

From: February 11, 2021 Board Meeting-Public Comment
To: Meeting Info
Subject: [External] February 11, 2021 Board Meeting-Public Comment
Date: Thursday, February 4, 2021 8:51:31 PM



Public Comment

From: Lilana Spindler

Agenda Item: N. Public Comment Not on the Agenda

Meeting Date: 02/11/21

Name: Lilana Spindler

E-mail Address:

Phone:

Agenda Item(s):

N. Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

Comment:

I would like to speak at public comments at the next meeting on Feb. 11. Here is a summary of what I would like to talk about. Please let me know how much time I will be given. • We call to your attention the tax inequities and concurrent economic inequities that are plaguing Berkeley residents. • The City's Tax Assessments haven't followed the equity model represented to voters. • Poignant example: an elderly widow is charged more for city services than a 24 unit market rate apartment building! • Our organization, BATE's main focus is the 11 Harmed Homeowners in South Berkeley, who have been overcharged tens of thousands of dollars each over their decades of homeownership. They endure excessive charges for non-dwelling understories when dozens of understories (even true basements) in Berkeley are not taxed. • Those owners are not taxed for their basements for these reasons: dirt floor, low ceilinged, unfinished walls, etc. The 11 Harmed Homeowners ask to be treated similarly and therefore equitably. • The average overcharge in the 11 Harmed Homeowners group is \$1000 per year, effectively paying a tax rate from 50% to 120% higher than other folks who are charged fairly. • Incidental to our public outreach to find overcharged folks, we have found staggering inconsistencies in the City's tax assessments (see BATE's 824 underassessed properties list provided to Board of Supervisor's investigative Counsel). There are rampant Ad Valorem Escaped Assessments also. We have filed requests for a tax appeal hearing before the Board of Supervisors, as we believe the Ca Constitution guarantees tax uniformity and appeal rights if uniformity is not preserved, but have not been given a chance to be heard.