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District 10

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Hello CS Committee members!

The Board of Parks started at 6:30 and it was an in-person meeting. I wanted to share my thoughts with you, but we had a packed room of community members testifying on park-related issues. I was able to follow most of the conversation but couldn't participate in the discussion. I hope my silence was not interpreted as not being interested in having a voice in this process.

It was disappointing to see the meeting be delayed under the reasoning of "new" findings. I was genuinely surprised to hear that some of you were surprised to learn that the CDD's RFP has built-in flexibility to facilitate the recommendation processes. This flexibility allows a process centered on equity and inclusion where scores are part of the equation but not the sole driver of the decision-making. This is a regular practice of other agencies around the city. If you missed the March 1st council meeting, here is the [recording](#), starting at marker 2:45:51 you will find the exchange between alders and staff from CDD, Finance, and Legal. All agencies tackled the process flexibility from the perspective of their roles and expressed a lack of concerns with the existing process.

As I was listening to the concerns brought once more about the scores, I couldn't help to reflect on Eric Romero's experience when he testified on behalf OFS services. I have close ties with OFS, their programming built my home back in 1996, 18 years later my son who is dyslexic was having issues very similar to Eric's struggles in high school. My son too benefited from OFS legacy system. Nor could I ignore Jessica Dyke's medical issues that brought her to Omega. If Eric, Jessica, and my own son had been left to be rated just by scores, where would they be today? If their value and potential would have been centered on comparing them against others with high scores, we better abilities and experiences would they have become happy and successful young adults? **SCORES may be a fair way to measure something but are not an equitable tool.**

If scores are what you want, why do we need a committee between staff and finance/council? It doesn't make sense to demand a rigid rating to be used and have this committee make recommendations on a process that is not flexible. I hope you recognize that this is not the best way to manage this funding. And I hope that you recognize that there is indeed a problem that is not associated with the flexibility of the RFP. The problem is the inability to check our biases at the door and facilitate a process that is not tainted with lobbying and personal interests.

Imagine if I come to you as an alder and asked you to fund Developing Artist, Murals and Alliances (DAMA) who applied for funding but did not get any. Imagine I called in to brag about their services and how they deserve funding. Imagine I dare to do such a thing and neglect to disclose that the Director of DAMA is my sister. Would that outrage you? I hope it would outrage you enough to call me out on it. I don't have to imagine your reaction, one of the callers, assumed a position of power to advocate for an uncle. Nobody called that out during the meeting. Should I be advocating from my alder's role for my

November 10, 2022

Page 2

sister or the organizations that have personally impacted me? I hope your answer to my rhetorical question is no.

As an alder, I expect the upcoming meeting to be recorded and available for viewing before the Finance meeting to facilitate viewing access to other alders. I will rearrange my schedule to be present at the meeting to allow myself the opportunity to get all my questions answered directly from you before making recommendations to Council via Finance. I am looking forward to learning about the committee's processes and guidelines used to ensure inclusion and equitable decision-making are the focus of the recommendations.

Yolanda, please add me to the meeting invite.

Thank you all for your service! This is a difficult process and carries a lot of emotional baggage. I appreciate your work and I know that we all can do a better job working together towards the goals and vision of the city.

Sincerely,

Yannette

Alder Yannette Figueroa Cole (she/her/hers)

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