

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Debbie George <pillowdeb@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 18, 2016 2:14 PM  
**To:** Trish Spencer; Frank Matarrese; Tony Daysog; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Jim Oddie; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** City Council meeting re: item 6b

Mayor Spencer and Alameda City Council,

My name is Debbie George and I am a resident, business owner and property owner both commercial and residential in my home town Alameda. From the time I moved here over 40 years ago, I have been involved in many ways to support the arts in my community and the importance thereof.

I was a former Board Member of Alameda Civic Light Opera, member and involved with Alameda Elks in fundraising and entertainment through Stagemasters, Board Member of Park Street Business Association, Chair of Park Street Promotions Committee and President Of Park Street Business Association for 2 terms. I have been in various positions on the Park Street Association's Board for over 14 years. During my time involved, owned and operated a business in the Park Street District for 44 years and have witnessed first hand the importance of the arts in one form or another in the city of Alameda.

There was, many years ago a Public Arts Commission formed, to which I thought would grow into something to create a fund for the arts and grow with time to support future projects as development unfolded and incorporated elements for the residents to be proud of. I found out there was around \$200,000.00 in the account and \$75,000.00 was spent to hire a consultant to tell the city how to spend the money. Since then nothing has moved forward and the commission was disbanded until now with discussion about removing a cap for future developers and spending the money not with community approval or support.

Let me remind you about a parking meter fund that was used to build our much needed Civic Parking Garage when Alameda Theater was redeveloped. This was a purpose that added to the revitalization of our Downtown District and created a lively and rebuilt shopping and meeting place for all residents. I have high hopes to someday have a "Alameda Cultural and Arts Building" for various cultural and artistic events. Can you believe that this year Alameda Civic Ballet will NOT have The Nutcracker performance here due to the fact there is no place to have the event. West Coast Dance will not be performing their annual show in The Kofman Auditorium due to the fact AUSD has said it is unsafe. Think of all the kids that will not have the experience that was once offered to grow and learn the beauty of Arts. I saw first hand children develop careers from their participation in ACLO and character building that went on. We should learn from other communities such as Walnut Creek that has Leshner Center for the Arts that benefits the city coffers and brings additional tax dollars to their district and a venue for Graduations, music performances, Ballet etc.

I am asking you to oppose the current staff recommendation 6b and call for a fair and open process to distribute our City's art fund that supports public arts programming in Alameda. There needs to be a RFP process, call for Public Arts Commission to commence it's review process and remove the developers cap or at least increase the amount. This account should have considerable more money than it does and with a proper Commission, we can build a future for our students, seniors and the betterment for our community. Let's set the bar high and start working together.

Debbie George