



CITY OF SAN MATEO

City Hall
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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 20

Section Name: {{section.name}}

File ID: {{item.tracking_number}}

TO: City Council

FROM: Drew Corbett, City Manager

PREPARED BY: City Attorney Department

MEETING DATE: January 19, 2021

SUBJECT:
Report on Housing Leadership Council Post-election Event

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive report on the events leading to the denial of access to two persons registered to attend the post-election event.

BACKGROUND:

The Housing Leadership Council (HLC) is a nonprofit corporation formed to promote the development of housing and affordable housing within the community. During the last election, HLC was actively engaged in the campaign to defeat Measure Y, the initiative to extend the voter-approved general plan height and density limits. In late November 2020, HLC organized a post-election decompression event to review the results of the November election. The event was to be held virtually over Zoom. HLC promoted the event through its newsletter and through social media posts. The event generated significant interest as over 100 persons registered to attend. Promotional materials for the event stated that councilmembers Bonilla, Goethals, and Lee would attend and make presentations.

Two persons who were active supporters of Measure Y registered to attend the event. Both persons received notice that their registrations were accepted and were provided links to join the event. The event was scheduled to take place on December 9. On December 8, an HLC staff member noticed that the two Measure Y supporters had registered for the event. The staff member cancelled their registrations. The cancellation of the registrations caused a message to be sent out to the individuals notifying them that their registration had been cancelled. One of the individuals called HLC to find out why but was unable to contact anyone.

The event was held on December 9 and attended by over 100 persons. All five members of the City Council attended the event. No one at HLC notified any of the council members before the event that the registration of the two Measure Y supports had been cancelled. One of the persons whose registration had been cancelled attempted to attend the event. While this person was at first able to view the event, after a few moments his attendance was cut off.

About a week after the HLC event one of the persons who had been denied access contacted the City Clerk and requested that she provide a recording of the event. The City Clerk informed him that she did not have a recording because this was not a city event. On December 23, 2020, this person emailed a letter to the City Clerk, the City Attorney, and the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office expressing his concern about the council participation in the HLC event. He stated his concern that this could be a potential Brown Act violation because members of the public had been denied access. He asked that he be provided with a recording of the event to remedy his concern.

On January 4, several members of the public emailed the City Council with their concern that three members of the council had participated in secret meetings with developers and housing advocates. At the January 4 council meeting, the Council directed staff to ascertain the facts surrounding this event. The information provided in this report was obtained through

interviews of the two persons whose registration to the event had been cancelled, the HLC executive director, and the HLC staff member who cancelled the registrations of those two persons. HLC has also provided staff with a recording of the post-election event.

BUDGET IMPACT:

This action is informational and will have no impact on the city's budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This report is not a project subject to CEQA, because it can be seen with certainty that it will not cause a physical change in the environment. (Public Resources Code Section 21065.)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Public Comment

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