

Don't Bury the Library
Update #55 - June 25, 2020

Most important

Although the City Council voted 4 - 2 to move forward with the Mixed-Use project, *it isn't over until it's over!* The City Council will meet again on August 25 to hear staff reports on funding this huge, complicated project. The barriers to actually producing this misguided behemoth of a project are enormous. We remain skeptical they can pull this off.

What happened?

After over three and a half hours of meeting, including public comments, and in the face of a clear mandate by the public, four members of the City Council voted to proceed with the massive Mixed-Use project that will forever change the open air small-scale quality of Cedar Street downtown. Katherine Beiers and Sandy Brown voted no, with Sandy stating that she had never seen "*such lopsided*" comment from the public.

True enough about the public opposition! We counted the letters that came into the City Council about this contentious project.

By 5:07 pm on the day the Council met, there were a total of **571 letters**.

Of those 571 letters, **436** were in opposition to mixed-use and in

favor of library renovation, a project that would also save the last public open space downtown, where the Farmers' Market has been for decades, to allow for planning a downtown commons. Compare our 436 letters to the **135** supporting mixed-use. Add to those letters the equally lopsided testimony during the Council's meeting, and that puts opposition to the mixed-use project at about **75%** of the public that wrote or spoke on the matter.

As we said to Council members during our testimony: *"If the message had been a 50/50 split, it would have identified the proposal before you as merely controversial. But with more than 3 to 1 opposed, you have been given a clear mandate to vote no on the mixed-use project."* One may see DBTL's statement to Council by clicking here: <https://dontburythelibrary.weebly.com/public-statements.html>

In his vote, the Mayor stated -- as we have known all along -- that affordable housing was what he cared about the most. Who is not for affordable housing?! It is unfortunate that the mayor did not understand that since the fall of 2016, this project was supposed to be *about the library* and what was to happen to it. Affordable housing is *not dependent* on the library being included in any affordable housing project anywhere in the downtown.

Toward the end of the meeting, after discussion of the motion submitted by Donna Meyers, Mayor Cummings proposed some

"friendly amendments" to her motion, no doubt because he was somewhat skeptical (as he darn well should have been) about certain aspects of the project.

Meyers accepted all but the last one ... the most important one. It read: "*Should we not be able to move the mixed-use housing project forward, City Council will move forward with the renovation.*" Cummings was assured by Meyers that his 5th amendment was a given anyway, but our guess is that Meyers would not approve any motion with the word renovation in it, otherwise it could have been included, as a stated given, huh?

One may read the final motion by going to the Summary provided by the clerk: <https://scsire.cityofsantacruz.com/sirepub/mtgviewer.aspx?meetid=1366&doctype=SUMMARY> Scroll to the 6:30 pm portion of the day long meeting.

What's Next?

Good question!

The CFST has put out a very interesting message, which can be read here: <https://mailchi.mp/266dc2ac40a2/setback-at-council?e=390df6e943>

Downtown Commons Advocates (DCA) issued a Press Release the day after the vote, viewable here: <https://downtowncommonsadvocates.weebly.com/>

Meanwhile, Don't Bury The Library will continue to collaborate with anyone interested in our mission, which has *always* been to have the downtown library repaired, upgraded and modernized with Measure S funds.

As we are fond of saying, stay tuned ...

Jean Brocklebank

on behalf of <https://dontburythelibrary.weebly.com/>