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Comment re: Tomorrow's 8/11 committee and council discussion on the Olympic 2018 Bid Proposal (CF15-0989, 15-0989-S2)

Sylvie Shain <sylvie@sylvieshain.com>

Thu, Aug 10, 2017 at 3:32 PM

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Dear Honorable Chair and Members of the Olympic Ad Hoc Committee,

I am writing to you today, having heard statements made by members of the Olympics Ad Hoc Committee as I listened to last week's hearing. I wanted to commend the members who approached the deliberation with caution and highlighted the budgetary and financial concerns that are magnified by the city's rush to approve the 2028 Olympic bid which has not yet had any independent analysis and this, while the State legislature has yet to initiate a vote on cost-overruns.

While the optimism on the latter as a *faite-accomplie* seemed to permeate the committee, it is extremely dangerous to put the cart before the horse and lead the city blindly into signing an agreement that leaves it liable for damages if for any reason the Games do not move forward. I would suggest that as more people become familiar with the Olympic bid process, the IOC's catastrophic reputation, and the devastation recent Olympics have caused their host cities, it is not inconceivable that a Public Referendum might occur in the future, either at the state or local level, causing any and/or all of these decisions to be over-turned. Caution is the best remedy to avoid this eventuality.

The current rush by the bid committee, which is composed of many individuals who stand to personally gain economically from an Olympics in LA, is totally irresponsible and I ask that you please apply the same level-headedness to this week's discussion and slow this horse down, so we can all take a look at it and make sure it is fit for the races (pun intended).

Doing so will help minimize and mitigate potential harms, ensure a fully transparent and democratic process for the city's residents, and therefore minimize public backlash. The city council is beholden to the constituents whom you have all taken an oath to serve and protect, and many of this city's residents are unaware that this process is even taking place, much less what the implications are. I am noticing more and more as I talk to people that they- like I have- are finding out what an Olympics bid could mean for the city and they have questions that merit responses.

With the additional four year timeline and the fact that there are no other cities proposed for 2028, it is therefore unnecessary and irresponsible to rush the city into this decision, as the IOC's deadline is in fact, arbitrary.

The new bid warrants new study and new consideration. Four years is 57% more time than the previous proposed timeline and with that comes far more uncertainty about our economic stability, the chance of another major earthquake (which has been predicted is forthcoming), the national political climate as it relates to the status of immigrants and risk of deportation, and levels of homelessness, which are tied to housing affordability and displacement. It isn't like we are currently even in a positive trend on the latter and could have reasonable expectations that the worst is behind us as [recent study](#) indicates. We have never built more units of housing and yet we keep losing affordability....which for housing advocates like me, is very clearly tied to the continual construction of displacement-inducing market rate and luxury projects.

I ask that you recommend a continuance and either hold Friday's city council vote and at minimum ask to impose a condition to amend the bid contract and release the city from the liability of fees/damages to the IOC if the city rescinds its agreement within the next four years- the added time that this bid process has provided. This would give us time to conduct independent studies and financial analysis. That would be a minimally fair and reasonable condition to impose. I also ask that final execution of the bid contract be by the entire city council. We don't live in a monarchy and relinquishing this right to 2 people instead of 16 is a transference of power that is unfair to voters, who rely on their elected representative for accountability. I also ask you to all to ensure that every opportunity is afforded members of the public who wish to address the council by having a public hearing in council chambers tomorrow (8/11/17) as there has not yet been a full council hearing on proposed 2028 bid.

As to the question of the substance and merit of the bid, I recognize that many have a romantic association with the Olympics that began in childhood. Like many romances, the years can reveal things we never quite knew before. The wool has certainly been pulled from my eyes as story after story about the devastation caused by Olympics have been revealed in city after city all over the world- from displacement, mass eviction, criminalization of the poor, and the massive cost-overruns and corruption scandals.

The glaze of gold medals can no longer mask the fact that the IOC, an elite body of the world's most powerful people does not play fair and does nor does it hold itself accountable, not in terms of compensation to the Olympians who devote endless hours to their sport, and certainly not to the cities who host them. It is important to note that while 1984 LA Olympics is being touted as a financial success story, it is likely largely due to the fact that citizens voted to not cover cost-overruns in a referendum, which ultimately forced the bid committee and IOC into accountability and they developed the corporate mega-sponsorship model that covered costs the city might have had to pay.

It is worth mentioning that the principals and core values of our city cannot be properly reflected in this event until such time that the IOC reforms itself and models its decision-making after democratic, not autocratic processes. We have a responsibility in the larger sense not to enable the type of behavior that does not reflect those values, be it by our own President or the IOC. In order to honor the true intent of the Olympics and ensure a positive legacy, reformation is needed to ensure that the Games have a future and occur in a sustainable and equitable way. There is precedent for ideology being placed above the Olympic tradition, as the 1980 US boycott indicates.

I ask that our city leadership do not sacrifice our own city's chartered democratic process, by allowing for proper citizen engagement, independent oversight, and transparency, in order to conform with the demands and processes of the IOC.

I hope that you recognize the enormity of this decision for our city and realize that not going along with the proposed plan and timeline does not equate to being against athletes, youth sports programs, the mayor, or the Olympics themselves, but it means that you are doing your duty to ensure the best interests of the citizens of our city and an opportunity for truly successful Olympics Games, by every measure.

Respectfully,
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Housing Rights Advocate



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Comments 8.11.2017 Ad Hoc on the 2024 Summer Olympics-Agenda No. 1-CFI 15-0989 & 15-0989-S2

Joyce Dillard <dillardjoyce@yahoo.com>

Thu, Aug 10, 2017 at 4:12 PM

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Has anyone addressed the implications of the threats of destruction from North Korea or any other type of disaster that would burden the City with debt.

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