

From: [City Council Public Comments](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] 7/11 Council: Agenda Item #12.3 Accela Civic Platform Renewal (Pull for Discussion)
Date: Friday, July 14, 2023 4:40:04 PM

From: Eric Fraser <truthintourism@gmail.com>

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Subject: [EXTERNAL] 7/11 Council: Agenda Item #12.3 Accela Civic Platform Renewal (Pull for Discussion)

Dear Mayor, Council Members, and Managers,

Can this item be pulled for discussion?

Item #12.3, is for a renewal of the Accela Civic Platform, more commonly known as the citizen.srcity.org/CitizenAccess platform. This is the main electronic gateway for permits (including recreational reservations apparently) as well as building and short term rental permits.

This consent item is for a 1-year renewal for \$171,348.85.

The staff report minimizes how important this platform is to the STR community and for any property owner engaging a building permit, as it is the only way to submit applications and attempt to understand the application process, or code enforcement files and administrative citations.

A concerted attack by the City on STR properties has occurred over the past two years, and as part of the targeted community we have detected some deficiencies, short-comings and more regarding the fitness of this platform to support citizens.

Of course, these short-comings could be because of insufficient tutorials or education on how to use the site. But even with access, the reports and files do not contain a complete record for the property owner, representatives, and researchers. I doubt that the problems are Accela's fault.

What we would like to know is:

- 1) What procedures are in place for Information Technology (ITD) and Permitting and Economic Development (PED) managers to take in advice and experiences from users ?
- 2) How are deficiencies addressed so the public records system (Nextrequest) is not unnecessarily tasked?

For item #2, the deficiencies can be highlighted by Nextrequest 23-442 made on 5/5/23 (still unpublished by the City) and 23-559 made on 6/5/23. Here are links to the spreadsheets containing the data that the City has responded with:

23-442:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EdT74IFo6rH9QQ4yLJR51GB0NcfI57Rwy6lDwYwtbLU/edit?usp=sharing>

23-559:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12VJlp_gu7btP5U2q0QwuG8gZHLw5dLoumOdHPXitmW4/edit?usp=sharing

When a Nextrequest is published, the documents are available from the City's Nextrequest platform.

It was only through our public records requests could we have learned and studied the extent of illegal and voided administrative citations issued by PED, when this information should have been attainable through the citizen portal *if staff had completely entered all relevant information*.

Other issues cited by STR community members include:

- "Difficulty of use."
- "Confusing."
- "Not user-friendly."
- "Does not contain all the information needed."

We are on to the fact that the City wants to make STR properties difficult to permit and almost impossible to defend against vexatious complainers and activist staff. But at some point, those strategies just become another relic showing the excesses of government overreach, and political influence, that ushered in Santa Rosa's expensive War on STRs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Eric Fraser

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