

EXTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

The City Clerk's Office received
the attached correspondence regarding
Item 6- B
5-6-14 City Council Agenda

Lara Weisiger - Community Development Block Grant

From: <gerstle@mindspring.com>
To: "Marie Gilmore" <mgilmore@alamedaca.gov>, "Marilyn Ezzy-Ashcraft" <mezzy...>
Date: 4/24/2014 8:03 PM
Subject: Community Development Block Grant
CC: <DBiggs@apcollaborative.org>, "Laura Thomas" <ciaolauretta@comcast.net>,...

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing to you about item 6-B on the May 6, 2014 Council agenda:

Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of the FY14-15 Community Development Block Grant/HOME Partnership Investment Program Action Plan and Authorize the City Manager to Negotiate and Execute Related Documents, Agreements, and Modifications. (Housing 236)

The City of Alameda is an entitlement recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). CDBG funds support programs and activities that benefit low and moderate income persons and households and help prevent or eliminate slums and blight. Each year, entitlement cities must follow a prescribed process to receive public input, establish community goals and prepare a budget for the coming year. Each city must also prepare and submit an Action Plan to HUD for formal approval.

I am deeply concerned that our request for HUD CDBG funds does not include housing for homeless single men. Homeless single men, including seniors and veterans, are forced to leave Alameda to obtain emergency housing. Alameda has a homeless problem. Not all of those who are homeless are visible, but all are suffering. Sending them off to Oakland or other communities by AC Transit bus or other means to obtain housing, simply pushes off our responsibility to help those who are vulnerable onto our neighbors. If we do this, then we should also give those communities our CDBG funds. Homelessness is not just a problem for those other communities; it is our problem as well.

In addition, City of Alameda public policy actively contributes to homelessness. Unlike other nearby communities, we have not limited rent increases. Also, the minimum wage in Alameda does not provide adequate income to obtain housing in Alameda. Our community is not acting in a responsible manner. We need to align our public policies and our funding priorities to help those who are at risk and vulnerable. If we do not, I would urge HUD to transfer our CDBG funds to those communities that do.

Sincerely,

Steve Gerstle
Alameda, CA