★ MED+MART Exclusive ★
STAIRLIFTS
#1 STAIRLIFT WARRANTY IN THE INDUSTRY!
$100 OFF

When you use promo code: PAPER20PLUS

SHOP OVER THE PHONE OR ONLINE
ASK THE EXPERTS
Mon.-Fri. 9am-6pm • Sat. 9am-4pm
Family Owned and Operated Since1994
MED+MART
So you can...™
866-751-4471
WE HAVE PPE IN STOCK! MASKS, THERMOMETERS, GLOVES AND MORE BULK DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE
UP TO 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE FINANCING • BEST PRICE GUARANTEE!
5% OFF MedMart.com when you use promo code PAPER5MM
DS-GCI0482207-02

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 | DESERTSUN.COM
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

The Desert Sun

Oak View Group and the H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation announced plans Wednesday to build a sports and entertainment arena on land between Interstate 10 and the Classic Club golf course. This drone photo shows the proposed site looking north.
OMAR ORNELAS/THE DESERT SUN

ARENA ON THE MOVE

Planned Palm Springs sports, entertainment venue moving near Palm Desert; tribe no longer involved

Amanda Ulrich, Melissa Daniels and Shad Powers
Palm Springs Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

A little more than a year after the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the Los Angeles company Oak View Group announced plans for a $250 million sports and entertainment arena in downtown Palm Springs, officials confirmed that the site of the project is moving to the mid-valley — and the tribe is no longer involved.

The 10,000-seat arena is now planned for an unincorporated piece of land just north of the city of Palm Desert, on roughly 43 acres between Interstate 10 and the Classic Club golf course. The new location is a short drive from both the internationally renowned estate Sunnylands Center & Gardens and Agua Caliente's Rancho Mirage casino.

Oak View Group (OVG) is moving ahead on the privately funded arena with a new partner: the H.N. & Frances C. Berger Foundation, a local nonprofit that owns the land and will lease it to OVG. Live Nation Entertainment, a leading global event producer, remains a partner on the project to bring touring artists and live events.

Groundbreaking and construction are scheduled for next year, and the arena is slated to open in the last

See ARENA, Page 8A

Seattle Kraken AHL affiliate will still play in valley

Shad Powers Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Hockey fans in the desert will still have a team to call their own, they'll just have to wait another year to see them.

As first reported by The Desert Sun, the arena that was planned to be built in downtown Palm Springs as the home to an American Hockey League team affiliated with the NHL's Seattle Kraken has been nixed.

See HOCKEY TEAM, Page 8A

This rendering shows the proposed arena planned for an unincorporated site north of Interstate 10 near Palm Desert. COURTESY OF OAK VIEW GROUP

Q&A PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERT

What does state's COVID-19 reopening framework mean?

Mark Olalde Palm Springs Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

After spending a long summer fighting to fix a stalled coronavirus testing regime, a broken public health data collection system and recovering from a post-Memorial Day surge in COVID-19 cases, the Golden State appears to once again be headed in the right direction.

California had 7,170 hospitalized patients who were confirmed to have COVID-19 on July 21 — a low point — but that number, as of Sept. 14, had dropped to 2,887. After two spikes in cases over the summer, the average number of newly confirmed infections has dropped to a level not seen since mid-June.

Harnessing that momentum, Gov. Gavin Newsom recently unveiled a new framework that moves counties through four color-coded stages of reopening based on their recent per-capita case counts and recent positivity rate, which is a measure of how many

See Q&A, Page 10A

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT CALIFORNIA, 7A

Observatory spared from wildfire

Firefighters have stopped a wildfire from damaging the historic Mount Wilson Observatory, which played a pivotal role in confirming that galaxies exist outside the Milky Way. PWREN/ALERTWILDFIRE VIA AP

USA TODAY

Vaccine strategy aired amid political questions

The government outlined a sweeping plan Wednesday to make vaccines for COVID-19 available for free to all Americans, assuming a safe and effective shot is developed, even as top health officials faced questions about political interference with virus information reaching the public. Federal health agencies and the Defense Department laid out complex plans for a vaccination campaign to begin gradually in January or late this year. **11A**

La Quinta residents rally

A group of residents is urging the city to install a crosswalk at Adams Street and La Palma Drive. They say motorists ignore the 25 mph speed limit and posted signs warning of pedestrian traffic. **3A**

desertsun.com
Subscribe: Access to all of our content every day.

Weather
High 110° ▮ Low 80°
Sunny. Forecast, **14A**

Volume 93 | No. 337
SERVING THE COACHELLA VALLEY SINCE 1927 **$2.50**

0 40901 08201 9

Arena

Continued from Page 1A

Arena

quarter of 2022.

The Seattle Kraken's American Hockey League team will play in the facility once construction is complete.

In an interview with The Desert Sun, OVG CEO and co-founder Tim Leiweke explained how the company's partnership with Agua Caliente "ultimately unwound" and discussions began with the Berger Foundation, a group that Leiweke said he's known for years. Concerns about parking and traffic also bogged down the Palm Springs plans.

The tribe faced "a moment of truth" when coronavirus first hit in March, Leiweke said. As the virus forced the tribe's casino properties in the Coachella Valley to close alongside other local businesses, the arena project also paused.

Around April, Agua Caliente "came back and just said, 'This is not something we can commit to today. Because of what's going on (with COVID), our priorities have changed,'" Leiweke said. "So, we acknowledged that and said, 'Okay, but we can't sit around and wait because unfortunately for us, we got the clock ticking on an American Hockey League team."

The tribe declined a request for comment Wednesday from The Desert Sun.

Agua Caliente Chairman Jeff Grubbe said in a press release that the tribe "re-evaluated its economic development priorities" and is instead focusing on its new casino in Cathedral City and cultural center in downtown Palm Springs.

"After working together for more than a year to put a joint-venture project together, and then another three months to negotiate a land lease, we couldn't find that common thread to reach an agreement for the arena project," Grubbe said.

Palm Springs hospitality leaders had hyped up the project for its proximity to the Palm Springs Convention Center, noting an ability to incorporate the arena into potential group meetings. Aftab Dada, chair of the PS Resorts hotel group in Palm Springs, said while the new location will prevent a close collaboration, keeping the project in the desert is a big win for the area. Palm Springs hotels, for example, already fill up for other major desert events like the music festivals and the BNP Paribas tennis tournament.

"As long as the arena is being built in our destination, that's a plus-plus-plus," Dada said.

A cyclist rides his bike along Varner Road near Classic Club Boulevard in Palm Desert on Sept. 15. Oak View Group and the H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation announced their plans to build a sports and entertainment arena on unincorporated land between Interstate 10 and the Classic Club. PHOTOS BY TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

The arena will be built on land previously identified to house a sprawling, 12,000-seat sports complex.

How this changes arena timeline

The arena was originally expected to open by fall 2021 in time for the hockey season — a timeline that is now extended by a year.

The arena in its new location will still house an American Hockey League team that will be an affiliate of the NHL's Seattle Kraken. While the Kraken, a new NHL expansion team, will begin play in the fall of 2021, the Palm Springs AHL affiliate will not start playing until the 2022-23 season.

Leiweke said that it has not yet been determined what the team will be called or if it will still use "Palm Springs" as part of its name with the arena now being built in an unincorporated part of Riverside County.

He added that he was happy with the enthusiasm shown by desert hockey fans, evidenced by the 2,500 or so deposits that were put down for season tickets.

The details of the project remain much the same as the arena planned for Palm Springs. Most notably, that includes a second sheet of ice which will act as the practice rink for the team and a public skating rink for things like youth hockey and figure skating.

The arena will be built on land previously identified to house a sprawling, 12,000-seat sports complex. That proposed complex, called The Shield, was set to be built by a group called the Coachella Sports and Entertainment Stadium Authority on 125 acres of land owned by the Berger Foundation.

Doug Vance, the foundation's vice president of real estate, said the foundation and group mutually parted ways about four months ago after they couldn't come up with a path forward during two years of negotiations.

The foundation started working with OVG earlier this summer, Vance said, and jumped through a lot of the normal hurdles because the foundation has been preparing it to house a project like the arena since purchasing the land in 2003.

"We've done a lot of the pad work and utility work and offsite improvements for streets," Vance said. "That expedites exactly what Tim (Leiweke) needs to meet his timeframe. We have a shovel-ready pad. ... It's been over-excavated, re-compacted, certified, grating permits, we've been working for years on this development.

"They needed a place where they could have an advantage in speeding up the timeframe and this met all their criteria."

Parking, traffic concerns impacted Palm Springs plans

The arena was initially planned for a mostly undeveloped section of Agua Caliente tribal land bordering its Palm Springs casino. That area, which was predominantly parking lot space, is slowly returning to its former use. A local landscaping company was re-planting trees there last week after removing them to make way for construction in January.

Leiweke said he understood that the community surrounding the downtown site didn't like the parking options as they were presented; hundreds of people attended a public hearing last

See ARENA, Page 9A

Hockey team

Continued from Page 1A

However, Oak View Group has chosen to keep the arena and the hockey team in the Coachella Valley, now building its 10,000-seat venue in an unincorporated area north of Interstate 10 near Cook Street in the mid-valley.

The original plan was to have the AHL team debut in Palm Springs for the 2021-22 season. That is no longer an option. The arena at its new location is scheduled to break ground in 2021 and be ready in late 2022, in time for the AHL's 2022-23 season.

Instead of finding an alternate site for a year, Tim Leiweke, CEO of Oak View Group, said the Kraken will not have an AHL affiliate play during the 2021-22 season and will wait until the following season. He noted that the Las Vegas Golden Knights, the most recent NHL expansion team before the Kraken, didn't have an AHL team until year three of its existence.

"Our plan is that the arena's going to open in time for the AHL 2022-23 season, that's the current target," Leiweke said, adding that the players that the Kraken draft in 2021 will still see action even without an affiliate team. "So they'll have two or three young kids that they may lend out to somebody for a year, which is what Las Vegas did. I believe that my brother (Tod Leiweke, CEO of the Seattle Kraken) and Ron Francis (General Manager of the Kraken) are thinking that that's the way they're gonna handle this as well."

So the players the Kraken acquire over the next year will be sprinkled among other AHL teams for the 2021-22 season.

"It's pretty typical, especially for an expansion. It's nothing that hasn't been done before, so they will adjust accordingly, and we'll still have great players to develop, they'll just be playing elsewhere," said Nick Forro, who was appointed the president of AHL Palm Springs in April. "And then they'll return home to Palm Springs once we're ready to kick off."

One of the reasons OVG didn't hesitate to remain in the valley with a future arena and hockey team is the reception they have received from local hockey fans. Leiweke said around 2,500 deposits and season tickets were purchased in anticipation of the team playing in Palm Springs.

For anyone who put money down to reserve season tickets and no longer wants them with the change in location and the extra year's wait, a refund will be made.

"Yeah, we had about 2,500 season tickets sold, quite a few of those are club seats. So we literally have a waiting list on premium seats that's almost going to fulfill all of the inventory that we have," he said. "We'll be contacting all of those folks (Wednesday). If they bought season tickets or premier seats because of the downtown Palm Springs location, and they want a refund we obviously will 100% do that. If they want to hang in there with us, and I think almost everyone will, then we'll just roll it over and they'll start in the 2022-23 season."

The details of the project remain much the same as the arena planned for Palm Springs. Most notably, that includes a second sheet of ice which will act as the practice rink for the team and a public skating rink for things like youth hockey and figure skating.

That component will be even more critical than it was in the previous incarnation because the desert's only other rink, Desert Ice Castle, shuttered its doors in May, leaving desert hockey players and skaters with no place to play.

Jeff Larson, director of the desert's top youth hockey club Desert Blaze Hockey, said the fact that the arena and hockey team are staying in the desert is a huge development for the hockey families of the desert.

"We were very worried," said Larson, of the notion that a desert hockey arena might not happen after all. "It's a game-changer to us and this and OVG staying here will basically save hockey in the desert. Kids were already scrambling and going to other cities to find ice time. It's not been great. Without a place to skate in the desert, there's no hockey in the desert."

Larson said many of his youth players had to drive more than an hour to Orange County or Riverside or Ontario, just to practice for an hour, and then drive back. That will still be the case until the arena is built, which now won't be until 2022, but having this light at the end of the tunnel will help keep the hockey spirit alive in the desert, Larson said.

"It's already been a strange year, with COVID-19. We've had to push back the season and push it back again," he said. "We're just trying to keep kids in the game, keep them excited about hockey and keep the sport alive in the desert. Having an AHL team and a new arena and new rinks coming to the desert definitely helps."

Larson said another plus is that the arena will likely draw youth hockey tournaments and events, which will make the desert's stamp in the hockey world even larger. Also the mid-valley location will help cut down drive time for many of the players who live in Palm Desert or La Quinta.

According to Forro, the partnership between the team and the youth hockey community will be integral.

"The youth hockey community has been devastated with the Ice Castle closing so us coming in and working together with them is going to be really important and powerful," Forro said. "I've got young kids 10 and 8 years old, and if their sports were taken away ... and hockey isn't one of those sports where you can just go play in any field like soccer. It's tough and these families are ingrained and they'll travel far lengths, so we're excited to have this community sheet of ice and work together with them."

Hockey team name

One of the hot topics for local hockey fans was always what is the desert AHL team going to be called. The team has filed trademarks for six names including Firebirds, Dragons, Sun, Eagles, Hawks and Falcons.

But now both parts of the name are up in the air. Forget about the mascot name, will the team still even be called Palm Springs now that the arena will be built in an unincorporated part of Riverside County near Palm Desert and Thousand Palms?

It was announced in July that the Seattle NHL team would be called the Kraken, a mythical squid-like underwater monster. Will the desert's team name in some way be connected?

Leiweke said that both parts of the team's name are still to be determined, but that whatever it is it will represent the entire valley.

"We want to work with the Kraken to come up with a brand that is equally as unique and equally as important to the Coachella Valley," Leiweke said, later adding. "Whether it's Palm Springs or Palm Desert, we represent the whole valley. Our season ticket holders are from the valley. ... Now, what we call it is to be determined. We've been focused on getting all these agreements done. And so I think our next process will be geared towards the branding. Whether we call it Palm Springs or Palm Desert, the reality is we're the valley's team."

With a nod toward his brother Tod who was with him on a Zoom call with The Desert Sun as the two watched an NHL playoff game from a Seattle Kraken merchandise store, Leiweke said that he's hoping to push him to get the Palm Springs team name out by the holidays. It was presumed he meant the holidays of 2020.

Shad Powers is a columnist for The Desert Sun. Reach him at shad.powers@desertsun.com.

The cost of the arena and related parking infrastructure could also be about $10 million less than expected, partly because of a general lull in construction during the pandemic and more competitive pricing. TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

Arena

Continued from Page 8A

December, and many residents gave criticism about the project.

"Did we change our direction that night? No, we had an obligation and a commitment to our partners in Agua Caliente," Leiweke said about the December meeting. "But then when the coronavirus came along, and then when they changed as to their direction and priorities as a tribe, it gave us a chance to take a step back."

Now, all parking for the new arena location will be contained onsite. Access to the facility, right off the highway, will be easier in comparison to weaving through smaller Palm Springs roads and neighborhoods.

The cost and related parking infrastructure could also be about $10 million less than expected, partly because of a general lull in construction projects during the pandemic and more competitive pricing, Leiweke said.

"I hope people realize we listen, we heard what the community wanted. They wanted us to be self-contained," he said this week.

Ron Willison, who lives in the Palm Springs Deauville, a condominium complex behind the Agua Caliente casino, said Wednesday that the arena was a concern for him and many of his neighbors. Willison said he believes OVG made a wise decision to relocate.

"(Agua Caliente) have always been good neighbors here," Willison said. "I'm thrilled to see what's going up with the museum and the spa, but that was just not a great location."

Ellen Sopkin and her husband own a home on North Vía Miraleste near Alejo in the Movie Colony, and said she "can't be happier" after hearing news. Concerns over the arena almost made the couple put their home up for sale.

"The streets are way too small for that many cars," Sopkin said Wednesday. "People are just not that nice when it comes to those events and they're going to be drinking. You think about that when you leave a game at Dodger Stadium, and that's quite a neighborhood when you're trying to get out."

Another potential issue centered around additional public safety costs associated with arena events. Palm Springs' fire and police departments said last December that they would need nearly $20 million for new equipment and facilities, plus an additional $3.6 million annually to increase staff.

Agua Caliente had ultimate authority for all land-use decisions on its reservation as a sovereign nation, but there was a process for the city to make recommendations. The city made 81 planning recommendations to the project, of which the tribe accepted 69.

Palm Springs Mayor Geoff Kors said Wednesday that while Palm Springs was working with the tribe and OVG to address details like traffic, parking and public safety, it was not involved in the decision to move locations.

"I think there were benefits to having it in downtown Palm Springs and a number of issues that needed to be resolved if it were to be in downtown," he said. "The city has no say in where they decided to build it."

Arena could drive Palm Desert economy

Palm Desert Mayor Gina Nestande said the arena will be an "economic driver" for her mid-valley city, which is home to two university campuses and the McCallum Theatre.

"As people come to this hockey stadium, they'll also need a hotel to stay in or they'll go visit a restaurant or any of our fabulous businesses that are located near there," said Nestande, who was approached by the Berger Foundation as a courtesy in terms of any impact the arena, situated off the I-10 Cook Street exit, might have on the city.

Over the past few years, the city has seen hotels go up in the Cook Street area, including a Fairfield Inn and Hampton Inn & Suites with more planned near the DMV. Cook Street is also home to CSU San Bernardino and UC Riverside campuses.

Since the CSU San Bernardino satellite campus opened in 1986, the city has worked toward making it an independent Cal State university. Nestande sees the arena as another plus in trying to achieve that goal.

"The more we can drive people to come to our area here ... the more likely we are to get students to attend Cal State," Nestande said.

While the new arena is sited less than 10 miles from the McCallum Theatre, which features touring Broadway musicals and other musical artists, Chairman Harold Matzner said he doesn't have concerns about the close proximity.

"They're playing a completely different genre (of music) they have a lot of overhead for, and they're not going to open it for most of the (acts) we have," Matzner said. "I think it's wonderful for the valley. That kind of a facility is part of the valley growing up."

How does this change review process?

The site of the proposed arena is unincorporated land just south of the Coachella Valley Preserve, and is already part of a prior master plan that Oak View Group officials say previously went through a lengthy environmental review process.

To get approval to move forward, they've submitted an addendum to that plan that will have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Leiweke doesn't expect to run into environmental concerns or have a need for habitat mitigation. "Because of the master plan and all the work that's been done by the Berger Foundation Foundation, the site's clean," he said. "There's no hazard, no cleanup, no remediation of any kind."

OVG also doesn't have to start from scratch on the design of the building, which will be similar to the Palm Springs proposal. That building was going mostly underground to preserve sight lines of the mountains, but due to an existing flood plane at the new location, it will be more elevated.

"The look of the building is very similar to what we already have designed," Leiweke said. "So, we just essentially moved and did adjustments to make it work on the site, but it's going to give us a much quicker process because we're so far down the road with all of our planning and all of our design development."

David Freedman, a member of the Palm Springs Sustainability Commission, played an active role in building environmentally-friendly recommended alternatives for the Palm Springs iteration of the arena. He said the move means there will be a "load of cars that aren't going to be idling around Palm Springs, looking for a parking space."

He labeled that fact the "largest environmental win for Palm Springs," though he cautioned that the greenhouse gas emissions, while moving away from the population center, won't actually decrease because people will still need to drive there.

The future of the arena's location in Palm Springs first came into question in June, when Leiweke confirmed that plans were on hold amid the pandemic.

Before this week, one of the last official announcements about the project came in February, when the arena's groundbreaking was delayed due to "extenuating circumstances," according to the tribe. Vance, the Berger Foundation's vice president, noted that without the land and environmental review already in place, it's likely that Leiweke would've had no choice but to take the entire project out of the valley.

"If the Berger Foundation hadn't prepared the land for something like this, they would have not been able to meet the timeframe and we would have lost them for the project and the valley," Vance said. "To capture them and keep them here, ... I was so happy to entertain the idea that's now come to fruition. The tax revenue that the county and the community and the valley are going to experience are going to be second to none."

Staff reporters Sherry Barkas, Brian Blueskye and Mark Olalde contributed to this report.

Timeline: How the planned Palm Springs arena moved

The Oak View Group — which in 2019 unveiled plans to build a hockey and entertainment arena in downtown Palm Springs — announced Wednesday that it's relocating its project east to a parcel near the Classic Club golf course and Interstate 10.

Oak View had previously planned to partner with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, but the tribe is no longer involved with the project. Instead, Oak View said it is partnering with the H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation, which supports educational and other charitable projects, on the new iteration of the arena.

The land near the Classic Club had previously been identified for a proposed indoor stadium project called The Shield. The property is owned by the Berger Foundation.

The proposed arena is to be occupied by an American Hockey League team and set to open in 2022. Here's a timeline of events of the Oak View Group arena project and The Shield proposal.

July 19, 2018: J. David Miller, the founder and coach of the SoCal Coyotes developmental football team in the desert, and a group called the Coachella Sports and Entertainment Stadium Authority, announced plans to build a $300 million, 12,000-seat mixed-use stadium in Thousand Palms that would be called The Shield at 1 Coyote Way. The proposed sports complex would include a hotel, medical facilities, a senior living village and retail, and be located on 125 acres of land owned by the Berger Foundation in the area between The Classic Club golf course and Interstate 10. The stadium had a proposed 2021 completion date.

May 28, 2019: Tod Leiweke, the chief executive of the newly created National Hockey League team in Seattle, confirms in an iHeartRadio interview that Palm Springs is one of two markets, along with Boise, Idaho, being considered for a team in the American Hockey League.

June 26, 2019: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the Oak View Group announce a $250 million, 300,000-square-foot sports and entertainment arena in downtown Palm Springs on 16 acres of tribal land downtown off Calle El Segundo, just north of the tribe's casino. Oak View Group and the Seattle NHL partner to submit an application for its AHL affiliate play in the arena. Live Nation Entertainment also signs on as a strategic partner to provide a large stable of top touring artists and premium live events.

July 3, 2019: Following the announcement of the Palm Springs arena, J. David Miller says he sees the announcement of a new 10,000-seat arena for downtown Palm Springs less as competition for his project and more as a complement. "We're flattered that they validated the sports tourism report that we authored," said Miller. The only update Miller shares is that he believes The Shield stadium, originally planned for 12,000 seats, will be expanded to 14,000 seats. A rendering is released of the proposed stadium and there are no further updates on when the project will break ground.

July 8, 2019: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians prepares an environmental study for board members to evaluate looking into potential effects related to aesthetics, air quality (including greenhouse-gas emissions), cultural resources, energy, water, land use, noise, public services, transportation/traffic and utilities related to the arena.

July 12, 2019: The Desert Sun queries a number of experts who study sports and entertainment facilities, as well as Tim Leiweke, the CEO of Oak View Group, about how they think the arena could affect local businesses. Leiweke says the arena could bring $100 million to the Palm Springs economy each year, but economic studies have found that building sports facilities has little to no positive relationship with economic growth and development.

July 23, 2019: The NHL team in Seattle announces its official name, the Kraken, which is an octopus-like sea monster of legend.

Aug. 14, 2019: Oak View Group files a trademark for "Palm Springs Firebirds" as a potential name for its AHL affiliate.

Sept. 2, 2019: Palm Springs Mayor Pro Tem Geoff Kors and City Councilman J.R. Roberts host a community meeting at the Palm Springs Convention Center with about 100 attendees, who share concerns over parking and traffic. Roberts admits he doesn't love the proposed location for the arena. "I'm not going to pussyfoot around — I'm not happy the arena is this close to town," he said. "I'd be much happier to see the arena closer to the freeway and out of town. We just don't get a choice in that."

The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians announces the following day it will have a "comprehensive parking plan" to support the arena.

Sept. 20, 2019: The Desert Sun uncovers planning documents revealing onsite parking spaces would accommodate less than 1% of a full house at the proposed arena.

Nov. 8: A new report anticipates heavy traffic at intersections in the heart of Palm Springs before and after events at the planned arena.

Dec. 2: The City of Palm Springs releases a report examining the potential public safety, parking, traffic and environmental effects of the arena project. Palm Springs would possibly need parking meters, residential parking permit systems, and changes to on-street parking times to handle the influx of people streaming downtown for events at the arena. The report also indicates that the city would try to come up with ways to generate revenue from the development even though it is on tribal land, and therefore not subject to taxation.

In addition, Palm Springs' fire and police departments say they need nearly $20 million for new equipment and facilities, and $3.6 million annually to bolster staff at the beginning of the next fiscal year, to prepare for the downtown arena project.

Dec. 4: A Palm Springs city staff report indicates the arena will need almost 12 million gallons of water each year to accommodate an AHL affiliate team and other events, and outlines other environmental concerns. It makes recommendations for clean energy, reducing dust and traffic pollution, and other measures.

Dec. 5: The Palm Springs City Council unanimously approves a resolution urging developers of the arena project to build onsite parking and work with the city to mitigate other arena impacts. A standing-room-only crowd of more than 300 people gathered at the Palm Springs Convention Center laugh and boo during a discussion of parking solutions. Palm Springs Mayor Geoff Kors makes it clear the city can only make suggestions — not requirements — regarding the arena on tribal land. "The tribe is a sovereign nation and they get to build what they want on their land," he said.

Tim Leiweke pledges to work with the city and the community, pointing to his experience developing 18 arenas and stadiums in other cities. "We have always forged a relationship with the community," Leiweke said. "We have always listened to their issues. We have always done everything we can to provide minimal disruption to their quality of life."

Dec. 16: Oak View Group names John Bolton as its general manager of the Palm Springs arena.

Jan. 6: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians rejects recommendations from the city to put all required parking spaces onsite and to redirect patrons away from city parking lots and garages. The tribe states it would direct Oak View Group to negotiate with the city over millions of dollars in police and fire upgrades the city says are needed for the arena.

Jan. 9: A civic interest group called Palm Springs Together purchases a full-page advertisement in the Los Angeles Times asking for Gov. Gavin Newsom, state Attorney General Xavier Becerra and federal authorities to review the tribe's plans. "We respect the Tribe's property rights, but we have rights, too, namely to a healthy environment and quality of life," the group said in the advertisement.

Feb. 5: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians announces the groundbreaking ceremony for the new arena on Feb. 18.

Feb. 12: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians postpones its groundbreaking ceremony, citing "extenuating circumstances" as the reason. A new date isn't announced.

April 28: NHL Seattle names Nick Forro the president of the affiliate team in Palm Springs.

June 17: Tim Leiweke confirms to The Desert Sun the arena is on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Once we get past (the virus) we'll make a decision if we're gonna proceed," Leiweke said.

Sept. 16: The Oak View Group and The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation announce a partnership to build a privately financed sports and entertainment arena on land owned by the foundation near I-10 and Cook Street. Oak View says it is no longer working with the Agua Caliente tribe.

— Brian Blueskye, staff writer