



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The following is public correspondence received by the City Clerk's Office after the posting of the original agenda. Individual contact information has been redacted for privacy. This may *not* be a comprehensive collection of the public correspondence, but staff makes its best effort to include all correspondence received to date.

To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

From: [Jerry Lopatin](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment - agenda item 10
Date: Sunday, November 28, 2021 10:44:47 PM

Nancy Phillips makes excellent points in her letter objecting to committing public funds for a theater group facility.

I agree with her.

To summarize:

1. The public benefit of such a theater is minimal. Maybe a few hundreds of patrons a year could be accommodated in such a limited space, and it is very difficult to achieve quality performances in small spaces.
2. At the same time, the loss of hundreds of parking spaces will have a dramatically negative impact on the entire community.
3. If groups want to create a theater in Los Altos, they are of course free to do so -- on their dime. They can build or adapt their own building, at their own expense. Why should scarce public resources be spent on a pet project of a few wealthy individuals? And if it can't be self sustaining financially, then is the City going to support it forever?
4. This would create a terrible precedent. What will the next group want the City to subsidize?

I urge you to put an end to this now.

Jerry Lopatin
Los Altos

Jerry

Jerry Lopatin

From: [jim jolly](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Item 10 memo of understanding Los Altos Stage Company
Date: Sunday, November 28, 2021 2:41:32 PM

I am 110% against this proposal. Los Altos has many more critical issues to deal with. Jim Jolly
Sent from my iPhone

From: [M Satterlee](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Theater MOU
Date: Sunday, November 28, 2021 12:11:16 PM

Dear Council,

The concept of an MOU to give this group time makes sense. However, I believe it is premature.

Vicki Reeder is quoted as saying it would take a 1,500 seat theater to be self-sufficient. If she can calculate that, then she should be able to use the same assumptions to calculate the needed subsidy for the theater of the much smaller size her group is proposing.

The community deserves to know what that possible subsidy is before tying up public property for any length of time. Is it small enough that the community would support it or so large that the project will collapse under the weight of it? I don't know. Do you?

It also appears some terms of the MOU are yet to be completed.

Is it the intent to tie-up one single parking plaza for 5 years? I certainly hope the scope is limited to a single parking plaza.

Is the time to be a full 5 years? I certainly hope not, unless there are some specific milestones that must be passed for the MOU to continue. The group should propose what those milestones are as they are in the best position to know how they plan to spend the up to 5 years of time the Council is considering granting them. If those milestones are not met, the City Council should be able to terminate the MOU should there be a higher need for the land or it has become clear the proposed project will not come to fruition.

There have been 3 prior groups I can think of that have promised to raise money to build or refurbish public amenities or buildings. All believed the money would be easy to raise and their project was fully supported by the community. None of those projects have been built because none of the groups were able to raise the money. Please keep that in mind when considering how to proceed.

Sincerely,

Megan Satterlee

MOU Los Altos Stage Company Item#10 Nov 30,2021 Council Meeting

Dear Council Members.

Please do not sign an MOU with the Los Altos Stage Company.

Our parking lots are public land that is a city asset having a value of ten to twelve million dollars an acre. Currently the Los Altos Stage Company enjoys free land, free rent and subsidized utilities at their Current location. Now they want more.

I had a conversation with Pete Dailey who is on the Theater working group. He told me a new theater and all of the amenities would cost thirty-five million dollars. He said the groups expectations was that the city would provide six million in money or land or a combination of both.

The strategy being used by the State Company is to get a commitment from the city to give them a parking lot downtown, with out a business plan, feasibility study, parking plan or having raised any money of their own. According to Gabe Engeland a feasibility study as described by the Los Altos Stage company could run as high as \$400,000. The theater working group is asking for the city to pick up 25% of the cost.

The city has already lost 71 parking spots, as restaurants have tables and chairs in our parking spots. Does the Los Altos Stage Company expect us tax payers to build a parking structure for them? It seems like they want a commitment for a gift of a parking lot, before they have done any due diligence or brought a plan to the city.

According to the Surplus Land Act, surplus land needs to go for housing first. Council needs to follow State law.

Our City Finances are in trouble. Although we do not have the numbers as yet we do know that our expenditures are far exceeding our revenues. According to Jon Maginot we will have a shortfall in revenues of over twenty-five million dollars from 2020 to 2023. Kuljeet Kalkat stated at a council meeting that we have no money for CIP projects for at least the next two years. A commitment to any non-profit at this time is premature, before Council can see the operating budget and CIP budget so the fiscally responsible decisions can be made. Just to name a few--we have law suits to pay for. We have the Grant Park facility with desperately needed electrical upgrades. Our Police are understaffed and need to replace aging police cars, we need to pave our roads and fix sidewalks. The Council has established clear priorities, and a theater downtown is not one of them.

I understand that the city needs a new Police Station desperately. If the city was to float a bond, the rating agencies such as Standard and Poor's would need to look at our finances (liabilities, assets such as land and buildings and our revenues over expenses) The city cannot afford to have a bad bond rating because that makes the interest higher making the bond harder to sell to raise the needed money.

Please be fiscally responsible and let the Los Altos Stage Company pay for a feasibility study, then present it to Council, before any pen goes to paper, It is easier to do it right from the start, then try to undo mistakes.

The claims made by the los Altos Stage company that a theater downtown would generate a million dollars in sales tax revenue is absurd. There are far better ways for the city to raise sales tax revenues.

Currently among the top sources of sales tax revenues are Armadillo Willy's, BevMo, Chef Chu's, Lucky Supermarket, Ranch 76, Whole Foods Market and Trader Joe's (Information provided by Anthony Carnesecca)

. The Downtown Visioning Plan was accepted not adopted. It said that if a hotel, two high-rise apartment buildings, a theater, and an office building was built, the sales tax revenues might increase to a million dollars.

I am afraid that the Los Atos Stage Company is taking advantage of your generosity.

If the Los Altos Stage Company wants a new theater, they can pay for their own pet project. The uber-wealthy can spend their money anyway they wish, but until all our essential city needs and CIP projects are met, unfortunately you need to stand strong and deny the MOU.

Sincerely

Roberta Phillips

Dear Los Altos City Council

Priorities for the Los Altos City Council were approved by Council at the July 13, 2021 Regular meeting.

- By taking an oath of office, the Council members promised to uphold all 8 priorities, even though the community has heard at least 2 council members deny ever making any promises.

Fiscal Sustainability

The City of Los Altos will continue to be responsible financial stewards of its resources and assets to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability by practicing sound financial management and fiscal transparency, while providing fiscally sustainable government services that address the needs of the community.

Asset Management

The City of Los Altos will set clear expectations and allocate the necessary funding to maintain and improve City facilities and infrastructure that are necessary to provide high-quality services for the well-being of residents.

Continually, there are many community members voicing serious concerns re: fiscal soundness of Los Altos. And yet, the Council does not seem to be doing a thorough analysis to provide decisions for fiscal soundness, nor do they appear to be listening to the community.

The City Council should NOT recommend or approve any non-vital projects, until together the new finance manager and city manager are able to do a full analysis of the City budget assets and liabilities.

Why does Major Fligor call herself a “partner in crime” at the recent Veteran memorial service in Los Altos?

Why does Council member Meadows think there is “money to play with” at a recent council meeting?

Why does Council member Weinberg want to “cut the ribbon” for the new theatre?

Where is the hard financial scrubbing that the Citizens of Los Altos were promised? Council members Enander and Lee Eng asked for more data and research at the last council meeting regarding an MOU.

Would Fligor, Meadows, and Weinberg be as frivolous with their own hard-earned money! Wouldn't they want a business plan, projections, and commitments of financial support from the theatre supporters? Or, do they want to play the old worn-out game of greasing the palms of a few well heeled?

All essential services must be funded and completed, before any non-essential projects requested by special groups.

The City Council of Los Altos were elected to protect the assets and the people of Los Altos. This is a promise that must be kept.

From: [Pat Marriot](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: [External Sender]PUBLIC COMMENT Item 10 November 30, 2021 second comment
Date: Friday, November 26, 2021 8:21:06 PM

Council Members:

In a November 16 letter to the editor in the Town Crier, Curtis Cole says his wife asked him “why people oppose a theater downtown.” He said he didn’t know, but “they are the kind of people who don’t build community.”

If Cole bothered to ask, he might find people who oppose the theater have a different concept of community.

My ideal community would have a police station that doesn’t flood, safe and well-maintained streets, a kitchen for the seniors at Grant Park, affordable housing for our teachers and clerks. It would have a fiscally-responsible city council that wouldn’t play favorites with their friends who beg for public land and public money to fund pet projects. It would be a community where public outreach ensured the average resident would be heard over the voices of a handful of former mayors who think they still run the town.

Cole might also find those opposed to the theater are rational people with business experience who make decisions based on facts and financial analyses. He might even discover that many of us love the performing arts, but don’t see it as our responsibility to provide public resources for a theater that will never pay for itself and will be an ongoing financial burden to the city.

Pat Marriott

From: [Bill Hough](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Andrea Chelemengos](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT Item #10, November 30, 2021
Date: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 7:12:02 PM

I am OK with on having a theater in downtown Los Altos, as long as it is privately funded and no city resources (including land) are given to the project. There are plenty of more important things for the City to spend scarce resources.

The existing Bus Barn theater is close enough to downtown that replacing it is duplication of effort. Perhaps an upgrade is in order?

Additionally, has any consideration been given to working out an arrangement with Foothill College and/or LA High for use of their theaters?

If the Bus Barn people raise funds for a new theater, fine. But there should be no public resources devoted to any theater.

Bill Hough
Los Altos

From: [Pat Marriot](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT Item 10 November 30, 2021 theater MOU
Date: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 4:35:30 PM

Council Members:

In the video of the theater group's Oct 18, 2021 meeting, Mike Kasperzak, says, "We have to get a yes, a 5 year commitment, and if you do all this stuff we'll make this happen. The city's going to have to go out on a limb and say we are going to work with you to make this [theater] happen."

It makes no sense for the city of Los Altos – the residents of Los Altos – to go out on a limb for a small group of theater enthusiasts.

This is a classic example of mission creep: You "support" them, you sign an MOU, and the asks will continue. An elephant is eaten one bite at a time.

If this group sincerely believes they've got a winning plan, why aren't they putting up their own money? Or is it too risky for them to make a financial commitment? If they can't ante up, we should not be putting valuable public land on the table.

A responsible council would say, "You go out on a limb, present a feasibility study and get funding commitment for construction. Then we'll talk."

I urge you to not make any commitments to this group in the form of an MOU or any other legal document until they deliver a feasibility study and pledges for at least \$30M - \$40M construction costs.

Given your fiduciary responsibility to your constituents, you have no right to go out on a limb for the theater group or any other entity asking for public resources.

Pat Marriott