

PUBLIC COMMENT # 2
UNDER: Agenda Item 13.B

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CITY CLERK'S OFC

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From: Lisa Wong <lisawong12@gmail.com>
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To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment - 13.B

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Public Comment on Agenda item 13.B PUBLIC HEARING: INTRODUCTION ORDINANCE NO. 1865

I recognize that as a private citizen and layperson, I may not be deeply informed of the purpose of the changes proposed in Ordination No. 1865 (item 13B), but am assuming positive intent on the parts of city administrators to benefit us residents. As a community volunteer at a local drive-through food pantry distribution, I have to express concern that the ordinance update seems to exclude the possibility of drive-through food distributions, unless those are allowed without the need of a permit. I would like to hear a thorough layperson's explanation from leadership as to the benefit and value of making this ordinance change.

I know many here on city leadership ran on a platform promoting economic development, business support, and community investment. As a local homeowner, I can appreciate the hard work to grow the local economy and increase property values. I also recognize the resulting upward pressure on the costs of living here, driving up the price of rent, food, and childcare – the basic necessities of a good life. I know it is City Council's responsibility to support revenue streams for the city, and it is City Council's equally important responsibility to champion the safety net for our community, as those who are already living on the margins rely on the safety net of social services to make ends meeting during hard times, which can unexpectedly fall on anyone. Volunteering at a food bank is how I contribute to my neighbors – helping to address local food insecurity on a bi-monthly basis is our small way of helping folks feed their families, perhaps making it possible to make rent and stayed housed, put gas in the car, make it to work, or face an unexpected expense. And let's not forget our neighbors who'll always have a harder time – our disabled and homebound, seniors and elderly, families, veterans, those on fixed incomes and with limited opportunities. Food pantries keep folks at the edge from falling deeper into poverty. Community services like food pantries are needed now more than ever.

Mama Rosa's drive-through distribution happened twice a month, for two hours from 12-2pm, on church property, on Saturdays in our largely vacant civic center area (non-business hours). On our last distribution on 2/17, like the many before it was shut down, ~50 volunteers served 369 families (328 drive-through and 41 walk ups), totaling 1538 individuals, with over 20,000 lbs of food, **in just 2 hours**. The sheer volume of high quality food we can serve to our neighbors in the short two hours is incredibly efficient and effective at tackling an urgent community need. While there are other free food pantry distributions happening throughout the week in Gardena, this is one of the only I know of that happens on Saturdays, which allows me to volunteer regularly, and helps support families that are working M-F to get the food they need. They're able to get enough food to stretch across 2 weeks and many folks carpool to help out their neighbors, like families who don't have cars or need physical assistance with the heavy load. Please consider how eliminating drive-through food pantry distributions could hurt the community and your constituents. While we've been shut down, I know some families are hurting. As we are all

working toward the benefit of our community, let's continue to work together to find the best solution while continuing to serve the basic needs of our vulnerable neighbors. Please consider solutions that will support all channels of food pantry distribution.

Thank you.