Levesque, Jennifer

From: Jeffrey Carter [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 8:48 AM
To: cityclerk
Subject: Public comment

Merced City Council
Public comments
FYI
You may be interested in this.

Found on Facebook. Comments by: Florence Lambert.

"Last night's City Council meeting, June 17, 2024, regarding eliminating the voice mail feature and now not allowing residents of Merced to call in and leave their opinions was pretty despicable. Serratto stated so very many things that were pretty reprehensible for a Mayor, that I was shocked. And his statement that "he receives so many complaints from the public about the phone calls is ridiculous. If he was bound to truthfully reveal how many calls he actually receives, the number would no doubt be zero……If whoever these supposedly complainers are, isn't it strange they didn't use the call in line to place these complaints? But instead, personally complained to the Mayor. ……..I think Serratto's nose was growing on that one. But the best was when our Mayor said that the quality of the meetings drops when all these residents call in. That was insulting to the resident of the City of Merced. One second Serratto stated "The Public input is essential……" Not 60 seconds later he stated "We receive too much input from the public."

Councilman Smith……..did you really say "I don't think there's a lot of people that can't come?" Did you really say "so we can be at work at 8"00 o'clock?" Are you that unaware? I can name 16 people without even thinking that cannot drive at night……That do not have computers……..and would like to come to the meetings. I am speaking of senior residents that are all very interested in the welfare of the city of Merced. Maybe you could go pick them up and take them home.

Councilwoman Boyle…….wow I am so disappointed in you. You are the councilperson of my district…….. you have so lost my vote. I cannot understand why you even wanted to be on Council……You slouch on the dais and give the impression that you're asleep most the time. Not just my opinion.

Councilman DeAngelo……..I was so appalled at you……Actually complaining that "people come to the council meetings." Good Lord…….

Council Xong……Well, I never expected to say these words "I agreed with your stance." For the first time I might add.

Matt, the council meeting most likely could be shortened by 30-40 minutes if you would not use so much time pontificating on each and every "anything." You, yourself use up way too much time and use 100 words where 20 would have said exactly the same thing.
I do not mean that as a insult. You truly do talk too much.

Shane, Sarah and Ronnie, I am confused why any of you ran for council…….Did you think it was all about attending food functions, opening new restaurants, being invited into people's homes, rainbows and unicorns? Please spare me your

complaints about getting to bed late! Seriously, I personally know there are attendees that are sitting in that audience as long as you're up at the dais. When I was still able to attend, I was there before you were and I left the same time you did.

I was embarrassed for you Merced City Council. Did any of you happen to watch the meeting on video today? If so, then surely you were also embarrassed for yourself.

Florence Lambert
Merced,"

This is what people think of you guys!
Useless

Jeffrey Carter

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Steven Donahue <stevedonahue1@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 13, 2024 6:59 AM
To: cityclerk
Subject: Merced City Council, public comments

Merced City Council.
Public comments

Finally, after 2 years and 4 months the emails are posted back online for public review. The law has always required this. on March 21, 2022 the mayor illegally broke the law and told the City Clerk to no longer post emails, critical of the City Council and the mayor, online for public review. People need to be held accountable and appropriate penalties need to be applied for breaking law. The DA and the City Attorney believe otherwise.

They council took a fake vote for show to make it sound like the City Council was doing us a favor by posting the emails online for public review. It has been the law all along. They just got caught.

Saying that having no bid contracts is like buying a carton of milk at the grocery store is a complete joke. Some of these contracts are for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Awarding them without a bid process leaves them open for complete and 100% corruption. Which they are.

Now that they have completely shut down a large portion of the people of Merced from making public comments by eliminating voicemails shows you that they could care less what the people of Merced need and have to say. It's all about them and the corruption.

Now they are going after in person, public comments with putting restrictions on the amount of time allowed for public comments on certain subjects and setting limits of two minutes for speakers or a total of 10 speakers. This is getting nuts. They could care less what the public has to say.

It's the peoples public meeting.
They are there to Aid in the conducting of the peoples business. It is not their Meeting.
Speak up.

Steve Donahue
209-402-8911

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Steven Donahue <stevedonahue1@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 13, 2024 6:55 AM
To: cityclerk
Cc: Cornwell, Craig
Subject: Public comments. Merced City Council. Post online.

Merced City Council

Brown Act section 54950.
"In enacting this chapter, the Legislature finds and declares that the public commissions, boards and councils and the other public agencies in this State exist to AID in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of the law that their actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly.
The people of this State do NOT yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do NOT give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created."

This is the law. Word for Word. Roberts rules is not the law. They are just suggestions, and you know that.

Mr. Cornwell, mayor Serratto, Councilman Boyle, Merced County District Attorney.

How can it possibly not be against the law when the City Council and the Mayor are deciding that what the people said, in the form of voicemail, should not be known to the people of Merced. It is the peoples right to know what issues the people have. Even if someone reads from a script. Please explain that at the next City Council meeting why it is legal to withhold information from the public. Voicemails contain information that the public is entitled to know. Whether it's cracks in the sidewalk or crackheads in the park.

Do the ACLU and ADA people approve of the new policy to withhold information from the people.

Steve Donahue
209-402-8911

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Fernando Echeveria [redacted]
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 1:25 PM
To: Levesque, Jennifer

Americans with Disabilities Act.

City of Merced.

It has come to my attention that Merced City Hall has been directed by the Merced City Council and the Mayor to violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. Numerous Brown Act Violations submitted for investigation by the District Attorney Office are going through a second review by our new Chief District Attorney Supervisor Katy Gates. As well as criminal complaint against Ronnie DeAnda.
The members of our local community are now involved in a civil action against the illegality of violations concerning the ADA non compliance. As a former City Council Member and Candidate for Mayor in this election cycle. It is very concerning. As the State of California Civil Rights Division investigation headed by Guadalupe Hernandez is ongoing and continues to be involved in the numerous allegations and complaints of illegal procedure and corrupt elements. This information and the numerous witnesses will be forwarded to investigation. The momentum of the people who are going to be affected by the ADA non compliance are already speaking with consultants and attorneys. It's not going to be in the best interests of our taxpayer's to have incompetent council members create a new chapter of wasteful spending.
However.... The legal right for a group of people that demand justice are turning their civil charges against the public employees who are not protected by the city of Merced and participate in illegal actions. As well as the council members themselves who are already being recognized by legal experts and now already face civil action. Ronnie DeAnda is a prime example of having to answer to civil action and criminal charges for the use of City of Merced seal and counterfeit badge on political flyers. Those flyers were distributed by firefighters in uniform and using fire equipment and on duty. Derrick Parker is another prime example of failed corrupt mechanism and has resigned. Numerous resignations are all connected to a new chapter in government operations and the cleansing of corruption prevalent in Merced City Hall. We all make choices in the workplace to be a part of the corruptive elements or take a step back and be a part of eliminating the problem.
The Americans with Disabilities Act was to prevent what is happening today at Merced City Hall.The outstanding citizen's involved are supporting new bold leadership to bring back decency and honesty in local government operations. What has transpired is a good example of preventing disabled citizens from participation in the protected area of local government. It's a direct correlation to quell the public's outcry and voice. This is not acceptable. Most importantly it is a direct violation of the most important aspect of our fundamental rights of the most powerful laws. The First Amendment rights of every single American.
Sincerely,
Fernando Echevarria former City Council Member District 2

Your voice Your Future

City of Merced
678 w 18th street
Merced, Ca 95340

July 11, 2024

Dear Mayor Serratto and City Council Members.

Subject: TBID Proposal for the Merced Tourism.

The Merced Hotel Lodging Association (MHLA) members had a meeting on July 10th 2024, 3:00 PM at the Courtyard Marriott Merced to discuss the TOT increase. The consensus of the members is to not support the TOT increase.

We do believe that we should move forward with forming a TBID and the hotel owners will assess the additional tax on themselves, most likely 2%, which will go to fund the TBID . This will need to be voted on by the Association members and passed by a 50% plus 1. We believe this might take some effort but is more palatable to our members.

We know this is a change from what we discussed in the past. We are open to having a conversation with you and Staff, but with the upcoming council meeting on Monday July 15th, 2024, there is not enough time to have another discussion.

Based on the previous TBID proposal submitted to the City of Merced on August 15th 2023, the MHLA members requested the City's contribution of 2% from the existing Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and 1% hotel owners can assess themselves to make the total contribution of 3% for funding the TBID.

If the hotel owners will assess themselves 2% for the TBID, then they will ask only a one-time lump sum contribution from the City to support the TBID. After that the City of Merced does not need to contribute anything more for the TBID, they can use the 10% of TOT for the general fund.

I hope this proposal will serve the blueprint for funding the TBID. The Merced Hotel and Lodging Association is convinced that this is a vital investment for increasing Merced tourism.

Sincerely,

Edwin A Kainth, President
Merced Hotel & Lodging association
(MHLA) A non -profit organization
Ph: 209-756-5218
Email: mhla.merced@gmail.com

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Judy Blackburn [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 5:57 PM
To: Housing
Subject: CDBG loan

To the members of the Merced City Council:

Annual Plan 24/25

This letter is in support of Sierra Saving Grace's effort to get a CDBG loan from the City of Merced. It is no surprise that Merced has homelessness problem. Sierra Saving Grace has been awarded this grant nine different years and have been able to house over 42 people. People once living on the streets are being housed in duplexes and triplexes. There is follow-up by case workers from SSG to be sure that these once homeless people's needs are met. SSG has a proven track record of taking dilapidated properties throughout Merced and upgrading the houses to enhance the neighborhoods, as well as provide shelter for homeless people. If the Merced City Council want to truly make an impact on the homelessness problem in our city, I believe they should vote in favor of Sierra Saving Grace receiving the Community Development Block Grant.

Thank you for your time!

Mrs. Judy Blackburn
Merced, CA 95348

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Harvest Time Merced <harvesttimemerced@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 23, 2024 5:48 PM
To: Housing
Subject: 2024 AAP Comment
Attachments: Suggestion to City Council.xlsx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Greetings Mayor and Councilmembers,

My comments are specifically regarding the direction you provided on the CDBG funds for the Public Service Projects.

If I understand Kim Nutt's explanation correctly, she and her staff presented Option 1 & 2 as they best aligned with the results of the Community needs survey and the City's Five-year plan. While all appear to be worthy projects & programs, if the results of the Public Survey is not fully considered - it seems to beg the question "why then spend time and money on the survey in the first place?" While I know that either of the recommended options would benefit Harvest Time more than the Council's decision, it is not for that reason alone that I present my thoughts.

Since the funds come from HUD and are intended to meet their objectives, I understand that whatever the Council decides must also receive HUD's approval. Herein lies an additional obstacle for the organizations - Delay of reimbursement. It is already a financial challenge as the projects are to begin on July 1, 2024 while reimbursement is usually not available until February or March 2025. There has already been a two month delay this year in the public hearing process which will no doubt further delay the rest of the process for the 2024/2025 funding period. **Please do not make any decisions that potentially could delay it even further.**

In the event that all projects meet HUD's goals & objectives, I would then ask you to consider this suggestion:

Since the amount of available funding is roughly half of the amount requested, approve each organization to receive half of what they requested (with the exception of Calvary Assembly for the reason Kim stated in the June 3rd meeting). I've attached a spreadsheet showing my recommendation.

This action would treat each organization fairly rather than the appearance of bias towards Lifeline Community when the Council approved **$5,000 more** than they requested - while cutting all of the rest of the projects.

In the event that an organization could not proceed with the reduced amount of funding and therefore reciends their request, the available funds could then be distributed among the remaining organizations.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sheila Garcia
Chairman
Harvest Time

	Program Name	Requested Amount	Council Approved:	Difference from Amount Requested	% of Total Request	51.19% of Requested Amount		
1	Sierra Saving Grace	$106,500.00	$40,000.00	**-$66,500.00**	51.19%	$54,517.35		
2	Harvest Time	$67,720.00	$30,000.00	**-$37,720.00**	51.19%	$34,665.87	*	
3	Healthy House	$37,000.00	$25,000.00	**-$12,000.00**	51.19%	$18,940.30		
4	Project Sentinel	$55,000.00	$25,000.00	**-$30,000.00**	51.19%	$28,176.50		
5	LifeLine Community	$25,000.00	$30,000.00	**$5,000.00**	51.19%	$12,797.50		
6	Walking by Faith	$50,000.00	$24,685.00	**-$25,315.00**	51.19%	$25,595.00		
7	Calvary Assembly	$27,597.00	$10,000.00	n/a	flat amt	$10,000.00		
	TOTALS	**$368,817.00**	**$184,685.00**			**$184,692.52**		
						-$7.52	*	*deduct from Harvest Time*
						$184,685.00		

Levesque, Jennifer

From: John [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 4:12 PM
To: cityclerk

Dear Merced City Council,

I am writing on behalf of Sierra Saving Grace to endorse and encourage their effort to obtain a CDBG Loan from the City of Merced. Sierra Saving Grace uses this money to buy and renovate older unoccupied houses which are then rented at a very low rate, depending on the occupant's income. Tenants are homeless or at risk for homelessness. Please consider awarding Sierra Saving Grace Homeless Project so they can continue their good work in our community.

Sierra Saving Grace Homeless Project

1 OVER 42 PEOPLE HOUSED

SSG has been awarded this loan 9 different years and now manages 16 units, some being duplexes or triplexes, currently housing 42 individuals. The city has put a lot of effort into seeking to renovate or build large apartment complexes to house many people, but the loan/grant approach has been very successful, too.

2 PROVEN TRACK RECORD

SSG has a proven track record over nearly 10 years of being able to change older, dilapidated properties into up-graded houses enhancing neighborhoods. SSG's portion of the work met every deadline and every requirement.

3 HOUSING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Some Merced's most vulnerable homeless and some who have been on the street the longest have been able to be housed under this program because of the very low rent requirement and because SSG's case workers follow up to be sure needs are met.

4 SCATTERED SITES

Under this program, people who were once living on the street are scattered throughout the city rather than being housed all together in one large building. This makes for a more peaceful transition for the newly-housed and for the neighborhood. HUD considers it a "best practice".

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Adrienne Lopes [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 3:29 PM
To: Housing
Subject: Attention: Annual Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

My name is Adrienne Lopes and I am writing to you regarding Merced Community Development Block Grant. In previous years this Block Grant has been used to support the efforts of Sierra Saving Grace Homeless Project. Last year SSG did not receive the grant. I am writing to you asking for your support in considering SSG as a recipient for this year's grant.

Homelessness is a consistent topic and concern in the city of Merced. SSG has been very successful in housing and monitoring homeless individuals. This organization uses the money from the grant to renovate apartment complexes to house the homeless. What more can we ask of an organization than to be actively involved in supporting our homeless brothers and sisters?

Please consider naming Sierra Saving Grace as a recipient of the Grant.

Thank you for your consideration. You may contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Lopes
[redacted]

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Joanne [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 2:39 PM
To: Housing
Subject: Annual Plan 24/25

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Merced City Council
Annual Plan 24/25

I have been a resident of Merced for almost 50 years. Over the years I have seen an increase of the homeless. I am very familiar with Sierra Saving Grace and all of the good work they have done in buying properties to renovate in order to house those that are homeless. They have been able to purchase these properties by receiving money in the form of a loan or loan/grant from the City of Merced. Sierra Saving Grace's ability to find properties in various neighborhoods to house the homeless has been incredible. It is also so important that these properties are scattered throughout Merced and not just lumped together in one particular area. I am so hoping the City of Merced will once again see that it is only the right thing to do in supporting Sierra Saving Grace once again by giving them Merced's Community Development Block Grant to continue all of their outstanding work and by giving hope to those that are homeless.

Sincerely,
Joanne Mills

Levesque, Jennifer

From: kaylee [redacted]
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2024 1:14 AM
To: Housing
Subject: Annual Plan 24/25

Dear Merced City Council,

Sierra Saving Grace, SSG, is a non-profit organization helping to house and take care of the large homeless population within Merced. Because of the continuous increase of population within this city, the increase in homeless has risen as well. With that said, SSG will be able to use the federal money from HUD to be able to house the homeless that have been living upon the streets as the grant/loan would provide them with living necessities and desirable living circumstances like low rent and a clean space. Please consider using this year's fund to help SSG create a better community and environment in Merced.

Thank you,
Kaylee Nguyen

Levesque, Jennifer

From: Rachel Rodriguez [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 4:00 PM
To: cityclerk

Dear Merced City Council,

I am writing on behalf of Sierra Saving Grace to endorse and encourage their effort to obtain a CDBG Loan from the City of Merced. Sierra Saving Grace uses this money to buy and renovate older unoccupied houses which are then rented at a very low rate, depending on the occupant's income. Tenants are homeless or at risk for homelessness. Please consider awarding Sierra Saving Grace Homeless Project so they can continue their good work in our community.

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