

EXTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

The City Clerk's Office received
the attached correspondence regarding
**Agenda Item #6-D on the
10-15-13 City Council Agenda**

Lara Weisiger - Fwd: Need for an RFP at Alameda Point

From: Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft <mezzyashcraft@alamedaca.gov>
To: LWEISIGER@alamedaca.gov
Date: 10/16/2013 7:27 AM
Subject: Fwd: Need for an RFP at Alameda Point

Per your request.

Marilyn

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Vice Mayor, City of Alameda
(510) 747-4745

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Chuck Kapelke <ckapelke@comcast.net>" <ckapelke@comcast.net>
Date: October 14, 2013 at 8:29:54 PM PDT
To: "Lena Tam" <LTam@alamedaca.gov>, "CITY MANAGER" <MANAGER@alamedaca.gov>, "Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft" <MEzzyAshcraft@alamedaca.gov>, "Marie Gilmore" <MGilmore@alamedaca.gov>, "Stewart Chen" <SChen@alamedaca.gov>, "Tony Daysog" <TDaysog@alamedaca.gov>
Subject: Need for an RFP at Alameda Point

To the Members of the Alameda City Council and City Manager:

I was surprised and disappointed to read that the City Manager is planning to hold closed-door negotiations with two companies – Charles Company and DeBartolo Development – as part of tomorrow night's meeting. I was even more dismayed to see that these companies (at least based on their web sites) have no record of creating architecturally interesting, innovative, or environmentally sustainable buildings, and in fact seem to be geared toward the kind of bland retail projects that can be found in pretty much every city and suburb in America.

In my naïve fantasy, I had been expecting staff to announce a Request for Proposals, or RFP, that would be sent out to world-class developers around the globe. On the one hand, this document would make a compelling pitch to prospective partners, laying out the countless benefits of building at Alameda Point, including the unmatched views of San Francisco and the bridges, easy ferry access, as well as strong schools, tight-knit community, and other virtues of Alameda in general.

On the other hand, the RFP would list a series of questions that developers would be required to answer to prove they have what it takes: How do you propose to make the Point family-friendly and architecturally interesting, in keeping with the rest of our city? How many LEED-certified buildings have you developed? What is your record of generating jobs and attracting top-tier businesses? How do you intend to work with the community as your project moves forward? How are you different from other development companies? And most importantly, provide us with detailed descriptions and visual renderings to show

exactly what you would propose to develop here, and explain how you would be offering the best bang for the buck.

This RFP would be sent not just to developers, but also to leading architects and designers; to universities and high-tech companies potentially in need of adjunct campuses; or to any other businesses and incubators that might be looking for a place to house their operations. Who wouldn't want to give their people the chance to live and work in one of the most beautiful spots around the entire San Francisco Bay? The RFP would generate massive buzz and send teams scurrying to put together jaw-dropping proposals that would show how they would keep costs low while delivering on everything Alameda wants and more.

I envisioned myself six months from now, sitting alongside my fellow citizens in the Alameda Theater, eating popcorn and watching as these teams of developers compete to wow us with their dazzling dog-and-pony shows, much as we got to watch Greenway Golf outshine Kemper Sports through its superior proposal and presentation.

Yet this dream appears to have been far-fetched, as the city apparently has no intention of issuing an RFP or casting a wide net to find the right builders for the Point. Instead, it appears that the decisions about which developers get to build upon this precious land will be left largely up to staff, and may be driven more by a short-term desire for tax revenues than by any long-term vision for a truly distinctive, integrated development.

I urge the Council to provide leadership and set a higher bar for which developers get a piece of Alameda Point, including by leading a transparent RFP process that will help ensure we get the right people for the job. I also hope to hear more about the discussions that are already happening, as there is no reason that the city should already be engaged in negotiations with developers before the EIR process is even completed, nor should such meetings be closed to the public.

Thank you,

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