



Peace and Justice Commission

INFORMATION CALENDAR  
November 27, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Peace and Justice Commission

Submitted by: Steve Freedkin, Chairperson

Subject: Public Commons for Everyone Initiative

INTRODUCTION

This report is in response to City Council's request for feedback on the Public Commons for Everyone Initiative (PCEI). The Peace & Justice Commission finds that there are adequate laws on the books to address true threats to public health and safety, and opposes the passing of the Public Commons for Everyone Initiative and other efforts as selective enforcement which serve to penalize poverty.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECT

The PCEI seeks to develop policies and services that would improve the quality of life for all residents and visitors in the public commons areas of Berkeley through a law enforcement effort. The Commission believes that approval of the PCEI would have detrimental impacts by further disenfranchising homeless and mentally ill individuals.

BACKGROUND

On June 12, 2007, Council directed the City Manager to solicit feedback and proposals from certain commissions and key stakeholders on the proposed PCEI for consideration by the Council.

At the meeting of October 1, 2007, the Peace & Justice Commission approved the following motion:

**M/S/C** (*Cohen/Wagley*) that the Peace & Justice Commission finds that there are adequate laws on the books to address true threats to public health and safety, and opposes the passing of the Public Commons for Everyone Initiative and other efforts as selective enforcement which serve to penalize poverty. **Ayes:** Bohn, Cohen, Freedkin, Kafin, McDonald, Meola, Sorgen, Wagley; **Noes:** None; **Abstain:** Sherman, Seaton; **Absent:** Litman, Winkelman.

Commissioners Sherman and Seaton abstained because they felt the Initiative is a work-in-progress and important to hear comments from others before taking any action.

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