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City budget woes mean less for non-profits

Only \$19,000 of nearly \$69,000 in enrichment grant requests awarded

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

The financial hit on Calistoga's economy due to the coronavirus pandemic has reduced the city's philanthropic endeavors.

The Community Enrichment Grant program, which annually doles out some \$30,000 to local non-profits, was reduced to \$19,000 this year despite requests of nearly \$69,000.

The City Council on Tuesday approved the latest round of grants, reviewed and recommended by subcommittee members Gary Kraus, Irais Lopez-Ortega and city manager Mike Kirn.

"It's tough decisions to make," Kraus told his colleagues Tuesday. "Given the guidelines we had and knowledge of this community's needs, I think we made the best decisions we could under the circumstances."

Fourteen groups submitted applications for this year's



PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

Helen Archerd, longtime manager of the Calistoga Cares Food Pantry, is shown sorting groceries in the pantry home – the Rock Room at the Napa County Fairgrounds. The group was given a \$6,500 Community Enrichment Grant from the city.

grant program, the subcommittee reported, requesting a total of \$68,738 in funding.

Six applicants received no funding while seven programs that were chosen for awards received less money than they requested.

The remaining applicant – the new nonprofit Bran-

nan Center – was awarded a waiver of building and permit fees up to \$10,000 for its plan to rehabilitate the Community Presbyterian Church and transform it into a community and performing arts center.

That award was questioned by city councilman

Donald Williams who said approving the grant before the project has been approved gives the impression that the Council has signed off on it.

"I'm generally supportive of the Brannan Center," said

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Closures resume as Napa County virus cases surge

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

As of today, bars, dine-in restaurants, indoor wine tasting rooms and several other types of businesses are closed due to Napa County's increase in coronavirus cases.

On Monday, just hours after reporting 60 new COVID-19 cases, officials announced that the county had been placed on a state watch list and would likely have to scale back its indoor dining and drinking operations as well as movie theaters, museums, card rooms and other indoor entertainment venues.

Brewpubs, breweries and bars were required to close, for both indoor and outdoor service, the county said in a statement issued late Monday. Restaurants would be allowed to continue serving meals on outdoor patios but not inside.

The closure period will remain in effect until at least Thursday, July 30, and could be extended depending upon case data, officials said.

"The County must comply with State required metrics and failure to meet these metrics will result in actions by the State of California to restrict activities in Napa County," said Diane Dillon, chair of the Napa County Board of Supervisors, in a statement. "It is critical that the community

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Gardener Sally Manfredi, left, shows Rosie Dunsford her PVC pipe arch for supporting her tomatoes, which she grows, along with other vegetables, at the Calistoga Community Garden on lower Washington Street adjacent to the Little League field and the Dunawal bike/pedestrian path. Both women have been members of the Community Garden almost since its inception in 2000.



PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

Community Gardens growing strong

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

At the end of World War I everyone in the U.S. was encouraged by the federal government to plant a Liberty Garden to help overcome food shortages, and during World War II National Victory Gardens were planted coast to coast. By 1944 some 40 percent of the food grown in the states came from those small family plots.

Today, facing another crisis in the COVID-19 pandemic, Ameri-

cans are once again turning to their backyards and community gardens to dig into the soil, drop in a few seeds, water and stand back and watch it all grow.

Furloughed workers, telecommuters and parents looking for activities for now-homebound children are shopping online for tools, seeds and liquid fertilizer.

The Calistoga Community Gardens is fulfilling the same role today with 33 plots tended by gardener members and their households, says board president Brian

Fennen. Plots are either 10-feet by 10-feet or 10-feet by 20-feet and have drip irrigation with year-round access. There is no cost to enjoy tending a small garden, and families are encouraged to bring children.

A six-member board decides on the needs of the community garden as a whole: Erika Pusey, Mitchell Eger, Many Ann Duncan, John (and Wanda) Clark, Doug Allen

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Council grants Merchant's appeal of Planning Commission ruling on historic Depot paint colors

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Resort owner Pat Merchant's request to paint the Calistoga Depot two shades of white has been granted.

But only after the City Council this week granted her appeal of the Planning Commission's denial in May to do so.

"I think if Pat Merchant were proposing the color pink or purple or bright blue there might be some merit to this conversation," said vice mayor Michael Dunsford during the council's hearing on the matter Tuesday evening. "There's no entity or agency that's legally binding them to paint it the same color, and there's proof that there was color on that building prior to it being painted gold, or yellow."

Merchant, whose family owns Indian Springs Resort, appealed the Planning Commission decision to the council,

saying commissioners "erred in denying the application" for a "lack of contrast between the proposed paint colors" and for "not considering the original color of the structure."

"There was discussion that the colors I had specified for the building did not have enough contrast and would not highlight the detail of the building," Merchant wrote in her appeal. "I disagree with this decision as I myself own a building at 1323 Cedar Street that is painted white...one color. The detail is very evident. This same idea was used at the Elms, another example of the beautiful preserved buildings in Calistoga painted white."

Merchant also argued that the Depot, built in 1868 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Re-

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