

THE ORANGE COUNTY BETA REGISTER

City seeking vendor to replace cinnamon roll cafe in park

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HUNTINGTON BEACH – A popular cinnamon roll restaurant in Central Park is about to change.

The city announced today that they are looking for a new vendor to take over [Alice's Breakfast in the Park](#), whose lease is up in September after about 30 years at that location.

Alice Gustafson, the owner and name behind the cafe, plans to start a new bakery with her daughter Mary Beth Gustafson and will stop operating the breakfast and lunch diner the day after Labor Day, said

son John Gustafson.

"I would say she is a little sad (about leaving) but optimistic that she will be able to help Mary Beth," said John Gustafson speaking on behalf of his mother.

Alice Gustafson, 78, [was given a two-year extension to her lease in 2008 after a dispute with the city about restaurant repairs](#). The city was prepared to replace the breakfast and lunch diner but Gustafson and supporters appealed to the council to let her keep the restaurant for two more years.

Now, the city is looking for a contemporary bistro to take over the homey diner. The city's [request for qualifications on its Web site](#) asks that the new owner serve affordable, fresh and "healthy" food and beverages for breakfast, lunch and twilight dining.

The request also warns that the cafe needs to be rehabilitated, including revamping the restrooms, painting the inside and outside and termite treatments.

"This facility has been underutilized and not well maintained over the last several years," the request said. "Significant renovation is necessary to the facility and operators are encouraged to state specific improvement ideas and plans."

For seven years, the city gave Alice Gustafson a discount on her rent to make repairs to the aging building, which used to be a boating house. In 2008, the city said it was not satisfied with the changes and needed to renegotiate the rent to make it comparable with other city-owned concessions.

Alice Gustafson, who argued that she was making repairs, said she could not afford the increased payments and the city began seeking a new owner.

During the October 2008 council meeting, about two dozen speakers addressed the council in support of Alice Gustafson and turned in a petition with 1,900 signatures of people asking that they keep Breakfast in the Park open. The City Council voted unanimously for the extension, acknowledging that the cafe was a landmark in the city.

The Gustafson family plans to start a new bakery, ideally in a location between Central Park and Main Street, and to sell their famous cinnamon rolls wholesale to hotels, John Gustafson said. The rolls could be purchased online with same-day shipping to the location. There are also plans for a small cafe at the bakery to serve the cinnamon rolls and coffee to people walking in, he said.

There was no mention in the city's request for qualifications of alcohol sales at the bistro to replace Alice's Breakfast in the Park. The possibility of alcohol being sold had previously sparked a backlash from some neighbors, who said the city didn't need another restaurant with an alcohol license.

Vendors would need to include any plans for alcohol sales in their proposals, Stanley Smalewitz Economic Development Director said. The proposals will eventually need approval from the City Council, he said.

To access the [request for qualifications visit HuntingtonBeachCA.gov under the business section.](#)

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