



**City Council Meeting**  
**Public Comments**  
**October 23, 2024**

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email [heidibeth1@gmail.com](mailto:heidibeth1@gmail.com)

Council Meeting Date October 23, 2024

Item # not on the agenda

Subject California Center for the Arts Escondido

Position In Favor

First and Last Name Heidi B Paul

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I am imploring the City to continue keeping our crowning glory, the Center for the Arts, community run and community funded. Please don't sacrifice our city's biggest draw -- ESPECIALLY since, according to my research, the Center brings in more money to the City than the City puts into it.

I have confidence that you will see the folly of outsourcing this most special part of Escondido and the wisdom of keeping it classy!

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email [melinda.finn@gmail.com](mailto:melinda.finn@gmail.com)

Council Meeting Date 10/23/2024

Item # Not on the agenda

Subject Finding Outside Entity to Control the California Center for the Arts

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Melinda V Finn

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

The California Center for the Arts has been - and continues to be a great asset to our community, which not only provides a variety of wonderful arts experiences to the public, but brings in a considerable amount of money. The idea of having an outside organization running the Center carries the risk of changing the whole nature and focus of what is already a successful operation. Finding a way to increase revenue and also maintain local control of this gem is the best route to maintaining what is special about CCAE.

Board or Commission to Request to Speak before: City Council

First Name: Stephen

Last Name: Wheeler

Date: 10/23/2024

Agenda item Number: Non-Agenda

Subject: Cannabis Business Prohibition Repeal - Followup to 09-Oct Oral Communication

Position: No Position

Submitted values are:

Board or Commission to Request to Speak before: City Council

First Name: Malek

Last Name: Haddad

Date: 10/23/2024

Agenda item Number:

Subject: Fire prevention inspection fee up 198% compare to 38% approved and issue with current inspection

Position: In Opposition

Background: 10 July 2024 "User and regulatory fee schedule" slide stated 38% deficiency in annual budget for Fire Prevention or 220,000 dollars shortfall which the city council approved.

Issue at hand: My fire inspection bill for my triplex (3 Unit) building year over year increase is 198% or \$388 dollars from \$130.00 paid last year.

fact: I am the smallest landlord/number of units in Building but gotten the highest increase from the 38% approved by city council to 198% and that is not fair.

supporting rationale: my 3 unit building is non commercial but residential and it is being lumped with other commercial building up to 10 units. The 2.5 hours inspection time is not at all accurate for my building which is where i believe there is a discrepancy in the total charges for inspection (\$155 loaded rate times 2.5 HRS = \$388). 3 and 4 unit complex should be grouped together as residential with no more then an hour to perform the inspection. We are small landlords and do not deserve the highest increase. Your solution to this matter is appreciated timely before my bill is due early Nov 2024.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email [jadestoll2@gmail.com](mailto:jadestoll2@gmail.com)

Council Meeting Date 10/23/2024

Item # Oral Communication

Subject

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Allison Stoll

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

The US is complicit in and actively funding the genocide of innocent Palestinians. It has been one year since the genocide began in Gaza and the death toll is continuing to rise. There is no justification for this, and our continued support of Israel has shown the world once again that we're not the good guys like we so often claim to be. The US government has demonstrated that its only interest is money and power. We are supposed to keep that government in check. I am writing today to ask you to please use some of the power you have, pass a symbolic resolution, call for a permanent ceasefire, and keep our tax dollars out of Israel's hands. Stand up for your residents! Stand against genocide!

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email [AngelTorresC@proton.me](mailto:AngelTorresC@proton.me)

Council Meeting Date 2024-10-23

Item # N/A

Subject ABANDONED COMMERCIAL PROPERTY VACANCY ORDINANCE ADOPTION

Position In Favor

First and Last Name Angel Torres

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I'm writing to express my support for adopting an ordinance to increase regulation of abandoned commercial properties and enhance security for these buildings. Additionally, I would like to address vacant properties that are not abandoned but have been without tenants for a year or longer—properties I would describe as neglected. Some commercial property owners allow storefronts to sit empty, generating no economic activity, and make no efforts to improve or maintain their properties. Is the city making any efforts to ensure these property owners maintain their properties? Is there any existing ordinance that could be stepped up in enforcement to ensure these property owners are incentivized to lease their properties, rather than let them to sit empty?

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email [dzech@cdccommercial.com](mailto:dzech@cdccommercial.com)

Council Meeting Date October 23, 2024

Item # 10

Subject Commercial Property Vacancy Ordinance Tax

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Don Scott Zech

Are you an Escondido Resident? No

Comments

I was raised in Escondido. I have been a commercial real estate broker in Escondido for the last 38 years and have brought 100's of businesses to Escondido over those years. Unfortunately, this proposed ordinance is the first step to condemnation (registration fees and penalties for non-conformance) and is a case of beating the horse with the carrot stick. It is also a case of government overreach by creating another law but not enforcing those already in place (Code enforcement works). Penalizing a commercial property owner for having a vacant property while the City takes 18 to 24 months to issue a building permit is not a business-friendly approach to attracting companies to do business in Escondido. I am all for keeping properties clean, neat, and crime-free. Unfortunately, the blight that does exist often sits at the feet of the City and the State. Often, decisions about uses that aren't defined in the zoning codes cause the problem. Are chiropractors doctors? Can dentists go into shopping centers? Can a car dealer go in a mall if they don't do repairs? How about if your driving experience is virtual? Where will Drones be allowed to take off and deliver? As soon as something isn't "cookie-cutter," it kicks out of the system and requires a study, a conditional permit, or a general plan amendment. These all take time, cause business owners and future businesses great expense and time, and often, in the end, a "pass" and move on to greener pastures. I could not find the proposed ordinance posted to read it, but the question comes as to what defines a vacancy for registration purposes? Is it immediately upon a single-tenant building becoming vacant? Is it only vacant land? Is it one suite in an office building or shopping center? In 2012 (so over 12 years ago) the City approved the Felicita Corporate Office Target Area and created the proposed Planned Office Zone. In 12 years I have brought 3 Fortune 500 companies to the City (and numerous quality SD based firms). In each case the City said it would take 18 - 24 months to do a rezone, specific plan, precise plan, zone-change BUT if it is over 5 acres (most properties in the area are) it would likely require an environmental report (12-18 more months). Also likely, a signal (traffic study required), relocation of HV power lines, Possible Army Corp of engineers because of possible creek and possible Cal-Trans because of the off-ramp. Now post COVID and in a new era of lack of demand for office, do we face another 12 years for the City to re-work the General Plan and Zoning to accommodate the market demand while we punish the owners of the properties who are paying their taxes and begging the City to help them to make money from their property and being business to Escondido. We all need to be on the same team (Commercial Property owners, Real Estate Brokers and the City).

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email [amaclachlan1@gmail.com](mailto:amaclachlan1@gmail.com)

Council Meeting Date 10/23/2024

Item # 10

Subject Abandoned Commercial Building Ordinance

Position In Favor

First and Last Name Alex MacLachlan

Are you an Escondido Resident? No

I would like to pledge the support of the Escondido Downtown Business Association for this proposed ordinance as a potentially important tool for our Economic Development Department to discourage chronically vacant commercial buildings downtown used as tangible storage units of past wealth, and not as vehicles of future economic growth and vitality. For as long as I can remember, there have been a problem buildings downtown but their stories and history are as varied as our downtown architecture. Most fall under a category of economic reality dictating the demand for such space or the success rate of entrepreneurs trying to fulfill a dream of small business ownership. These are not the buildings we are discussing today. Those buildings and our city are often a microcosm of our state's future economy, a harbinger of what is coming to rest of the country and state of California. No, we are discussing buildings owned by people who never had the intent of renovating them to their former glory and using the building themselves or renting them out to entrepreneurs investing in our city and in their futures. Those buildings you can count on one hand but their square footage and prominent positions downtown make our vacancy rates appear much worse. Those few buildings have been the topic of discussion for years between the Downtown Business Association and City Officials. Up unto this point, we have always used carrots as incentives for building owners to take public monies and improve the facades of their buildings, to take the largesse of Downtown Business Association member businesses willing to create free public art and photography on vacant buildings to mitigate the "Broken Window" theory affects of one prominent vacant building downtown on the rest of the existing small businesses downtown. Potential customers to our city businesses want to have confidence that they will be there next week before they invest financially and emotionally in those business owners this week and large vacant buildings that have been sitting there unpainted, unkempt, and un rented for a decade do not instill confidence, in fact we lost two more downtown businesses just last week within close proximity to one of the most egregious of these problem buildings. This ordinance will not be a silver bullet, but it could be an important first step. Frankly the dollar amounts probably aren't even a high enough disincentive, but it is a start and can be ratcheted up in the future if the seriousness of our resolve to bring these buildings back online and contributing to the resurgence of Grand Avenue is not respected. You can't invest \$5 million dollars in downtown Escondido, tell existing business owners we have their backs during the construction of street improvements designed to help them in the future, and then allow the equivalent of cars up on blocks in the front yard and homeless encampments on the front porches of their neighboring buildings. Vacant buildings with paper on the windows and not a dime in Tenant Improvements invested on the interior or facade have got to be stopped. We've tried many carrots, it's time for Sticks.