

MINUTES
MERCHANTS & TOWN HALL FORUM

Sponsored by: Sonora Chamber of Commerce
September 26, 2018

1. Attendees (approx. 14) were welcomed by Nancy White from the Sonora Chamber. Local government officials in attendance included Connie Williams-moderator (Sonora City Council Member), Jim Garaventa (Sonora Mayor), Tim Miller (Sonora City Administrator) and Chief Turu VanderWeil.
2. No attendee introductions were performed.
3. City Updates:
 - a. Santa in Courthouse Square
 - The Sonora City Council gave direction to staff to assess putting Santa in Courthouse Square based on an offer from a local landscaper to re-sod the grounds if damage is done as a result of Santa's location. Tim Miller is still trying to reach the landscaper to confirm his offer. Tim believes Santa will be in the Square this year and an assessment on actual damages can then be made. The second choice location is on Jackson Street alongside of the Square.
 - YoGood Yogurt announced that they are in discussions with investors to fund an account to pay for repairs of the sod if needed in future years.
 - The Sonora City Council will be finalizing the location for Santa at their October 1st meeting.
 - b. Dog Stations
 - Tim reported that the City has funding to purchase 15 dog waste bag dispensers (dispenser only, not receptacle). He has sourced black receptacles that are approximately 11x17. They can be affixed to city sign poles or onto waste receptacles. They will be located on/in Coffill Park, Washington Street, at the Farmer's Market, near the public restroom and in the lot on Stewart. There was a request to place one in the Fire Museum parking lot. Exact locations still TBD.
 - c. Trash Cans
 - The Sonora Chamber has solicited volunteers from the downtown merchant community to be part of a team to make recommendations to the City on the location of the waste/recycling cans. To date, only two people have volunteered.
ACTION ITEM: Sonora Chamber will set up a meeting in the next 2 weeks to discuss can locations.
 - Carry over item from prior meeting/not discussed: Tracy Hoyle from Sonora Used Books expressed concern that sometimes cans become full before being picked up and Waste Management wasn't picking up the neatly stacked trash sitting next to the full cans. **ACTION ITEM:** Tim said he was meeting with Waste Management on 8/22 and he would raise that issue.
 - d. Downtown clean-up
 - At a prior meeting, Nancy White, on behalf of the Sonora Chamber, volunteered to contact local service organizations to see if there was interest in developing a regular Saturday street cleaning service project. She reported that rather than that activity, the Sonora Chamber was in discussion with WATCH to see if they could do an additional cleaning on Saturdays. The WATCH program to clean up downtown Sonora is co-sponsored by the Sonora Chamber and the City of Sonora. **ACTION ITEM:** Sonora Chamber to provide update on feasibility of additional cleaning day done by WATCH.
 - e. Parking on Washington Street
 - Connie Williams spoke with Court officials and obtained a copy of the parking instructions given to prospective jurors. The document allows prospective jurors to park in restricted areas (including Washington Street), on their report date. Additionally, Carol Dowd reported that

once selected, Jurors are given a pink parking slip which also allows them to park in restricted areas.

- It was discussed that Juror parking is only one small part of the problem. Business people, particularly those working in law offices on Washington, are also concerning. Police Chief VanderWeil again advised that Merchants should report these drivers to the Sonora PD.
- It was also reported that the new Courthouse near the new Juvenile Justice Center will have a groundbreaking in January 2019 with an expected completion of December 2020. While its completion is more than two years away, it is anticipated that this will have a positive impact on downtown parking spaces.
- It was suggested that the Sonora Chamber of Commerce could send a notification to merchants reminding them where the extending parking areas are located. **ACTION ITEM:** Nancy White will raise this at the next Sonora Chamber meeting.

4. OTHER DISCUSSIONS

- a. Several merchants expressed concern that some sidewalks on Washington Street have become significant tripping hazards due to large cracks or sidewalk shifting (where two pieces of sidewalk come together and are no longer level with each other). It was reported that crews have recently done some repairs. Tim Miller advised that if a crack or sidewalk shift is greater than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, it should be reported to him for correction.
- b. Francisco Caballero from PG&E, Business Energy Solutions provided information regarding energy solutions for business. He advised that a free energy audit can be obtained from PG&E, however several merchants would need to schedule for the same day to make it feasible for a representative to come up here from Merced. For additional info call Mr. Caballero at 209-726-8443.
- c. Several merchants were interested in learning more about solar energy for business.
- d. Nancy White announced a new Business Over Breakfast program that will soon be offered bi-monthly by the Sonora Chamber. The concept would bring in experts to speak on topics of interest to local merchants. The first topic will likely be Loss Control/Theft Prevention. The Chamber is soliciting ideas for other topics of interest. It was suggested that Solar Energy should be considered. If you have ideas, please contact the Chamber at 209-694-4008 or write to info@sonorachamber.org.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10am. The next meeting will be held on October 24th at 8:00am.

Distribution:

Sonora Downtown Merchants Facebook Page
Sonora Chamber website – <http://www.sonorachamber.org/town-hall-meetings.html>
Jim Garaventa, Mayor of Sonora
Matt Hawkins, Sonora City Council
Colette Such, Sonora City Council
Mark Plummer, Sonora City Council
Connie Williams, Sonora City Council
Tim Miller, City Administrator, City of Sonora
Bryan Adcox, Executive Director Sonora Chamber of Commerce
Katie Dunn, President Sonora Chamber of Commerce