

## The following correspondence is related to Agenda Item #7

**Herrick, Mariela**

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**From:** meryl siegal <merylsiegal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 5, 2023 4:31 PM  
**To:** Housing Advisory Commission; Housing Advisory Commission  
**Subject:** Ala Costa Centers request for CDBG Funds

September 5, 2023

Dear Housing Advisory Commission,

I am writing about the request you will be discussing on September 6<sup>th</sup> regarding the Ala Costa Centers' desire to procure City of Berkeley CDBG funds. I understand that "[these funds] are used for public facilities located within Berkeley that are open to the public and primarily serve low-to-moderate income Berkeley residents." The Ala Costa Center is "not open to the community" and therefore should not be funded.

I live about 3 blocks from the Ala Costa Center and I am a "moderate income Berkeley resident" I have been here for 20 years. Or rather, I am 3 blocks from Cedar Rose Park and a Center that has never been available for community use. Since I have lived here there were a less than a handful of public meetings, the number of which I could count on the fingers of one hand, that occurred in the evening led by city or county officials at the "Ala Costa Center". No public meetings initiated by the community have been held there. No events for the larger community like classes and such have been held there (except for the aforementioned meetings).

There is no phone number on the outside of the Center with whom to speak.

In sum, the Ala Costa Center is not a community center. Although the application submitted states that the organization has a culinary class for about 7 BUSD students, that does not make it a community center. The community that borders Cedar-Rose Park does not have access to the Center. Never has. We do not hold classes there as the city does in other centers, nor community meetings. In essence, our community has no community center, no place to gather as a community.

I think there is a way for the Community that borders the park, and Ala Costa Center to co-exist but that needs to be managed and for the 20 years I have lived here, I have searched but found no way to really access this community center.

I therefore ask that at the present time, since the Ala Costa Center is not "open to the community" the application submitted by the Center not be funded at this time. Furthermore, I ask that the City of Berkeley work with the community and Ala Costa so that we, community members, have access to our center and the amenities that the center could provide for the nearby community.

Sincerely,

Meryl Siegal