

From: TFAA Board via Call.Click.Connect. <CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 4:37 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Alexis Lacy; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #149859: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council With plans for Council to discuss...

Dear **Call.Click.Connect.** User

A request was just created using **Call.Click.Connect.** The request ID is 149859.

Request Details:

This is a "private" request. Information should only be provided to the original customer.

- Name: TFAA Board
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: No Phone
- Email: tfaa@torpedofactoryartists.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: With plans for Council to discuss the lease of a studio space to Sweetbakes tonight, the Torpedo Factory Artists would like raise some awareness about the issue, and how it is related to a greater conversation. Office of the Arts management is offering Sweetbakes an opportunity to lease space in Studio 9 through Sept 30, 2019, with enormous rent reductions if the cafe is not as profitable as they would like to be.

We think it is important to remember that the tenant artists and arts organizations are also small businesses. Rent has increased over 20% during management by the Office of the Arts, which has caused several emerging artists to be priced out or turn down opportunities.

While there are two rent-free spaces provided by the Office of the Arts at the Torpedo Factory, these extremely limited one to three month initiatives are not valid spaces to build and grow a business. With the sad passing of Ann Citron, the sole tenant in Studio 329, there is another vacant studio space in the Torpedo Factory. We are disheartened to hear that the current plan is to only lease this studio to artists in short-term increments. This does not allow an artist to take ownership of the space, creating a studio they are most suited to work and sell in.

As the main attraction for people visit the Torpedo Factory Art Center, artists and galleries should be afforded at least the same importance as a bakery. Unlike a sandwich, art is rarely an impulse purchase. Stability and longevity are essential for an art business to succeed. While a cafe can be a draw for the Art Center, allowing a food service entity to have an economic safety net AND offered a longer lease seems counterintuitive for a facility whose tourism value is provided by artist studios and galleries.

Additionally, with the recent absorption of Studio 319 and Studio 208 after artist tenants vacated, the Office of the Arts management has already taken on over \$7,500 in unrealized rent annually, not to mention hastening an additional drop in programming and building engagement. Studios 8, 9, 12, 208, 319 were once recently all artist spaces. They are now mostly administrative or retail spaces, with the two spaces dedicated to artists having a less than standard number of weekly hours required, which they frequently struggle to keep. As temporary landlord, the Office of the Arts should set an example of how artistic spaces should be run and encourage them to be occupied quickly by artists- not continue to absorb studios that they can barely be keep open.

The TFAA board, representing over 200 artist businesses located at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, asks the Office of the Arts to rent Studio 329 to an artist for the remaining period left in this transitional lease (through September 2019). The waitlist that was transferred to the Office of the Arts in September 2019 still has Associate artists waiting for space. We were promised that list would be honored when vacancies occurred during this interim management. We encourage the Office of the Arts to do as promised and are willing to help in this

transition as needed. An artist should be provided the same length of lease in Studio 329 as is being offered to Sweetbakes in Studio 9.

- Expected Response Date: Monday, June 18

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the [Call.Click.Connect. staff interface](#).

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

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