

**From:** [Kevis Brownson](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Item 7B CC Meeting 1/16/24 Alameda Museum  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 16, 2024 12:53:42 PM

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Mayor, Vice Mayor, Council Members-

I hope that you can support continued funding for the Alameda Museum. I was pleasantly surprised last week to see what great progress they have made at digitally archiving our Alameda History, and making it easily accessible via their website. In addition, they have created an informative lecture series that highlights the diversity of Alameda's history.

Thank you,  
Kevis Brownson  
Everett Street, Alameda

**From:** [Jean Graubart](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] ALAMEDA MUSEUM  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 16, 2024 9:06:18 AM

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Dear City Council

— Martin Luther King, Jr. “Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

This week we recognize the activism of MLK. In light of his message above, the Alameda Museum, which is run by volunteers, brings members of the community together to benefit the Alameda community. Our volunteers are often visitors to the museum who are impressed with the beautiful and educational historic exhibits as well as the knowledge and warmth of the volunteers.

Relationships with the past and present are within the museum walls. These walls carry the history of the island and are carefully choreographed to enlighten the visitors. There is something for everyone, a military room which recognizes the people from Alameda who served our country. There is an old kitchen and barbershop which serves as a tool that teaches the children and teens what life was once like in Alameda. And there is so much more. Every item in each exhibit is from Alameda and brings to life the character and accomplishments of the community.

For an island like ours to be able to share the history and past with people living here and the many people who are visiting Alameda, is truly a gift. Few towns can say they offer a birds eye view into what their community once was and how it came to be the place of pride it is today.

We have books that explore neighborhoods and introduce Alamedans to the story behind their house, their home. We have a person who is available to answer questions about the old Alameda

and the new.

Our team of docents are proud to be a part of this museum and all it offers both historically and currently. Those who visit experience the same sense of pride.

We are indeed grateful to the city council for your support and interest in the continuity of the museum which brings light and life to what once was. Thank you.

Maintaining this historic sight allows us the opportunity to create a lovely home to share with everyone who stops in and to bring to life the breath and scenes that created the island.

Jean Graubart, Docent Coordinator

**From:** [Beth sibley](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Alameda Museum letter of support  
**Date:** Monday, January 15, 2024 8:53:36 PM

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City Clerk:

Below is a letter of support for the Alameda Museum which is a City Council Agenda item for meeting Tues Jan 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.  
Thank you.

Beth Sibley

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January 15, 2024

To: City Council Members

This is a request for the continued financial support of the Alameda Museum, an invaluable cultural asset of our community. For the past seventy-five years, the museum has been collecting, documenting, and preserving not only the historical records of City of Alameda but also other items like scrapbooks, maps, newspapers, photographs, and physical artifacts that reflect the architectural heritage and economic, and social life of Alameda. Through its exhibits and programs, it has educated generations of Alamedans about the history of the city as well as provided research help to students, scholars, and the general public.

As an Alameda Museum docent, I have seen a lot of visitors, many are families, who are delighted to discover that the City of Alameda has a local history museum and by browsing our exhibits they can learn about how life used to be in their community. They appreciate that all these photos and objects have been preserved. Many come searching the history of their house and are so happy when an older photo of their house is found in the archives. Docents try to be welcoming and helpful and hope these visitors will spread the word and may want to join as members, donate and/or volunteer at the museum.

As a part-time librarian at the Alameda Free Library responsible for the Alameda Collection, I have tried to learn about the museum resources through volunteering in their archives and sharing knowledge of our library resources in local history that complement the museum. Knowing what the museum has I can make more accurate referrals for library patrons. I look forward to greater cooperation and collaboration with the museum staff now that the library has oversight of the museum.

I think the museum should be commended for all it has accomplished through the years given its limited resources and staffing. Most all the work has been done by dedicated volunteers who have contributed a lot of their time, energy, and expertise to provide such a wonderful resource for our community. Thank you, Alameda Museum!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sibley

**From:** [Ellen Chesnut](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] City Council meeting: Tuesday January 16, 2024 @ 7:00PM  
**Date:** Sunday, January 14, 2024 12:52:23 PM

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**Dear Members of the City Council,**

**A city that does not care for its historical museums is a city that does not honor its past. Please fund the Alameda Historical Museum properly. By doing so you will be honoring those who played such an important role in Alameda history and you will leave an important legacy for future generations.**

**Thank you for your attention to this matter.**

**Ellen Chesnut  
Volunteer librarian ANAM**

**From:** [Brad Shirakawa](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Alameda Museum contract and funding  
**Date:** Sunday, January 14, 2024 9:49:19 AM

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Hi;

I'm Brad Shirakawa, the archivist and researcher for the Alameda Japanese American History Project. We recently concluded our project in 2023 with a two month exhibit at the Alameda Free Library. I wanted to mention my thanks to the Alameda Museum, and to Valerie Turpen for their assistance with the project. If you need a reference as the museum's contract and funding are being discussed, here is something you could use:

**"I love solving a mystery," Valerie Turpen, President of the Alameda Museum wrote to me in an email from 2021.**

**Val and the museum were extremely helpful during my three years as archivist and researcher for the Alameda Japanese American History Project.**

**Not being a native Alamedan, I often depended on Val's knowledge and resources to identify people and places in photos that came from local family albums.**

**Early in the project, Val helped identify photos made some 100 years ago of the bridges crossing the estuary...that all looked the same to me. I had questions about huge fire that occurred around 1920, and the Japanese language school whose location was difficult to determine. Val clarified all those things.**

**Her personal knowledge of a family in her neighborhood helped me to expand the story to include photos that I would not have known existed.**

**She graciously allowed me to access original materials at the museum itself. In short, my finished materials would not be as compelling or complete without her help.**

**I would like to personally extend my extreme thanks to Valerie and the museum resources she brought to bear. I would highly recommend that the museum contract and funding be extended, so that this invaluable resource continue to be available to the Alameda community and beyond. The project's materials are already available online for the world wide general public to find and use.**

**Brad Shirakawa  
Project archivist and researcher  
408-431-2871**

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I am also attaching two documents that reference the museum's assistance, and two photos from the library exhibit.



A young girl reads one of the dozens of stories that can be unclipped from the wall that were part of the Alameda Japanese American History Project exhibit. It was held at the Alameda Free Library May 17 to July 15, 2023.



Thank you very much.



A street sweeper cleans Park Street, circa 1915-1920s

## **First Permanent Location of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda at 1630 Park Street**

**The Temple had its beginning in 1906 when Rev. Mokujo Fujii, then resident minister of the Buddhist Church of Oakland, came periodically to Alameda to officiate at funerals and other religious services. Early in 1912, Rev. Gyodo Haguri, also affiliated with the church in Oakland, began to hold regular Howakai services in Alameda at the home of Matsutaro Sugiyama.**

**About this time, under the leadership of Matsutaro Nakata, a group of sixteen Buddhist faithful proposed establishment of a permanent site where religious gatherings could be held. On August 12, 1912, a storefront location at 1630 Park Street was rented for this purpose; thus developed the concrete beginning of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda.**

**This first location was on the main (business) street in Alameda and conveniently situated so as to be accessible to the Issei Buddhists, the majority of whom lived in the proximity of the business district.**

**This location would not last long. On April 8, 1914, a large room was rented within mansion of Edward Kimberlin Taylor, former mayor of Alameda, located at 2325 Pacific Avenue in Alameda.**

Streetlights like the one in this photo were erected in Alameda beginning in 1895 using warm incandescent bulbs instead of carbon arc bulbs. Carbon arc bulbs provided a very bright and but harsh light.

By the turn of the century, Alameda had about 50 incandescent streetlights. This is an example of one of the 4,200 streetlights installed in Alameda between 1911 and 1916, about 100 remain on the island (as of 2012).

ALAMEDA  
**Japanese**  
**American**  
History PROJECT



*Japanese Language School*

*Pacific Ave  
ALAMEDA, CALIF.*

**Japanese Language Institute Association of Alameda /  
Circa 1918 - late 1920s / 2256 Pacific Avenue, Alameda, CA**

Originally a tenement (per the Sanborn 1897 map). Visible on the left is the back 2261 Lincoln Avenue (still standing as of 2021) and a garage to that building. The tank tower is the back of 2258 Pacific, which was a nursery business with sheds (Now a vacant lot with one shed standing).

The enclosed water tank is at 2257 Lincoln. The back of City Hall is in the distance.

The sidewalk stamp in front of this location is dated 1925. Today, 2256 Pacific is a stucco apartment building which may be built on the footprint of the tenement building.

This information is courtesy of Valerie Turpen at the Alameda Museum.

**From:** [Jean Wolslegel](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Alameda Museum  
**Date:** Saturday, January 13, 2024 3:04:33 PM

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I am a docent for the Alameda Museum. Very recently I had some of my family, from out of town, meet me at the museum near the end of my shift. They enjoyed looking around and were so impressed with what was available to view and the details that were provided.

First time viewers, that just happen to wonder in, express how wonderful our museum is and that they will be back.

None of this has anything to do with the interesting items in the shopping area. That is just a nice extra attraction that is fun and an unexpected delight.

Promote our wonderful museum and be proud.

Jean Wolslegel  
Native Alamedian