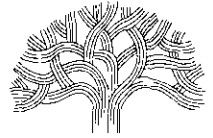


CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • 1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA • OAKLAND, CA 94612

NANCY J. NADEL
Councilmember
District # 3

(510) 238-7003
FAX (510) 238-6129
TTY (510) 238-7413

TO : Public Works Committee
CC : City Administrator
FROM : Councilmember Nancy Nadel
DATE : July 10, 2007
RE : Agenda Item 12, Revocable and Conditional Permit to Rock Paper Scissors
Collective

Dear Public Works Committee:

My office has received the attached additional information, including letters of support from Oakland residents, from the Rock Paper Scissors Collective regarding the proposed revocable and conditional permit to allow the "First Friday Community Cultural Event" to encroach into 23rd Street between Valley Avenue and Telegraph Avenue on the First Friday of each month.

Please include this information and the attached documents as supplemental documents regarding this agenda item.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Nadel

Nancy Nadel, Councilmember
District 3

OAKLAND'S EMERGING ART SCENE



BY REYHAN HARMANCI

"It's irresponsible to make art that doesn't address the community it's made in," says Zach Houston, an Oakland artist standing outside the Mama Buzz cafe and gallery, where his black-and-white drawings are on display. Houston is clutching a coffee cup and admittedly feeling its effects. He starts to hold forth on the Oakland Art Murrmur, the monthly art walk around downtown Oakland, when a boisterous man named Mel approaches, interrupting. He's clearly sauced on something and asking for change or phone numbers or just some attention. Houston tries to wave him off, but he's persistent, mumbling even after Houston gives him some change. "OK," Houston says, after Mel moves away. "What was I saying?"

Houston was speaking for the need for art and artists to stay tied to their communities. It's no secret that rising rents have been driving artists and creative types of all stripes out of San Francisco proper for years, but although many people pay lip service to the burgeoning "Oakland art scene," not enough people go to Oakland to see it.

Collaborative ventures such as Art Murrmur hope to change that — to make a map of the galleries in order to put Oakland on the larger cultural one. The year-old Art Murrmur is Oakland's answer to San Francisco's First Thursdays in Union Square (centered around the 49 Geary St. juggernaut). Oakland galleries have signed on to stay open later on the first Friday of every month. They all pay to maintain the Murrmur Web site and generate publicity materials, and they all meet regularly to check in about what's going on in their galleries and discuss issues that arise with the Murrmur.

The Murrmur, which started with six participants and at one point had 25 members, has 13 member organizations.

"Initially it was an idea that me and Mike Simpson had about a year and a half ago," art writer Theo Auer says. "We'd brainstorm every couple weeks, argue about art history, and we were like, 'Why doesn't Oakland have a dedicated art walk?' When it has, it's fallen apart in a couple of weeks.

"We thought this could take Oakland to the next level."

On this particular Friday, the first in May, the air was crisp. The Art Murrmur



Web site and postcards number the galleries, in a vague attempt to create order, but no one seemed particularly concerned about following it. The popularity of the event — gallery owners say that in the warmer summer months, as many as 700 people will pass through over the course of four hours — has led organizers to change the hours from 5 to 9 p.m., in hopes of encouraging fewer incidents of, say, open container violations.

Rock Paper Scissors Collective, on the corner of Telegraph and 23rd Street, the area with the highest concentration of Murrmur galleries, had arranged to close about half a block, so in addition to the open galleries, other organizations could profit from the foot traffic.

At about 7, the street was half-full but the crowd was steadily building. Rock Paper Scissors is a gallery space, a small store of hand-crafted items and a program of classes. A collective member, Amy Mosely, says in a phone interview that she sees the Murrmur as a way of getting people involved with RPS programming. "The more types of people coming through, the more people who get exposed to art," she says. Although the block party is a modest affair — maybe six tables have been set up in the space between RPS and the Esteban Sabar Gallery — the feeling is really positive. Skinny young

"THIS IS MY FIRST GALLERY AND MY FIRST TIME ON THE WALK. THE TIMING IS REALLY GREAT FOR PARENTS BRINGING KIDS."

Aklesia Asnake,
Oakland Art
Murrmur visitor

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The shi merce cut artists may collectors

AND'S GING SCENE



PHOTOS BY KIM KONENICH / THE CHRONICLE



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hipsters and older people with kids bounce around the area, buying baked goods from Providence House and checking out the hand-crafted items, such as wallets and purses. The Loyd Family Players, a band dressed in red and black outfits of various styles, gets ready to perform. The crowd is far less uniform than one would expect; people of different ages and races make it seem as much like a street fair as an art opening. “I think we had a mixed feeling at the beginning,” says Richard Hammer, an employee at Providence House, the low-income supportive housing program. “We didn’t feel as connected to an event that’s having a big impact on the neighborhood. But now it’s really exciting. There’s a lot of potential here.”

“I like it because it’s more down-to-earth, community-oriented,” says an RPS volunteer named Trinity, as she does some live screen printing work, pushing out hot pink ink. “Come to a fashion show after the Murmur,” says Mojo Lappin, holding a sheaf of flyers and clad in a snakeskin-printed jumpsuit, her black hair pulled back from her face. She says that she lives in New Orleans, but has artist friends who moved to Oakland after Hurricane Katrina. They invited her to showcase her clothing at a space called the Tin Shed, and she says she was happy to do it. One of the Art Murmur’s biggest selling points is the diversity of featured work and galleries. For instance, the atmosphere at the Esteban Sabar gallery is worlds apart from the hubbub on 23rd Street. A mix of atmospheric music, drum and bass beats with more ethereal sounds greets visitors as they navigate the different rooms. Two different shows are up, along with owner Esteban Sabar’s partner Marty McCorkle’s paintings. Guests mumble rather than shout greetings.

“I really get the sense that there’s a community here,” notes Sabar in a phone interview, “I get recognized wherever I go in Oakland. Catharine Clark (of the Catharine Clark Gallery) walking in Union Square — no one would recognize her in the same way.”

The shifting line between art and commerce cuts both ways — although Oakland artists may bemoan the lack of moneyed collectors to buy their work and help them

At left: Charity Romero and Ezra Li Eismont (behind screen), of the art collective Remade in America, set up their silkscreen equipment on Oakland’s partially closed off 23rd Street. Above: a piece by Rock Paper Scissors Collective’s E-203099 (the artist goes by his prison number).

THE OAKLAND ART MURMUR

happens on the first Friday of every month, from 5-9 p.m. A map and a list of participating galleries are at www.oaklandartmurmur.com.

► MURMUR

From previous page

pay their bills, more established venues shy away from the risks that Oakland gallery owners and artists are willing to take. And it isn't just Oakland art folks who see a difference in the kind of work East Bay artists are making. Meg Shiffler, gallery director of the S.F. Arts Commission, writes in an e-mail that "What I'd like to think is that Oakland has the possibility of being to San Francisco what Williamsburg (Brooklyn) is (or rather was five years ago — this is an important distinction) to New York. It's not simply a feeder community of artists and spaces, but its own vital scene that defines itself according to art-related responses and sociopolitical circumstances that are quite different from what we confront in San Francisco.

"The Oakland scene is not one thing," she continues. "It's constantly reinventing itself because it's primarily artists running the show."

Conceptual art, a genre that doesn't lend itself to heavy sales figures, is widely shown in Oakland. At 21 Grand, a music venue as well as art space that has moved from 21 Grand St. to 416 25th St., two conceptual shows were on display. In the large warehouse room, Trish Stone's "Charles Spy" — wherein the artist tries to peep on Charles Schwab Berkeley offices — and Luther Thie's "LA. Interchange" — a proposal for a water tower that will generate bubbles in proportion to the accident news off the California Highway Patrol wires.

Off the main drag, 21 Grand didn't have many people fighting over the spread of carrots, dip, grapes and chips, but the people who did come got to calmly chat with at least one of the artists. Things were a little more hopping along another cluster of galleries actually on Grand Street. Mercury 20, Industrielle and Front Gallery all had bustling storefronts. "This is my first gallery and my first time on the walk," says Aklesia Asnake, looking with two of her children at the images from photographer Ed Jew's "Chino Latino meets the Angel Baby" show. "The timing is really great for parents bringing kids." As the official end of the Murmur neared, not many people seemed ready to go home. A black-and-white projection with French subtitles was thrown against a wall on Grand Street and people clutching postcards continued their loops. One couple in their 20s, who had been at the block party, were spotted again at 21 Grand. "We haven't been to the Murmur before," said one of them, Hayes Valley resident and designer Karl Dolter. "I've been to 21 Grand before to see music, and I've used Rock Paper Scissors for classes, but I haven't gotten to see them as a galleries."

Dolter, who has been to First Thursdays, among other San Francisco art opening events, says that he sees a difference in the Oakland work. "In Oakland, there are more artists living off the land, so to speak," he says, "They're not judged as much, they're more free."

He smiles, looking around the room. "I would come again. I trust this side of the bridge." ■

AND IN THE REST OF THE BAY AREA.

BY DELFIN VIGIL

Let's see, in just the past couple of weeks we've had the Bay to Breakers marathon, where runners looked odd only if they weren't naked and drunk. And just before that was the How Weird Street Fair, where cops working crowd control wouldn't find anything suspicious about a G-string wearing still walker.

In reality, the oddest form of art-fun to find in the San Francisco Bay Area might be the Thomas Kinkadee gallery that's in every strip mall town across the country. Imagine one of Kinkadee's mass-printed picturesque pastels hanging in a coffee shop on Valencia Street — now that would be weird. With an arts and entertainments scene that is always on its toes, there is plenty of "only in the Bay Area," events and places still to be (re) discovered. The Pink put together a quick list of unusual suspects that don't (necessarily) require taking Jell-O shots or wearing butt-less chaps.

FOLLOW THAT PARADE

"One of the hardest things for a band to do on tour is find a venue. I sort of turned that on its head and decided to be the touring venue looking for bands," says John Benson, owner of an old Oakland AC transit bus converted into a mobile music club. Benson brought new meaning to "tour bus" after he found the 1979 Flyer bus that he bought to drive cross country to Ohio, where his father died. Benson just wanted something big enough to bring back all of his father's belongings.

"I thought it was the most ridiculous and hideous thing I had ever seen in my life. So naturally, I had to have it," says Benson, who bought the bus last July for \$5,000 from a retired Oakland police officer. The cop acquired it after the department gave up on transforming it into a "state of the art" mobile unit.

Before transforming the insides of the bus into a stage area, Benson (a former bass player for A Minor Forest) decided to make the bus green. He put solar panels on the roof and installed eight deep cycle batteries that power the p.a. system. That not only eliminated a PG&E bill, but it also meant that bands could play remote locations, like a beach, without any need for an exterior plug outlets.

The diesel engine bus now runs on vegetable oil.

The first bus gig was on June 12, just outside of Mama Buzz Cafe in Oakland. Evil Looking Warriors, fronted by Benson's 7-year-old daughter, played that night.

In less than a year, the bus has hosted nearly 60 shows featuring 300 bands that have played beaches, industrial parks, parking lots, truck stops, driveways and freeway



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PHILLIP MAISEL

But the bulk of the free shows (they pass a donation hat around to help out the bands) are typically held "somewhere in the Bay Area."

To find out when and where the next bus show will stop, call (510) 223-7688 or e-mail followthatparade@yahoo.com.

THRILLPEDDLERS

The freaks come out at night. And when they do, they invariably end up onstage at Russell Blackwood's Grand Guignol style theater just under the freeway at 10th Street in San Francisco.

Called the Hypnodrome, it's where, since 1999, Blackwood and his Thrillpeddlers theater troupe celebrate everyday like its Halloween.

Their latest "grotesque comedy," is "Hypnodrome Head Trips," a series of six kinky but bloody one acts.

Among the plays is Eddie "The Czar of Noir" Muller's adaption of "Orey in the

with a date in one vate interactive where couples can during the play's even close the cur proviso on their ov Hypnodrome F next week, 8 p.m. T admission; Shock l (800) 838-3006. ww

FOOD, FILM AND I

Would you care to go along with y grilled calamari?

"It's just like a v Pirie, executive ch eign Cinema, whe being asked.

It only makes s Mission Street that shoe emporium a converted to a fanc art gallery.

So after Pirie a Clark, founded For in 1999, they decid cessful years by ope undeveloped space

"It was basically with pigeon feather great place to be v you're done with d

With the help o of Modernism Inc. § the old barn is a gl with spiral staircas nine. Officially call gallery opened in every two to four m

Currently on ext Stock Poncorn sold ser

Organizations not included in this packet that have been involved at past First Fridays or have expressed interest in future first Fridays:

- Providence House
- St. Vincent De Paul's
- Covenant House/COV Records, Real Hard/Silence the Violence
- Remade In America
- Art For A Democratic Society
- City Slickers
- People's Grocery

Cultural Groups and Artisans:

- Nan Estep, live sewing
- Remade in America/Field Day, live screenprinting
- Oaklandish
- RPS Youth Intern, Troy Carter, live airbrushing
- Paula Ruiz, recycled bicycle tube jewelry

We send an open invitation to community organizations that would like to get involved and hope to partner more with youth performers from the area and the art department of local high schools.

First Fridays Community Cultural Events

Current Participants:
Rock Paper Scissors Collective
Remade in America
Providence House
MetWest High School

**Young Entrepreneurs!
Local Small Businesses!
Community Organizations!
Performers! Schools!**

Interested in getting involved in First Friday ArtWalks on 23rd St.?

Every first Friday of the month, RPSC is creating a space for the community to come together and showcase their talents, share their work, fundraise for their projects, and celebrate their community! Organizations, young entrepreneurs, performers and the like, would get a chance to share with one another and reach the hundreds of people the Art Murmur attracts to the area every first Friday of the month. We're open to all ideas and to all groups that make up our unique and culturally rich area. Please email community@rpsccollective to get involved!

NEXT EVENT MAY 4TH 5-9PM!

Street Performances, Craft Vending, Hands-on Art Activities, Youth MCs, Spoken Word, Fashion Shows, Social Justice Groups, and more!
Let's Celebrate Our Community Together!

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2273 TELEGRAPH AVE
OAKLAND, CA 94612
510/465-2797
FAX: 510/836-3312

CO-DIRECTORS

PHIL PORTER
PHIL@INTERPLAY.ORG

CYNTHIA WINTON-HENRY
CYNTHIA@INTERPLAY.ORG

ADMINISTRATOR

SHERI PRUD'HOMME
SHERI@INTERPLAY.ORG

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

JEANELYSE DORAN ADAMS
OFFICE@INTERPLAY.ORG

Dear City Council of Oakland,

We are a non-profit arts organization on the corner of 23rd St. and Telegraph Ave. I am writing this letter in support of the community street fair organized by the **Rock Paper Scissors Collective** the first Friday night of every month. We hope to help them obtain a permit to close 23rd Street between Telegraph and Valley St. every first Friday of the month.

I believe that the monthly permit will help improve the safety of the Art Murmur event. Designating this block as a gathering place for the crowds will keep the crowds off the sidewalks, maintaining better sidewalk access for the local residents. This set-up also enhances the ability to manage the crowds.

The Art Murmur has become a wonderful celebration of the artistic community in this neighborhood. We look forward to more ways we can be involved with this ongoing event.

Thank you for your support in furthering this community event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Elizabeth Mendana'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Mendana

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WING IT! PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLE
INTERPLAY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
INTERPLAY EXPERIENCE
WING IT! PRESS

Publicity Administrator
Body Wisdom, Inc.
2273 Telegraph Ave.
Oakland, CA 94612
510-465-2797
www.interplay.org

interplay.org

Uhuru Benefit Art Auction

1601 - 2nd Av., Oakland, Ca 94611

510-676-5041

Contact: Jeanine Griswa

To: The City of Oakland

I strongly encourage you to permit the closure of the street(s) for the First Friday of the Month Oakland Art Murmer Community Street Fair.

We had the opportunity to set up a small table at the Oakland Art Murmer Community Street Fair in May of 2007, We met several invaluable contacts with artists and community members. They have since joined in our efforts towards our non-profit fundraising for African Community Programs.

This is a very important opportunity for non-profits and community groups such as ours because there are not a lot of locations that permit community outreach and where people also have the time to stop and talk.

Our perception is that the presence of the community groups 'ground' the whole event and give it a structure and legitimacy that improves the security and the positive experience of all who attend.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jeanine Griswa

Uhuru Benefit Art Auction Chair

Dear Oakland City Council,

This is a letter in support of the community street fair organized by the Rock Paper Scissors Collective every first Friday of the month. The street fair they have organized the past two months has been a great addition to the community and to the Art Murrur events. I support them in their efforts to get a permit to close 23rd St between Telegraph and Valley St., every first Friday of the month.

I believe that with a permit the safety of the event improves, better access is to the sidewalks is given to residents by allowing the street as a gathering place for the crowds, and the crowd from the Art Murrur art walk is able to be better managed, as is the level of noise.

I also am in support of celebrating the artistic community in this neighborhood and in providing a space for community groups, nonprofits, and local small business owners to get involved and benefit from the success of Art Murrur.

Thank you for your consideration and help in furthering this community event.

Sincerely,



2330 Telegraph Ave.
Stock Club
Oakland CA. 94612

Dear Oakland City Council,

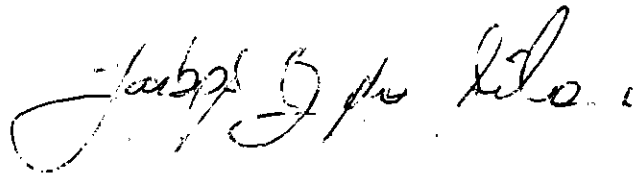
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Thank you for your consideration and help in furthering this community event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph G. de Lora". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a dark ink on a white background.

AMAZONA'S PIZZA
2427 TELEGRAPH AVENUE
OAKLAND, CA 94612
(510) 625-1233

6 June 13, 2007

Dear Oakland City Council,

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Thank you for your consideration and help in furthering this community event.

Sincerely,

Naomi Canchela

On a personal note, I have been the neighbor directly upstairs from the Rock Paper Scissors storefront for the past year and a half. In that time, I've seen the collective organize the street fair + other events that have fostered an inclusive community centered around encouraging creativity. As their neighbor, I've only seen them approach their work thoughtfully and responsibly — always keeping neighbors informed and encouraging our feedback.

They've got my full support in pursuing this permit.

NAOMI CANCELA
491 23rd St #23
Oakland, CA
94612

Dear Oakland City Council,

This is a letter in support of the community street fair organized by the Rock Paper Scissors Collective every first Friday of the month. The street fair they have organized the past two months has been a great addition to the community and to the Art Murmur events. I support them in their efforts to get a permit to close 23rd St between Telegraph and Valley St., every first Friday of the month.

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2429 Telegraph & Wilby market

821-3025

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Sincerely,

Marie

Marie

491 23rd st #33

Oakland Ca

I live in the building
and totally support the
fair.

Dear Oakland City Council,

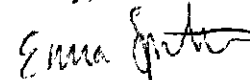
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Sincerely,


EMMA SPERITUS

RPS VOLUNTEER

I have followed the progress and growth of RPS from the beginning -- and I can only see community improvement. I think this permit is a great step in the positive growth of Oakland arts and city's cultural organization.

Sincerely

Emma Speritus

Dear Oakland City Council,

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Sarnas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

123 Bay Pl #206
Oakland CA 94610

Dear Oakland City Council,

This is a letter in support of the community street fair organized by the Rock Paper Scissors Collective every first Friday of the month. The street fair they have organized the past two months has been a great addition to the community and to the Art Murrur events. I support them in their efforts to get a permit to close 23rd St between Telegraph and Valley St., every first Friday of the month.

I believe that with a permit the safety of the event improves, better access is to the sidewalks is given to residents by allowing the street as a gathering place for the crowds, and the crowd from the Art Murrur art walk is able to be better managed, as is the level of noise.

I also am in support of celebrating the artistic community in this neighborhood and in providing a space for community groups, nonprofits, and local small business owners to get involved and benefit from the success of Art Murrur.

Thank you for your consideration and help in furthering this community event.

Sincerely,



ZACH HOUSTON

3751 LATIMER PLACE
OAKLAND CALIFORNIA

Dear Oakland City Council,

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Trinity Cross

510 928 7944

Dear Oakland City Council,

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Sincerely,

Micah Morris
Micah.em@gmail.com
Paula Salenme

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Sincerely,

Sarah Hahn
1614 Webster St #102
Oakland, CA 94612
Sarah Hahn

Dear Oakland City Council,

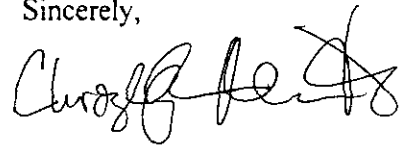
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CHRISTOPHER WHITE
1435 3rd Ave.
Oakland

Dear Oakland City Council,

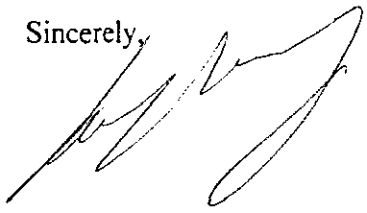
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Alicia P. Martinez

Dear Oakland City Council,

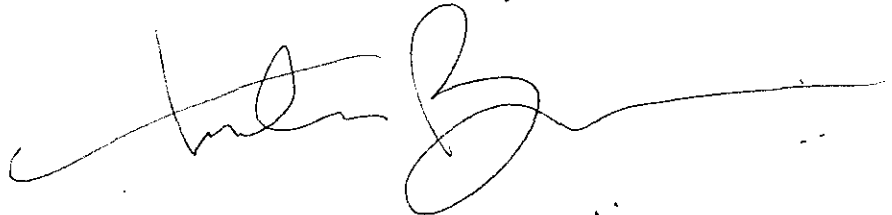
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amelia Berumen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amelia Berumen

Dear Oakland City Council,


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Katrin Nazal

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Sarah Lejon

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Sincerely,

Carla Funk
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Dear Oakland City Council,

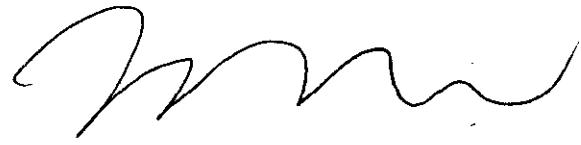
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Tammy Tsao


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Scott Stanley


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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marco Alves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "A".

MARCO ALVES

Dear Oakland City Council,

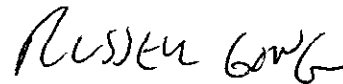
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Kimberly Fennell