

L. Parlin # 27 BOS 12/12/17

12-12-17 Board of Supervisors, Agenda Item #27, File #17-0489, Chamber of Commerce Lease  
Public Comment by Lori Parlin

Remember, perception becomes reality. The public perception in El Dorado County is that a small group of well-funded special interests are running the County. Gifting public funds violates the California Constitution. The burden is on you to show that this is not a gift of public funds and is a public benefit. Where does El Dorado County define exactly what is a public benefit and what is not? I looked in your Governance Handbook, in your Ordinances, and your Strategic Plan, and could not find the definition of public benefit for El Dorado County.

Here is a statement from your newly adopted Governance Handbook: "The Board retains public trust through efficient and cost-effectiveness stewardship of resources."

Public trust—You are using taxpayers resources to subsidize this organization. Does that build public trust?

Cost-effectiveness—It was said during discussion that this building will likely never be used by County employees because there is no parking and no ADA accommodations. The staff recommendation was to sell the building. Why didn't you simply follow that recommendation?

You have approved spending tens of millions of dollars on public buildings. We as taxpayers have to pay for that, and yet you are giving away public funds.

The Lease Agreement states, "The Property is leased to Lessee for the sole purpose of conducting business and activities related to support Civic and Commercial Progress benefitting the residents of El Dorado County and as permitted by law."

Where have you defined Civic and Commercial Progress? Will the Chamber be allowed to continue campaigning against certain candidates and local initiatives? Is that your definition of civic progress? Will the Chamber be allowed to continue lobbying for large, government-subsidized businesses to come to El Dorado County and compete against local mom and pop shops? Is that your definition of commercial progress?

Without clear definitions of terms like public benefit, civic progress, and commercial progress, your decisions are very subjective and give the perception of favoritism.

I ask you to deny approval of this lease agreement today and instead return to staff's recommendation to sell the building.