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EMERGENCY ITEM AGENDA MATERIAL

Meeting Date: June 9, 2020
Item Description: Emergency Declaration and First Amendment Curfew Criteria
Submitted By: Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn (Author), Councilmembers Ben Bartlett and Kate Harrison, and Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsors)

This item is submitted as an Immediate Action Item pursuant to Section III.D.4.b of the Berkeley Council Rules of Procedure.

In light of ongoing demonstrations throughout California and across the Bay Area in response to illegal police killings of Black individuals, there is a need for immediate action to establish policy on the order, scope, terms, duration and other conditions and elements of curfews in the City of Berkeley.

The Council must immediately take action because demonstrations have occurred in recent days and there is evidence of planning for [additional demonstrations](#) similar to the ones that prompted the recent curfew in the City of Berkeley. Such demonstrations, including potentially challenging situations in which bad actors infiltrate groups of peaceful protestors, can place outsized demands on police and others responsible for ensuring public order and safety. In addition, the City must be prepared to protect the constitutional rights of individuals who wish to peacefully assemble and protest injustices in Berkeley and beyond.

Sadly, we know that unjust and discriminatory killings of Black individuals will continue. According to a Washington Post [database](#) tracking police killings, more than 1000 people have been shot and killed by the police in the past year, with Black Americans killed at more than twice the rate of white Americans. Shocking incidents happen all the time. In the past few days, we have had a slaying in Vallejo and a shooting in Oakland of individuals of color. Because such events occur with sad frequency, protests in opposition could arise at any time as well, potentially prompting the City to seek another declaration of Local Emergency, and curfew. Therefore, new policies must be established immediately.

The Agenda for the June 9 City Council Special Meeting was published on the afternoon of June 2, prior to the meeting at which the Council approved an emergency resolution from the City Manager imposing a curfew in response to scheduled demonstrations. Therefore, the need to take immediate action to establish a policy on curfews came to the attention of the Council after the publishing of the Agenda.



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CONSENT CALENDAR

June 9, 2020

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn (Author), Councilmembers Ben Bartlett and Kate Harrison, and Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsors)
Subject: Changes to the Berkeley Municipal Code and City of Berkeley Policies with Respect to Local Emergency Declarations and First Amendment Curfews

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct the City Manager to return to the City Council for adoption amendments to the Berkeley Municipal Code and/or policies to approve that clarify and codify the following with respect to the declaration of a Local Emergency:
 - a. A Local Emergency can only be declared by the Director of Emergency Services if a regular or special meeting and session of the City Council cannot be called due to physical impossibility of holding a meeting, because a quorum cannot be established, or because the urgency of the Local Emergency is such that waiting 24 hours for the City Council to convene a session and/or Special Meeting would endanger the community;
 - b. Should the Director declare a Local Emergency without action of the City Council (due to one of the reasons stated at (a), above), Council ratification of such action occurs at the first possible opportunity, even if it requires calling a Special Meeting and/or session of the Council; and
 - c. The applicable statutory and legal standards (Federal, State and Local) for calling a Local Emergency shall be presented to the City Council when seeking declaration or ratification of a Local Emergency, along with facts to support meeting those standards, so that the City Council, likely acting under rushed and exigent circumstances, is able to make a carefully considered and fact-based determination that declaration of such Local Emergency conforms with the legal standards and is supported by facts.
2. Direct the City Manager to return to the City Council for adoption amendments to the Berkeley Municipal Code and/or policies to approve that clarify and codify policies, terms and procedures for the order, scope, terms, duration, and all other elements and conditions of curfews called in response to, or likely to have the effect of limiting or banning, planned, expected or reasonably foreseeable first amendment activity,

including rallies, marches, demonstrations and assemblies of all kinds (“First Amendment Curfews”),as enumerated (1-8) under the “Background” section of this item, below.

3. Advise the City Manager and/or Director of Emergency Services that approval of this item represents the will and direction of the City Council with respect to declarations of Local Emergencies and imposition of First Amendment Curfews, and should the occasion to declare a Local Emergency or impose a First Amendment curfew arise prior to formal Council adoption of the requested amendments and policies, the City Manager and/or Director of Emergency Services shall, to the greatest extent possible under existing law, strive to encompass actionable elements, and meet spirit, of this item.

BACKGROUND:

“Those who won our . . . revolution were not cowards. . . They did not exalt order at the cost of liberty. . . . Only an emergency can justify repression [of speech]. . . . The fact that speech is likely to result in some violence or in destruction of property is not enough to justify its suppression. There must be the probability of serious injury to the State. Among free men, the deterrents ordinarily to be applied to prevent crime are education and punishment for violations of the law, not abridgment of the rights of free speech and assembly.” US Supreme Court Justice Brandeis, *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357, 377–78 (1927) (Brandeis, J., concurring)

State law and the Berkeley Municipal Code both include provisions for the calling of a Local Emergency. Once a Local Emergency has been called, the power to impose curfews is in the hands of the Director of Emergency Services (“Director”), with ratification by the City Council.

This item seeks to achieve two goals:

First, the Berkeley Municipal Code only allows the Director to proclaim a Local Emergency if the City Council is not “in session.” If the City Council is “in session,” the City Council must call the Local Emergency. It also requires the City Council to ratify a Local Emergency called by the Director within seven days, or the proclamation has no further effect.

2.88.040 Director of Emergency Services--Powers and duties.

- A. The Director of Emergency Services is empowered:

1. If, in the Director’s judgment, the conditions will require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat, to request the City Council to proclaim the existence of a "Local Emergency" if the City Council is in session, or to issue such proclamation if the City Council is not in session. Whenever a Local Emergency is proclaimed by the Director, the City Council shall take action ratifying said proclamation within seven days of issuance or the proclamation shall have no further force and effect;

This item directs the City Manager to return to the City Council amendments to the Berkeley Municipal Code and/or a policy to adopt that emphasize and clarify that the City Council is the body empowered to call Local Emergencies, and the Director of Emergency Services must present a proclamation of Local Emergency either at a Regular meeting of the City Council, or call for a Council session and/or Special Meeting to be immediately convened, and the Director may only call a Local Emergency himself in circumstances where, despite the requirement to convene the City Council, it is either (1) extremely difficult or impossible for the City Council to meet, such as a major wildfire or earthquake that renders both physical and virtual meetings physically difficult or impossible, or (2) after convening a session and/or Special Meeting, or at a Regular Meeting of the Council, a quorum cannot be established, or (3) if the emergency is so extreme and dangers to the community so grave and imminent that waiting for a Regular or Special Meeting or session of the City Council to be convened would endanger the community.

Further, the item requests clarification that City Council ratification of a declaration of Local Emergency by the Director should take place as quickly as possible, at the first possible occasion that a Special City Council meeting or session can be convened.

Second, once a Local Emergency has been declared, the Director of Emergency Services has the following powers under BMC Section 2.88.04(A)(6)(a):

To make and issue lawful rules and regulations on matters reasonably related to the protection of life, public health or safety, or improved property as affected by such emergencies; provided, however, such rules and regulations must be confirmed at the earliest practicable time by the City Council, shall be in writing, and shall be given widespread publicity and notice

It is according to this power that a curfew can be imposed by the Director.

A second set of BMC amendments and policies will address imposition of certain types of curfews. This item directs the City Manager to return to the City Council for adoption amendments to the Berkeley Municipal Code and/or policies to approve that clarify and codify new procedures and requirements applicable curfews which may be called in response to, or are likely to have the effect of limiting or banning, planned, expected or reasonably foreseeable first amendment activity, including rallies, marches, demonstrations and assemblies of all kinds, hereinafter referred to as "First Amendment Curfews".

Establishment of all curfews impacts constitutional rights, most notably the 5th Amendment protection against government deprivation of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." By limiting movement of individuals during the period of the curfew in the locations where a curfew is imposed, liberty is impacted. Thus, imposition of any curfew and must meet a high standard.

Under any curfew, first amendment activity - free speech - is also curtailed, by implication. If residents are confined to their homes some or all of the day and night due to safety concerns

and dangerous conditions after a disaster, they cannot assemble publicly for any purpose, and their first amendment rights have been curtailed. But there is a difference between a curfew that is called in the wake of a major disaster such as an earthquake or fire, to protect people from dangerous conditions, and a curfew that is called specifically in response to, or anticipation of, first amendment activity. This item asks for amendments to the Berkeley Municipal Code and/or the drafting of new policies that establish higher standards and more robust processes and policies with respect to potential First Amendment Curfews.

After an earthquake, fire, landslide or other major disaster, if a curfew is imposed to avoid the possibility that individuals out at night, for example, will be hurt by falling debris, encounter live electrical wires, or fall into sinkholes, the nexus between potential harm to community members and the calling of a curfew is clear and relatively uncontroversial. The fact that the curfew also precludes a rally, protest, funeral or other assembly is incidental.

But when a curfew is issued primarily to limit or preclude assemblies, free speech and the right to “peaceably assemble” is the direct target of the curfew, and higher standards must apply. The City Council should be the body to review the statutory and legal standards for imposition of a First Amendment Curfew, to review the facts, and to evaluate whether the intrusion on First Amendment rights is necessary to address a compelling interest, narrowly tailored to achieving that purpose, and uses the least restrictive means to achieve the purpose.

Changes to the BMC and/or new policies relating to First Amendment Curfews should include, at a minimum, the following:

1. An assertion or codification that the First Amendment shall not be infringed upon by the City of Berkeley without establishing that the proposed intrusion on First Amendment rights is necessary to address a compelling interest, narrowly tailored to achieving that purpose, and uses the least restrictive means to achieve the purpose
2. Imposition of First Amendment Curfews, if any, shall be by action of the City Council at a Regular or Special meeting, except in circumstances where it is extremely difficult or impossible for the City Council to meet, such as a major wildfire or earthquake that renders both physical and virtual meetings physically difficult or impossible, or if a quorum of the City Council cannot be established, in which case the Director of Emergency Services may impose a First Amendment Curfew that meets the requirements of all applicable Federal, State and local laws, legal standards, and policies. A curfew imposed by the Director must be ratified by the City Council within the following 24 hours, except if it is extremely difficult or impossible for the City Council to meet either physically or virtually, or a quorum of the City Council cannot be convened at a regular or special meeting.
3. A First Amendment Curfew and each and every element of such curfew, including but not limited to the curfew’s physical boundaries; times of day or night; duration; and the individuals/businesses/establishments, modes of transportation, and other activities or

elements to which it applies; shall not be imposed unless specific findings are made, based on substantial evidence, that:

- a. Each element of such curfew is narrowly tailored to meet specific violence or conditions which pose a clear and present danger of imminent violence likely to be perpetrated in each covered location (residential vs. commercial/manufacturing areas, specific residential or commercial/manufacturing areas, specific types of establishments such as bars, dispensaries, big box stores, etc.), using the covered modes (pedestrians, bike riders, people in vehicles, parking, etc.), during the covered times (morning, mid day, afternoon, evening, etc.), for the covered duration (one day, half day, etc.), and in, by or during all other conditions to which the order applies, and
- b. All reasonable alternatives and more narrowly tailored means to avoid or address specific violence or conditions which pose a clear and present danger of imminent violence, as well as any new rules or regulations which may be promulgated short of a curfew in those locations, even if more expensive to deploy, for those individuals and modes, during those times and for that duration, and for all other conditions to which the curfew applies, have been explored and found to be deficient in their ability to address specific violence or conditions which pose a clear and present danger of imminent violence, and only a curfew can reasonably provide for the necessary public safety and welfare.

All reasonable alternative means, considered and rejected, to address threats related to each covered location, population, mode or other condition or element of the curfew, shall be described in the report provided to the City Council upon the Director of Emergency Services' request for Council to impose such curfew, or upon the Director's request for ratification of a curfew imposed by the Director.

4. First Amendment Curfew orders must clearly state and/or designate on a map the specific areas to be covered, list the covered individuals/businesses, modes, times, duration and any other elements and conditions to which the order applies, and explain the specific violence or conditions which pose a clear and present danger of imminent violence, that justify imposition of the curfew to each element of the order. First Amendment Curfews may not be based on fear of violence alone; there must be specific, identified threats and/or a reasonable basis to believe threats might materialize in the locations, at the times, and by the means being banned or restricted by the curfew order.
5. A First Amendment Curfew can provide a specific number of days, or unlimited days, for which the curfew is suggested to apply. However, First Amendment Curfews can only be ordered by the City Council or, if necessary, by the Director of Emergency Services, for one twenty-four hour period at a time, and may only be extended or re-imposed, if at all, through additional action taken by the the City Council at a regular or special meeting or by the Director.

Notwithstanding the above, if, after 7 consecutive days of the City Council issuing daily First Amendment Curfew orders or the Director of Emergency Services issuing daily orders for the City Council's ratification, the Council or the Director wishes, on the 8th day, to issue a First Amendment Curfew order for a period longer than one day, the City Council, by a vote of $\frac{2}{3}$, or the Director, may issue or ratify curfew orders of up to 7 days in duration.

6. An overall finding must be made by the City Council or Director, in imposing a First Amendment Curfew, that reasonable alternative measures that burden substantially less speech would fail to achieve the City's interests, even if more complicated or costly to implement, and the added value of the curfew will make a substantial positive impact on public safety without unduly impacting rights guaranteed under local, state and federal laws, and in particular the First, Fifth and Fourteenth amendments of the US Constitution.
7. To the greatest extent possible, First Amendment Curfew orders shall refrain from using vague standards for enforcement and exemptions, that may result in selective, disparate or biased enforcement.
8. To mirror the notice requirements of Berkeley Municipal Code Section 2.88.040(6)(a), which requires "widespread publicity and notice" of a declaration of Local Emergency, and to meet ensure that a First Amendment Curfew is only enforceable against individuals who do not obey the curfew "after due notice, oral or written, has been given to said persons," and, to the greatest extent possible under the time constraints and physical conditions (lack of electricity or internet, widespread destruction in the event of a sudden wildfire or earthquake, etc.) which exist at the time a First Amendment order is ordered, the City of Berkeley shall publicize the First Amendment Curfew through, at a minimum, the following means:
 - a. By posting a notice at all locations where formal notices are regularly posted
 - b. By posting a notice prominently on the Home Page of the City of Berkeley website and on other appropriate pages of the website
 - c. By publicizing notice of the order through major City of Berkeley and police department social media accounts
 - d. By providing a copy of the notice to a broad array of traditional Bay Area media outlets including paper and online newspapers, radio and television stations, and other similar media
 - e. If the order applies only to specific locations within the City of Berkeley, by posting temporary signs on street fixtures and poles in such area(s), and in particular at major entrances to such areas such as on arterials and collector streets as they enter such restricted areas.
 - f. And by other means of broadcasting notice of the order to the general public.

In addition, notice and a reasonable opportunity to comply with the curfew (a “warning”) shall be provided to all individuals against whom enforcement is contemplated, by announcing the order through amplified communications and providing a verbal warning and reasonable opportunity to comply before enforcement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost of holding additional virtual or in-person meetings of the City Council to ensure rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America are upheld in all actions to declare Local Emergencies and impose First Amendment Curfews in the City of Berkeley.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ATTACHMENTS

1. ACLU of Northern California’s June 3, 2020 letter to Alameda County Sheriff Ahern
2. Karen J. Pita Loor, *When Protest Is The Disaster: Constitutional Implications of State and Local Emergency Power*, 43 SEATTLE U. L. REV. 1 (2019)

