arena project.

Arena Construction on Hold, But Preparations Have Continued

As you may have read in the Desert Sun newspaper on June 17, construction of the planned downtown Palm Springs entertainment and sports arena is on hold. With the Covid pandemic, the ban continues on large gatherings including concerts and hockey games the likes of which would be held at the Tribe's casino arena.



But even with construction on hold, planning for the arena has continued at various levels. Based on a review of public documents and information obtained from other sources, here's where we are:

The developer (Oak View Group) and the city began **negotiations on a memorandum of understanding** addressing key issues raised by the city last year. If the arena moves forward, we hope and expect that the agreement will be made available for public review, analysis and feedback before any action is taken. The major issues are public safety, including new demands on the city's departments and the impacts on citizens of Palm Springs, and parking and traffic.

In formal communication with the city so far, **the developer has offered to cover the cost of some additional public safety resources, but nowhere near what the fire and police chiefs said last year is needed.** Related, the developer has prepared a report on

the arena's presumed economic and financial impacts, which the city is studying. (Often in these cases developers say that facilities will produce economic activity including direct and indirect tax revenue as a way to argue for decreased public support payments.) We have asked the city to provide this document so that the public can review the assumptions and calculations.

The developer still has not offered to build any new parking downtown or at satellite locations to meet a total parking requirement in the 2,500-3,000 range based on arena capacity. Though some of the locations they've identified for surface parking, including on Tribal land downtown, could result in some net-new spaces not currently available to the public.

The city in March invited outside consultants to study the parking situation and provide recommendations. A variety of responses were received, offering ideas including a residential parking permit program, angled striping on a variety of downtown streets to increase parking capacity beyond parallel parking, time limited parking and paid parking. Our primary concern about parking is that demand for arena spaces will crowd out non-arena patrons of businesses downtown, including bars and restaurants, if no meaningful new parking is created.

The developer has secured **retail space at 125 E. Tahquitz Canyon for a public-facing sales and preview office** to showcase the facility to people who might bring concerts and shows to town.



Mitch Englander, the former Los Angeles City Council member who resigned from his post to join the Oak View Group as a vice president, has **pled guilty in a federal pay-to-play corruption case** in which money and travel were provided to the elected official in exchange for favorable treatment of a developer (Los Angeles Times, July 7, 2020). One of the incidents occurred in a bathroom at the Morongo casino in Cabazon, according to the indictment. The events happened while Englander was a city council member in Los Angeles. He left the Oak View Group shortly before the indictment was made public.

We'll keep you posted on arena-related news, and feel free to share any news with us. Meantime, stay safe, and let's hope we are through the worst of the Covid crisis.

Visit our website at PalmSpringsTogether.org

Palm Springs Together was created to address a social and economic justice issue, and has evolved to support public safety, including reasonable emergency medical response times, infrastructure and other hallmarks of a livable city.