

Update #57 September 23, 2020

Hi to all on our e-list of 155 ~

Your emails helped! There were a total of **82** opposed to (and 41 in favor of) approving the contract for an Owner's Representative, due to insufficient information. Then another **12** opposed to **5** in favor who spoke at yesterday's 3 hour long meeting.

In the end, **we prevailed** and staff will have to return in mid-late October with the information they were directed in June to provide in September! As mentioned in DBTL's 2 minute statement during public comment (amongst other eloquent comments):

*"My statement is not about for or against an Owner's Representative. This is about **revisionist history**, whereby staff has changed the narrative. Again. The minutes of your June 23 meeting, which were approved by you in August, are a **public record**. Those minutes include your directive to staff to return no later than 3 months with specified information. Three months. That is today. On August 25 the City Manager even repeated that the specified information would be available to council by September 23. Now the EDD web page claims that the Owner's Representative (OR) will provide the information -- some time in the future. This blatant manipulation of the record must stop. Today. The RFP list of the Scope of Duties for the OR does not include the information specified in the June 23 minutes to be made available to council no later than September 23. If any council member disagreed with the June 23 minutes, they should have had them corrected for the record in August. No one did that. Therefore, today, the EDD and council is revising history. EDD can come back with some ball park figures."*

We knew we had Sandy Brown and Katherine Beiers on our side. Mayor Cummings was the third vote we needed to oppose approving the contract. When he began to question the lack of information, the fact that the council got an unfinished contract the night before the meeting, and the public didn't see it at all, etc. I had a heartbeat hiccup ... I think he's going to do it!

Since Cynthia Mathews had to recuse herself that left only 6 to vote on any motion. Three no votes would spell the doom of contract approval. Instead, realizing that she had made a huge mistake by trying to make a motion to approve before the public was heard, Renee Golder finally backed down from her motion to approve. And Donna Meyers (who had tried to second it and had to be reminded that the council had not yet had public comment on the matter) remained quiet. I was very worried that Justin's motion would only get three votes also ... and thus be voided. So when the clerk called Renee Golder's vote and she said "aye," I knew we had won a postponement. What really surprised me is that Martine Watkins and Donna Meyers both also said "aye." A unanimous vote.

Here is an excellent summary from Downtown Commons Advocates:

"Today, the City Council voted unanimously to direct city staff to come back with financial information about components of the mixed-use project no later than the second council meeting in October. Despite the Council's direction on June 23rd for staff to provide that information within 3 months, staff had failed to do so.

"We will see whether staff provide basic information concerning financial viability -- whether funding was received for affordable-housing grant applications; where the City would get an estimated \$4-6 million of additional funding required for the library; and whether construction costs, bond funding, and parking revenue projections "pencil out" for the garage.

"We will continue to monitor this project and we will advocate for renovating the Downtown Library at the Civic Center, building affordable housing elsewhere downtown, and abandoning construction of an unneeded parking garage. The project would eliminate 10 Heritage trees, and displace the Farmers' Market from the last, best place for a Santa Cruz Downtown Commons and permanent pavilion for the market.

"For the moment, many thanks to all the people who wrote and called in to the Council asking them to postpone further consideration of the project until there is better information about its finances. Together, we made a difference!"

What lies ahead? Well, we're working on it. Meanwhile, thanks to all who wrote to the City Council and to those who spent 3 hours "attending" the meeting. Our specific goal remains to have the downtown library renewed/restored/modernized. It is to that end we continue forward.

Jean Brocklebank

<https://dontburythelibrary.weebly.com/>