



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

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From: baerjc@earthlink.net
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [City Council](#); [Gabriel Engeland](#)
Subject: public comments city council meeting may 9 item 6
Date: Monday, May 8, 2023 7:48:43 PM

To: Los Altos City Council

From: Jon Baer

Re: May 9, 2023 meeting agenda item #6

Below are my comments. Additionally, I am requesting the Council pull this item from the consent calendar so that the issues I have raised can be discussed prior to the Council taking a vote on this matter

1. The City has not met its obligation to diligently and fully pursue bids consistent with the City council vote in November 2021. The RFP was written in a vague and ambiguous manner which required any bidder to do significant work (and guesswork) just to create a cost estimate and respond to the RFP. It is akin to asking a contractor to remodel your house, without providing any specific guidance on what work is to be done. It is thus not surprising the City received no bids initially.
2. "Staff conducted a sole source search, and it was determined that the cost of mothballing would be, at minimum, \$469,000, which is almost 90% above the initial engineer's estimate." However, that bid was not presented to Council with an analysis as to why the cost was significantly higher. It would have been more productive to address the deficiencies in the RFP and identify suitable potential bidders by working with the various historic building consultants who have done work for the City previously.
3. It appears that staff made no attempt to get information as to why no one bid initially, nor why the sole source bid was significantly higher. Someone who was truly interested in getting the work completed would have done so. Another alternative, not pursued, would have been to address the deficiencies and scope of the RFP and then go out to get bids on a revised RFP.
4. The alternatives being considered for the EIR are, at best, vague. Adaptive reuse covers a very broad range of construction and deconstruction alternatives. Is the adaptive use scenario being evaluated contemplating work such that the building retains landmark status? The City has not met its own rules for when a landmark can be taken off landmark status. According to the City's own regulations, the only basis for removing a landmark designation is loss of integrity of the structure or incorrect information which was materially relied on to grant landmark status to the structure initially. If the City determines it is because of loss of integrity due to building deterioration, then the City has violated its own rules about maintaining landmark structures. In conversations with History Museum personnel, additional information about the Halsey's only strengthens the historic importance of them and their former residence.