



City of Grover Beach

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 8, 2013

Contact: Robert Perrault, City Manager
Telephone: (805) 473-4567

Grover Beach City Council Denies Appeal Filed by People's Kitchen

GROVER BEACH, CA — On October 7, 2013, after a lengthy public hearing, the Grover Beach City Council denied the appeal filed by the South County People's Kitchen that, if successful, would have kept them operating at their current site through July 2014. People's Kitchen filed the appeal following a September 10th Planning Commission 2-2 decision, which is a non-decision or technically a denial of the Conditional Use Permit application. The South County People's Kitchen is serving meals to between 50 and 100 low income and homeless individuals daily from a County-owned site located at 266 South 16th Street immediately behind the vacant Superior Court building in Grover Beach. In a related action, the City Council did direct the extension of a Temporary Use Permit for 45 days in order to enable the People's Kitchen to make an orderly closing at this location.

The South County People's Kitchen was forced to seek a new location when the Shouts of Grace Church, formerly located at North 7th Street and West Grand Avenue and the home of the People's Kitchen for the past five years, gave up its tenancy and moved out of town at the end of July. In need of a new site, the People's Kitchen turned to the County. The County was able to make available the site on South 16th Street for a nominal lease payment and for a one-year term, provided the use was approved by the City. Subsequently, the City issued a Temporary Use Permit for People's Kitchen, which enabled the People's Kitchen to operate from the site until a determination could be made on the request for a Conditional Use Permit for a longer period of time.

The City Council's decision was made with a 4-1 vote after a lengthy public hearing that lasted the better part of four hours. Council Member Glenn Marshall voted "no" on the motion to deny the appeal and the Conditional Use Permit. During the hearing, testimony was taken from nearly forty individuals who were themselves split on the issue. Several of the speakers praised the People's Kitchen program for its humanitarian efforts in feeding the food-challenged population. Others opposed the location of the People's Kitchen on South 16th Street, citing the fact that the facility attracted the homeless to an area already impacted by the homeless population. In the staff report, City staff had recommended the denial of the long-term permit based on the fact that the use could not be found consistent with the General Plan's designation for that area and the possibility that the additional intensity of the People's Kitchen use could exacerbate a pre-existing problem with the homeless within the area.

The South County People's Kitchen has been operating for the last 21 years and, for most of those years, has operated out of several different locations within Grover Beach.

In making the decision, Mayor Peterson spoke on behalf of the City Council indicating *"We are all so grateful to the People's Kitchen for their incredible service to the community"*. She went on to say *"Grover Beach is compassionate and has hosted the organization for several years. We are facing a community crisis that needs a community solution. We are asking our neighbors for help in solving this difficult problem. Zoning in our small towns often is not able to address the need for transitions between uses, and this is an example of conflicting uses with a residential neighborhood located right next to commercial and government uses with no buffer between them. The location along South 16th Street was not the right location for People's Kitchen, given the intense concentration of businesses, residences, and government services."*

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