

Lemos, June

From: noreply@granicusideas.com
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 11:41 AM
To: Lemos, June
Subject: New eComment for City Council - Via Video Conference



New eComment for City Council - Via Video Conference

Jacob Patterson submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: City Council - Via Video Conference

Item: 5C. 20-788 Approve Scope of Work for the Request for Proposals for a Feasibility Study and Establishment of a Community Land Trust Serving the City of Fort Bragg

eComment: What is the projected funding source for this feasibility study should the City decide to proceed with a contract?

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Lemos, June

From: Scott Menzies <scott.m.menzies@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 2:54 PM
To: Lemos, June
Cc: Morsell-Haye, Jessica
Subject: Comment: Community Land Trust

Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am thrilled to see on the July 13 Agenda the item regarding a request for proposals for a feasibility study on a Community Land Trust for Fort Bragg (Consent Calendar - 5C 20-788). While I wish the need weren't there, I know affordable housing land trusts are a solid tool to help more folks have places to live. When we lived in Eureka, Humboldt Bay Housing Development Corporation was a very prominent organization doing this kind of work (<https://www.housinghumboldt.org/about-us>), and they've done it a very long time.

While affordable housing tends to be these orgs focus on, I also want to encourage the Council to include in this research the possibility of a Commercial Space Community Land Trust. Years ago, as co-founder of the Humboldt County Independent Business Alliance (a member of the AmIBA network), I was once on a conference call about Commercial Space Land Trusts as, essentially, "affordable housing" for entrepreneurs. Such land trusts were not common then, and still aren't common, I believe, but I think should be seriously considered for our area.

A Commercial Space Land Trust could accomplish multiple things:

1. First and foremost, be affordable housing for entrepreneurs, ensuring we retain and encourage local, unique, independent businesses that add to our unique flavor, benefitting both locals and tourists, as well as allowing people to create their own employment - creating jobs.
2. Retain local control over these historic buildings that are a critical part of what makes this city a beautiful place to live and visit.
3. Make it possible to apply for grants that could cover critical maintenance and repair of buildings that, as they age, become that much more expensive to maintain.
4. Make it possible to do important upgrades (also through grants or other funding) like sprinklering, an issue that gets more urgent each and every drier and drier year.

We've had a high blight/vacancy rate in the Central Business District for years, and, as businesses continue to die off because of the COVID crisis, the idea of an entity that holds in trust commercial space downtown becomes an even more important idea to explore.

And as the cost of maintaining buildings that were never built, specifically, to last as long as they have continues to rise (as they continue to deteriorate), the idea that such historic buildings can be funded and maintained by private individuals becomes that much less likely - especially by locals, rather than non-locals seeking to treat our community as a profit-generating source, sucking critical local money out of our economy.

Note, too, the unwillingness of some, especially non-local, downtown landlords to give our local, independent, and unique businesses a break on their rents during COVID has driven some closures, which ultimately harms our town as a place for locals to shop as well as tourists to come and admire (and shop). It's in the City's best interest to ensure these buildings stay under non-profit local control and in good shape and affordable.

As the owner, myself, of a downtown business that is on the edge and functioning in a space that, while workable, does have structural challenges, the idea of a Commercial Space Land Trust seems to be the very shot

that our local economy will need to ensure further economic sustainability for our city, especially with this COVID crisis.

Thanks for your time,

Scott Menzies

Scott Menzies, M.A. (Environment & Community)

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