



City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: March 2, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Jim Throop, City Manager
j_throop@ci.lompoc.ca.us

SUBJECT: Direction Regarding Complaint from Lompoc Citizens about Noise Emanating from Private Property within the County of Santa Barbara; Approval to Send Letter to County to Address Noise Impacts

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council discuss this issue and:

- 1) Direct the City Manager to send the proposed letter (Attachment 1) to the Santa Barbara County Executive Officer with any modifications approved by the City Council; or
- 2) Provide other direction.

Background:

The City staff has received phone calls and emails and has reviewed a copy of a petition (collectively, Attachment 2) from Lompoc residents living on the eastern border of the City complaining about equipment noise emanating from private property/operations within the County of Santa Barbara (County). The petition was sent to the County directly by those residents. The subject property is a strawberry farm and the noise is due to the operation of heating equipment protecting those crops on cold nights. At the December 15, 2020, City Council meeting, three Council Members agreed to this item being placed on an upcoming agenda for discussion and direction. A draft letter to the County Executive Officer is attached for your review.

Discussion:

Being part of an agricultural community brings with it unusual living experiences. One of those experiences, especially along the borders of the City, which abut active agricultural operations, can be the occurrence of unusual noises generated by those operations. The City understands the importance to the community, as well as the general public, of those operations. The City also understands the expectations the local citizens have to be able to enjoy peace and quiet in the late evening and early morning hours.

The City's noise ordinance (Lompoc Municipal Code (LMC) (Chapter 8.08)) attempts, among other things, to create a balance between those two important aspects of living in the Lompoc Valley. Although the subject noises are generated outside of the City's jurisdictional boundaries, their impacts occur within the City's boundaries; so, the City's noise ordinance would apply.

One option for the City Council is to direct staff to investigate the incidents and complaints and determine whether the pertinent LMC noise provisions are being violated. Depending on the results of that investigation, staff would either pursue enforcement or let the complainants know the City would not be taking any further steps and they would need to handle this matter with the pertinent property/operations owners and the County.

Another option is for the City Council to direct the City Manager to send Attachment 1 (as may be revised by the City Council at this meeting) to advise the County Executive Officer of the City's concerns and the impacts to some residents of the City.

Fiscal Impact:

Finalizing and sending the draft letter would not involve insignificant staff and City Attorney time. If the City Council directs staff to evaluate potential noise ordinance violation and send enforcement letters, if appropriate, to the property owners, or to commence a noise abatement action, then staff estimates that could result in an expenditure of \$500 to \$5,000 in staff time and legal expenses.

Conclusion:

Staff requests the City Council provide direction regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Throop, City Manager

Attachments 1) Proposed letter to County Executive Officer
2) Online Petition and Emails