



Las Vegas

Agenda Item No.: 10.

AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF: JUNE 4, 2014

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC COMMENT DURING THIS PORTION OF THE AGENDA MUST BE LIMITED TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION. IF YOU WISH TO BE HEARD, COME TO THE PODIUM AND GIVE YOUR NAME FOR THE RECORD. THE AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION, AS WELL AS THE AMOUNT OF TIME ANY SINGLE SPEAKER IS ALLOWED, MAY BE LIMITED.

Minutes:

WENDY KVECK, Visual Artist and Arts Educator, appeared to address Bill 2014-40 on the agenda. She has participated in the growth of the arts community since she became a downtown homeowner in 2007 and has been renting studio space in the 18B Arts District since 2007. She has a current artist business license and opposes the proposed 30 percent fee increase in the Visual Arts category. MS. KVECK asked the City Council to consider and implement smart cultural policy that will increase the community base of artist and galleries and the patronage of the galleries beyond Preview Thursday and First Friday, attracting more artistic industry business and cultural tourism. She believes that the fee should be waived altogether as a business incentive for artists working in the 18B District and cited fee waivers in amounts from \$10,000 to \$50,000 the City has provided to Urban Lounges and Limited Taverns in the Fremont East and 18B Districts. She is concerned that the incentives have unevenly favored drinking establishments rather than the culture producers. A \$200 fee can be a hardship to many artists and since 2007, Las Vegas has lost at least 10 highly regarded galleries. She has researched business incentives for artists in culture districts in other cities and is asking for consideration of incentives such as sales tax exemptions, property tax credits and permit fee relief. She asked the City Council to reject the proposed business license fee increase.

PATTY DOMINGUEZ, Program Director at Metro Arts Council of Southern Nevada, opposes the proposed Visual Arts business license fee increase. She said that imposing a 30 percent increase to the Visual Arts enterprises business license fees while continuing to grant tax incentives to the Tavern and Urban Lounge industries is a blow that many in the creative industries will not survive. The estimated \$1,550 increase in revenue from Visual Arts businesses is dwarfed by the discounted revenue being waived for Taverns and Urban Lounges in the same area. As real estate and rental prices continue to climb, and government and management agencies seek a bigger piece of the redevelopment pie, many in the arts community will be forced to migrate from the area altogether. She said that artistic, cultural and social experiences keep people in a community and that 5.1 percent of Clark County businesses belong to the Arts industries, employing almost 21,000 people. MS. DOMINGUEZ urged the City Council to reject the fee increases to the Visual Arts community.

MAYOR GOODMAN commented that this agenda item will only be read into the record and will be referred to the Recommending Committee meeting, which would be the appropriate time to make comments.

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COUNCILMAN COFFIN said that he would like to hear the comments and that they discovered the Artists were lumped in with Commercial Photographers; he sees that as a problem.

PATRICK DUFFY, Las Vegas Citizen, said that the arts community is not asking for a freebie; they want to be accountable, transparent citizens in the city. He asked that the artists not be encumbered just when they are getting their feet secure in some areas and stated that the creative culture will make the City proud.

MARC ABELMAN, 18B President, thanked the City Council for revitalizing the downtown area but opposes Item 42 and said that the artists bring the originality, authenticity and iconicness to the community. He asked the City Council to not move forward with this bill.

GINGER BRUNER, Contemporary Arts Center, said that the group was a founding group for the Arts District and they would like to keep the Arts District artists. It costs money to make art and the amount of money the artists make is low compared to the cost of materials, time and effort invested. She said that they would like to have artists in the Arts District, but raising fees makes it much more difficult.

GIG De PIO, Artist, Contemporary Arts Center, said that a few months ago the Contemporary Arts Center was on the verge of shutting up. He wanted to create his own studio space at the Emergency Arts, but with the expenses and fees he could not do that. Raising the fees for doing business downtown will force artists to find other jobs that have nothing to do with art.

STEVEN FRANKLIN, Las Vegas resident, opposes Item 42 and said that a lot of artists have been struggling. He said that a lot of them have been working downtown for years, making tenant improvements on buildings they do not own and volunteering time to make the district much more visually appealing. For some artists, the fee increase is a considerable amount.

BRUCE BARRETT, Connecticut resident, said that he has experience as a developer and with artists. He said that he has been studying Las Vegas and was able to visit Fremont Street. Bringing in a lot of people with low disposable incomes who are not art collectors and are only interested in drinking in the streets will not get the City where it wants to be. He believes the City is trying to micromanage too much and if all of the artists say that they cannot afford the fee increases, the City should listen to them.