

3/7/17

Alameda Citizens Task Force has written to you in opposition to this referral. One of our goals are to make the City government as open and responsive to our citizens as possible. Councilmember Ashcraft's Referral constricts that goal.

Such a constriction of citizen access to the Council should not be enacted unless there is clear and convincing data that supports the conclusion that the present procedure unduly burdens Council and Staff or has some other demonstrable significant adverse impact on the City.

Councilmember Ashcraft's primary argument for requiring two councilmembers to initiate a Call for Review is that an individual Council Member might feel pressure to accommodate the wishes of constituents, regardless of the merits or cost and time burden of an appeal. However no data is presented to substantiate this claim. Our letter includes an analysis of the eight matters which have been called for Review from 2015 through the current date.

Seven of the eight Calls for Review were either high public interest items or matters that impacted a much broader sector of the community than the property that was the focus of the Call. The high public interest items were the Harbor Bay Hotel, the Park Street Shipping Container development, the mixed use development at the corner of Webster and Taylor, and the Harbor Bay Assisted Living Development.

All four of these projects were approved by the Planning Board. The Calls for Review resulted in three of the projects being rejected or amended by Council, with the fourth project being rejected by a regional agency. Our citizens should have free and easy access to the appeal process, rather than requiring them to lobby multiple Councilmembers to Call for Review or pay the substantial fees required for a citizen initiated appeal. In these four instances a fee of \$850 to \$2850.00 would have been required.

ACT implores Council to reject this referral.

Submitted by Gretchen
Lipow
Re: 9-A
3/7/17