

## Summary of San Bernardino County Planning Commission WORKSHOP on the proposed Light Trespass Ordinance, May 27, 2021

All five [Commissioners](#) were present, two online. The meeting was held at the San Bernardino County Supervisors Chambers in San Bernardino.

Chairman Weldy clarified that the intent of the Workshop was to learn from the presenters and ask questions; no actions would be taken. He also described the sequence of presentations to be given and emphasized that as a Workshop rather than a formal Commission meeting, question-asking from the Commissioners would be welcomed throughout the presentations.

The [Staff report](#) presented by Magda Gonzalez provided answers to many of the questions and concerns that Commissioners had expressed at the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting where the ordinance was originally presented. (Both the current and proposed ordinances are included in the Staff report.) The report clarified some details, and included a comparison table of ordinance elements for five regional communities including the City of Twentynine Palms. Another supporting document was a graphic display of Acceptable and Unacceptable lights from the Twentynine Palms ordinance that the Commissioners seemed to find useful.

MBCA President Steve Bardwell and Luke Sabala (retired head of physical science at Joshua Tree National Park), representing the Third District Dark Sky Committee, then did a terrific job of presenting the [PowerPoint](#) developed by the Committee. To meet the Commissioners' concerns, the focus was on demonstrating the benefits of the proposed ordinance for energy and cost savings, safety and security, and health. Climate change, ecosystem disruption, and tourism were also addressed. The Commissioners had a number of questions throughout the presentation, which reflected their attention to what was being presented.

Steve and Luke were then permitted to have the chamber lights dimmed to demonstrate shielded and unshielded lights and two versions of string lights. This was followed by a short overview and summary of the benefits of the proposed ordinance.

Then Ted Stimpfel, a Newberry Springs resident, presented a 15-minute PowerPoint to express his firm belief that the proposed ordinance was unnecessary, discriminatory, expensive, hard to enforce, and otherwise not acceptable.

Public comment followed, all from the Joshua Tree videoconference location. We expect that a video of the entire Workshop will be made available and the link will be added to this document. All community speakers supported the ordinance, and several spoke to specific difficulties with light trespass on their property. Click their names to read comments made by MBCA Directors [Pat Flanagan](#) and [Laraine Turk](#), and community member [Paul Smith](#). Here is the [chart comparing the two ordinances](#) mentioned in Laraine's comments.

Chairman Weldy asked the Deputy Chief of Code Enforcement Ignacio Nuñez for his opinion on and concerns about the Ordinance. He said he actually thought it would make enforcement

somewhat easier and further described the complaint and violation processes. He was generally in favor of the ordinance.

Chairman Weldy allowed a few minutes for Steve & Luke to “rebut” or clarify any points that they wished to in response to Mr. Stimpfel’s presentation, explaining this was comparable to permitting an applicant for development permits to make a final statement.

The closing discussion among Commissioners, along with considerable Q&A with staff and Steve and Luke, included the topics listed below. Commissioners asked staff to work on these items, and it was agreed that staff could email the Commissioners to ask their input on specific items, in preparation for the next presentation of the ordinance.

- The ordinance mostly needs “polishing;” there didn’t seem to be any severe criticism.
- They’d like more clarification on applicability and curfews for the entire County, the Valley area, and the Mountain and Desert region.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> District Supervisor Haughey brought up the wildlife issue.
- Clarification is needed regarding landscape lighting and string lighting.
- There was some comment from the Commissioners that the 2-year compliance period was perhaps too long in comparison to what other jurisdictions used (as noted in the staff presentation) and should be reviewed.

Additional comment via email - [PlanningCommissionComments@lus.sbcounty.gov](mailto:PlanningCommissionComments@lus.sbcounty.gov) - is invited until 5:00 PM on Friday, June 18, 2021. Staff will need about 2 months to work on this in balance with their other issues, and will then present it/recommend it to the Planning Commission. Another workshop is not expected.