

Berkeley City Council

CONSENT CALENDAR
September 10, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Laurie Capitelli
Subject: Budget Referral: Berkeley Art Center

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the budget process an increase of \$30,000 annually for the Berkeley Art Center.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$30,000 from the General Fund.

BACKGROUND

Berkeley Art Center (BAC), located at 1275 Walnut Street in Live Oak Park, is the only community-based visual art center in Berkeley. It has served the Berkeley community for over forty-five years through a combination of exhibitions, public programs, publications, events, and has operated as a valued community resource for the visual arts. It produces regular museum-quality exhibitions every year and 20 to 25 related programs and events including family days, workshops, artist lectures, panel presentations and film screenings.

BAC's annual budget, approaching \$200,000, covers a staff of one full-time director and two part-time employees, insurance, security services, printing, mailing expenses, supplies and materials needed to operate and general maintenance of a professional exhibition space open to the public. They rely upon membership, local business sponsors, grant funding and each Board member to contribute generously to leverage the annual funds received from the City.

In the past four years the BAC has significantly elevated the breadth and quality of its exhibits, attracting highly-regarded local artists and three times the attendees at its events and exhibitions than in past years. Press coverage has been steady and extremely positive. Kenneth Baker, the pre-eminent San Francisco Chronicle art critic, recently referred to the BAC as "a hidden gem." Berkeley Art Center has also embarked on a successful membership campaign over the past 3 years, doubling the number of paid members since 2009.

The City has historically subsidized the Berkeley Art Center at the same level for many years, though it reduced its annual allocation in real dollars by 6%, from \$70,000 in FY 2011 to \$66,652 in the recently adopted FY 2014 budget. Berkeley Art Center is

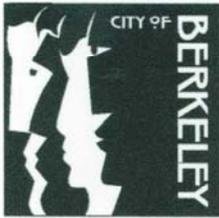
requesting additional financial support to expand its development program in order to become more self-sustaining, to improve community outreach, further support its staff and infrastructure, and to address much-needed facility enhancements and upgrades.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Laurie Capitelli, District 5 981-7150

ATTACHMENTS

1. April 22, 2013 Letter of support from the Civic Art Commission



Office of Economic Development
Civic Arts Program

April 22, 2013

Dear Mayor Tom Bates and Honorable Members of the City Council,

As outgoing chair of the Civic Arts Commission, I am writing on behalf of our Commission to express our support of the Berkeley Art Center's request that its annual allocation be increased by \$30,000 per year for a period of two years.

The Berkeley Art Center has been providing valuable services to the City and its arts community for more than 40 years. Actively engaging more than 10,000 people annually through its museum-quality exhibitions, family days, workshops and lectures, the Center contributes significantly to the economic well-being of the City and its local businesses while serving the local and regional arts community.

Special note should be taken of the Center's Biennial Youth Arts Exhibition, which—in collaboration with the Berkeley Unified School District—features the work of students in grades K–8. This represents a wonderful opportunity for Berkeley's public school students to have their creativity encouraged and appreciated by the community at large.

The Berkeley Art Center has brought to our attention the substantial structural changes that have occurred in its Board development and improved budget over the past four years. Its request for an additional amount from the General Fund is to help the organization move toward financial self-sufficiency through greater community outreach and accessibility.

We thank you for your past and present support of the Berkeley Art Center and respectfully request that you consider an increased two-year allocation to this valuable community asset.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Taylor".

Lisa Taylor
Berkeley Civic Arts Commission
Chair, February 2011 to February 2013

