



CITY OF OCEANSIDE

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March 24, 2020

Jonathan Markovitz
American Civil Liberties Union
PO Box 87131
San Diego, CA 92138-7131

Via Email Only

RE: Alleged Citation of Unsheltered Persons

Dear Mr. Markovitz:

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding allegations that the City of Oceanside has been issuing citations to unsheltered individuals for “being on the streets.” At this time, the City has not cited any person for violating the Governor’s order to stay at home, to include unsheltered individuals. Moreover, we agree that it would be inappropriate to cite individuals who have no ability to “stay at home” for failing to do so. Please rest assured that no such citations have been or will be issued against unsheltered individuals in the City of Oceanside.

In terms of the City’s continued commitment to the health, welfare and safety of its unsheltered citizenry, the Oceanside Police Department has two Homeless Outreach Teams operating full time, Monday through Friday, during this crisis. Both teams are in the field making daily contacts with our unsheltered residents, providing needed education and access to available services. Enforcement, even within environmentally sensitive areas such as the San Luis Rey Riverbed, has been suspended for the foreseeable future. The primary focus of such operations is now on locating the especially susceptible among the unsheltered population as well as those who may be exhibiting symptoms and to assist them in transitioning to temporary shelter and/or treatment facilities.

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A secondary, albeit equally important goal of these continuing operations has been to educate unsheltered folks regarding the ongoing health crisis as well as the public health orders concerning social distancing and cleanliness in an effort to avoid the spread of the disease among this vulnerable population. OPD is both encouraging and assisting folks in taking advantage of all available resources, including those that have been made newly available. As well, OPD will continue its work with the Regional Task Force to address issues affecting those within the unsheltered population.

That all being said, please be advised that, in responding to your letter, we learned that a single public camping ticket was issued, in error, under the Oceanside City Code on March 9, 2020. That ticket will be dismissed forthwith and additional training will be provided to ensure no similar issues occur going forward. In the meantime, the City will continue in its ongoing commitment to ensure the health and safety of all of its citizens during this public health crisis. Should you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

/s/

Annie M. Higle,
Assistant City Attorney

cc: John Mullen, City Attorney
Deanna Lorson, City Manager
Frank McCoy, Police Chief
Fred Armijo, Captain
Adam Knowland, Captain
Sean Marchand, Captain
Jim Ridenour, Sergeant