

From: [Silvia Ledezma](#)
To: [Supervisor Candace Andersen](#); [Supervisor Burgis](#); [Julie Enea](#)
Cc: [Clerk of the Board](#)
Subject: Input to Internal Operations Committee
Date: Monday, March 14, 2022 10:31:29 AM

I appreciate that you have taken the time to inquire about AC5 County Arts matters and concerns.

I am Silvia Ledezma Arts educator and advocate. My B.F.A. is from Cal. College of the Arts and a Masters of Arts in Visual Studies from the University of California at Berkeley.

In 2016 I was appointed by County Supervisor John Gioia and continued reappointment through 2021. I spent 5 years and eight months with the Arts Commission. As Chair I spent 12 months and 3 days due to a resignation.

I have been involved with the Superior Court of Contra Costa County as a Civil Grand Juror in 2018. This means that I volunteered for the County almost seven years.

Since 2016 I started to realize that the Commissions lacked team work, respect for Latinx like me. Through the years there's been secrecy and violations to the Brown Act and to Bylaws, nepotism and disruption when we needed consensus.

I reported this issue to a County Administrator which is no longer here. We were told that the Zoom meetings were not recorded because of Brown Act violations.

As the Chair to the County Arts commission I endured a lot of stress and frustration due to the lack of oversight.

I was immersed in the creation of the Cultural Plan prospectus updating Bylaws and creating Agendas. For me Inclusion and equity is the most important element for a better society.

I recommend that what is stated above does not happen again. For the Board and County Administration to observe the development of a new commission.

I recommend option one as a realistic approach in building a new Arts and Culture Commission for Contra Costa County.

Silvia Ledezma M.A.

From: [Jenny E. Balisle](#)
To: [Supervisor Candace Andersen](#); [Supervisor Burgis](#); [Julie Enea](#)
Subject: IOC Public Comments
Date: Monday, March 14, 2022 12:59:56 PM
Attachments: [Pandemic Relief Report.pdf](#)

Hello,

Jenny E. Balisle's IOC Agenda #8 comments for the record!

Thank you,

Jenny

Hello,

Thank you Supervisor Burgis and Supervisor Anderson for your attention to item #8 on the Internal Operations Committee agenda. My name is Jenny Balisle and I'm an administrator, curator, artist, and UC Berkeley Extension educator. As the former Managing Director of Arts & Culture Commission, I fully support Art Builds Community's recommendations including dissolving the Commission. Art Builds Community's expertise is impressive including numerous certifications, awards, publications, webinars, and philanthropic activities.

I would like to thank the County Administration Office staff for their subcommittee report and important analysis. **I support Option #1 to dissolve the Arts & Culture Commission and establish a nonprofit organization.** It is the logical next step to professionally meet community needs.

Of all California counties: only 9 of the 54 California Art Council recognized art agencies are county governments. All others are nonprofits. One local example is SVCREATES in Santa Clara County, they have been a leader in innovative community art programs and initiatives. Board members are esteemed art professionals and advocates.

Contra Costa county has historically had the lowest arts budget and staff of all Bay Area counties. Backed by a 2021 Vogel Consulting report (included in this email), this has had devastating impacts including limited funding opportunities on artists and art organizations. For example, San Francisco artists received 10x more grants than Contra Costa. BIPOC artists and art organizations continue to be disproportionately impacted.

When the Arts & Culture Commission received \$250k Measure X funds, it was reduced from the \$625k ask to only include 4 new programs with limited staff funds. No funds were earmarked for signature programs. In that position, I was managing 8 programs, writing grants, and facilitating commission business on an independent part time contractor salary. I worked 7 days a week and adding 4 new programs was unobtainable.

Since September, 6 Commissioners have resigned, a Senior Deputy County

Administrator, and Managing Director.

The Arts & Culture Commission has had limited funding and little oversight since 1994. The current structure is unable to flourish, meet community needs, and be sustainable.

A nonprofit model follows best practices of successful county agencies locally and nationally. Implementing Art Build's Community's recommendations and selecting Option #1 provides a solid arts foundation for the future.

Sincerely,

Jenny Balisle