

Lisa Wolfe

From: ~ -
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 5:01 PM
To: Lisa Wolfe
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: October 6, 2020 City Council Agenda Item 10A.

Ms. Wolfe,

Request the following comments be provided to all concerned parties for the October 6, 2020 Agenda Item 10 A.

"The staff report provides several examples of work previously provided by the Economic Development Department including several Intern positions. However, even though this is "Study Session" for the Council to provide policy guidance for the forthcoming budget and operating cycles, and some general numbers have been provided, I can find no mention or information on what costs and benefits each of these proposals offer for Benicia. Not sure you can evaluate something if you don't know the costs/benefits associated.

What actual economic benefit, in the form of lower costs or better services for citizens has been achieved by the Economic Development Department over the past several years, and what can be expected in the coming years. I may be wrong, I like accountability and I believe our citizen have a need to know if our programs are actually working, and for us. Please share some hard figures like sales taxes increased, costs reduced to provide some benefit, new business(') that provided previously unmet needs etc. etc. (a little bragging would help folks understand the value). If the Council decides to allocate Benicia funds for businesses please insure the funds provide a good return for our investment, make it a part of the funding support agreement. Yes, I think you can be gracious and accountable at the same time.

I am also not a fan of spending funds for items that do not provide essential direct citizen services in these economically uncertain times, which may last years. No statues, no art work, etc. until staffing is 100% (or close), our roads and parks are in good condition and our reserves contain adequate funds. Also, as this is a study session why are other larger and potentially greater fiscal impact issues not being addressed. Unless I missed something the water/sewer issues are still a problem for many. Why are optional and/or alternatives services and/or service providers not even being considered. Some mention of our poor roads, but this needs more information like backlog, improved-miles-per-year in a Plan (know you have one why not link it in the report?), when folks can expect to see work on THEIR street. etc. Information make decisions easier, helps map our future and expectations and hastens citizen buy in.

Has Benicia recently (say the past 10 years) consider or studied service consolidation with our neighboring service providers? If not, why not, if yes, where can we find the results."

Respectfully,

George N. Oakes

Rec'd 10/6 5:16 PM

October 6, 2020

City Council of Benicia

Benicia, CA

Dear Benicia City Council Members,

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for the proposal to provide \$75,000 for public art by the City Council of Benicia.

As the Vice Chair of the Arts and Culture Commission I can personally attest to wise investment this proposal offers to the community we serve. Leo Tolstoy once wrote "All art has this characteristic – it unites people." Benicia public art unites our community. Especially during times of COVID-19 and amid the isolation of sheltering in place, our public art provides a respite of the soul to connect to our humanity around us. By investing in public art, we are investing in the unity of our community.

The proposed funding will add to the growing efforts of our local artists and craftspeople to support the quality of life for people who call Benicia home. We see the joy, happiness, pleasure, and love that public art adds to our historical landscapes. Art adds value in a way that changes the person once it is experienced. Public art enlivens the senses because it is viewed in a new way each time you happen across it. This generous investment in our public art program will lift the spirits and the hearts of our community when it needs it the most!

In conclusion, I fully support to proposal to provide \$75,000 for public art by the City Council of Benicia. This investment will help to bring to fruition more programs that enrich the community for economic development, quality of life, community well-being, and for tourists and visitors from far and wide. This investment underscores the value of arts and creative works and provides a welcoming landscape to our historical town. It is a show of great confidence in the public art program of the city and it is greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,

Lily Ploski

Vice Chair, Arts and Culture Commission