

## Iraheta, Alba

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**From:** Adam Bray-Ali  
**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 2:29 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
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**Subject:** Public comment for 5/20/2024 City Council meeting Item #13

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Good afternoon,

This is a public comment for Agenda item #13 on the City Council Agenda for May 20, 2024.

Dear councilmembers,

I encourage you to delay voting on this specific agenda item and lease agreement for the newly formed Rental Stabilization Department based on several specific items:

- **Clarify actual needs:** The current needs and space requirements were drawn up by an out of area consulting firm (BHYV) and driven by a plan from the Pasadena Rental Housing Board without real world experiences in office space and usage. The consultant that the city hired uses the home address of the owner for their business address and they are suggesting that Pasadena lease offices for almost a million dollars when parking and other costs are added. We don't know yet if this amount of space is the required amount and the board/department currently employs less than 10 people. While the old adage of 'build it and they will come' might be true in the Field of Dreams, the Rental Housing Board has not even figured out how to start collecting funds from property owners despite the 1 year requirement in Measure H and the current interim director not having fully integrated the goals of the board with the requirements from the city. Perhaps a smaller space that can be used in the interim makes more sense than one that is built out for staff that has not even been hired and with no clear timeline for this hiring to complete.

- **Proximity to the existing city offices:** The Rental Housing Board members appear to want to create a space that is separate from the current operations from the rest of the city and community. The corner of Del Mar and Los Robles is not near the city hall and existing offices of the Housing Department. With so much overlap between the two departments, it seems more valuable to look for space that allows better communication between the two departments and the city as a whole. I do recognize the item #14 in the council agenda of leasing space here for the Risk Management department that already exists.

- **Alternative spaces or less expensive considerations:** There appears to be no mention of alternatives. In my experiences at the Rental Housing Board meetings, the need for space was discussed in a way that didn't recognize the alternative of using city owned property that may not be perfect but could work. Another alternative that was not discussed was the use of spaces owned by the PUSD or less expensive choices than a high rise in the convention center area that is not easily accessed.

- **Parking:** This particular location and lease does not include parking for staff, board members or the general public. In the staff report, they estimate an additional \$88,000 for parking beyond the lease amount. It is not clear if this is an annual rate or over the course of the 40 month lease terms. Not including an area for the public to easily and affordably access the department will dissuade the public from engaging with the staff and department members.

I have also learned that there is an ongoing and very loud protest against the hotel across the street from this specific location. Board member Peter Dreier has repeatedly written editorials and posted negative stories about this hotel and how the city is not allowing for loud and boisterous protests. See link below published in Pasadena Now on May 16, 2024 Being located near an area of conflict where Rental Housing Board members are actively protesting on the sidewalks will make access even more challenging for those with opposing views <https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/guest-opinion-peter-dreier-pasadena-is-violating-the-constitutional-right-to-protest>

As of now, the Council has effectively rubber stamped spending decisions from the RHB and fronted the money for no-bid consultants and outside attorneys who rarely appear in person at the RHB meetings. I fear that this expensive office space will remain underutilized and cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars in future fees to Pasadena property owners while not providing a true use benefit for the city and residents here.

Thank you,

Adam Bray-Ali

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