

ACT

Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

Dear Mayor Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Vella and Council Members Knox-White, Herrera Spencer and Daysog:

Upon reviewing Item 5E it is our suggestion that this matter belongs on the regular agenda rather than on the consent agenda. This suggestion is based on the following:

The contract with SEED which is under consideration is projected to cost the citizens of Alameda upwards of a quarter of a million dollars. And if for this reason alone, we believe that the contract warrants public discussion by means of the regular agenda.

The contracting agency apparently intends to carry out a number of surveys, however, it isn't clear to what extent the consultant might be willing to first review, and possibly incorporate, equity studies already carried out by various City agencies or departments such as the AUD and Housing Authority. This alone could possibly save time and expense for the project.

The consultant intends to create, or have the City Leaders create an Equity Working Group (EWG). And while this may be an efficient organization to effect the City's goals, there is no indication that the deliberations of the Group will be held in view of the public. Nor is there any indication that members of the public will be permitted to participate in the Group's deliberations by asking clarifying questions and/or making constructive suggestions.

This latter point is especially significant as we do not believe that being privy to occasional updates and reports and observing occasional public presentations are sufficient to constitute meaningful public participation. Following on the concept of public participation, the consultant has made no reference to having the minutes of the various meetings, the documents considered by the Group, or the work product of the consultant and the Group.

We are also concerned that the concept of EQUITY is being applied to only select groups of citizens despite the consultant having indicated in his Agreement document that:

"... solely targeted strategies, such as racial equity, focus on supporting individuals while failing to transform systems; such strategies are sometimes criticized for unfairly helping one group over another and can be viewed as preferential, thus seeding hostility and resentment."

In this regard, we believe that in addition to the groups of citizens enumerated by the consultant, other categories such as ethnicity, religion, nationality of origin, and other

defined categories or groups should be specifically included in any agreement signed by the City.

In summary, we propose that:

- 1) It would be preferable and more appropriate for Item 5E to be discussed as part of the Regular Agenda rather than the Consent Agenda.
- 2) All meetings and deliberations held by any/all groups constituted under the terms of the Agreement shall be open to the public, the members of which shall be afforded the opportunity ask clarifying questions and offer constructive suggestions which shall be acknowledged and considered by the group conducting the meeting.
- 3) In addition to the categories or groups of citizens whose issues and concerns have been specifically identified by the consultant as deserving of special attention by the EWG, we propose that the public be offered the opportunity to submit additional categories for inclusion. Such additional categories might include ethnicity, religion, and nationality of origin among the many categories and groups of individuals that can be found in Alameda.
- 4) Given that the timeline proposed by the consultant indicates that meetings with City Executive Team and formation of a project team are to take place in December and January we ask that the City Manager clarify whether Staff has been meeting with the consultant and work has started on creation of a project team already and whether a contract has already been signed by the City.

We want to stress that while we have reservations concerning the ability of a group of 6 or even 60 being able to equitably establish fair and evenhanded rules for procedures and policies impacting the 70,000 plus residents of Alameda absent **open and robust participation of the entire community**, the intention of this communication is to encourage and facilitate the creation of an optimally inclusive and open process for the purpose of optimizing equity for all of Alameda's citizens.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Alameda Citizens Task Force