

Hello Omni building community.

I hope this communication finds you in high spirits and fully basking in the abundance of the Summer season. I started writing this communication in April and after many attempts to pack in more topics, or share the most updated information, I now find myself at the end of my road on my final days in my formal capacity. This newsletter is my last formal communication to you all, but before I go through a list of **IMPORTANT** building updates and items on the horizon I would like to address you all and share my takeaways from the last 20+ months I have been in the building.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have dedicated time and energy toward nurturing the best of what this building can offer for ourselves and the larger community. I appreciate all who took the time to converse, teach, and collaborate with me - a person who was here for a moment in this building's larger story arc. May our time together be composted into something enriching to all and in service of a greater mission and vision for a just world with liberated people.

- My last day in the building is **June 10th**. If you would like to connect before I leave or discuss any of the details in this newsletter I will be around during Wednesday's Free Store hours from **3-6 pm**.
- If you are wondering how to get a hold of me after that, for those that have it my number will stay the same. I can also be reached via email at togetherwewinagency@gmail.com. Let's stay in touch!

Now we return to our usually scheduled newsletter content. I will review high level items over the last 4 months and what is on the horizon.

- **Welfare Tax Exemption (WTE)** Application was completed in February for 2026. Unfortunately we are in our third year of completing our "first filing" with the Alameda County's Assessors office to determine what our Welfare Tax Exemption will be for the building. This means we have yet to see any deduction on building taxes. As a reminder most of the money that comes in from monthly rent payment is going directly toward property and business taxes since EB PREC subsidizes staff wages (with the exception of Jasmine the building's part time Event Manager.) For the remainder of 2026 all areas of the building with the *exception* of the ballroom will continue to need formal contracts and user agreements with a nonprofit or fiscally sponsored project. Before the assessor ruling they will need to conduct an inspection to see for themselves how the areas in the building are being used. In the coming weeks after we complete the big capital improvement lift, there will be a concerted effort from the CALLI team to pester the assessor's office to get someone out

here so that they can rule on our designation by the Fall of 2026. As soon as that inspection is scheduled there will be communication out to everyone to help prepare for that date.

- **We said goodbye to Wood Street Commons:** At the end of February we received a notice from Wood Street Commons that they would be leaving the building to enter into a new lease in March. They secured a different office space that better supported their current goals and plans to grow. While they have been missed in the building, they are still a part of the community at large, and have stopped by to collaborate and connect with building users. **TODAY, June 6th from 1-4 pm** they will be hosting an office warming party if you would like to stop by and celebrate their accomplishments and transition.



- **Welcome Phil:** In March we welcomed North Oakland's own Philemon Abraham as the new Community Stewardship and Property Manager. Phil quickly onboarded and has been juggling a number of new projects and demands with grace. If you see him in the building please give him a hardie hello and strike up a conversation if you haven't already done so. He is the point of contact for building groups and users and can be reached at phil@thecalli.org or phil@ebprc.org.



- **CALLI/EBPREC Pilot Programming Ended:** The Stewardship Pilot with EB PREC participants focusing on event curation and space activation concluded in April. This was the first attempt at encouraging members of the EB PREC community and CALLI network to engage in the space. There was a lot of learning from this process and plenty of preparation the team has/is doing to better support future programming in the building.
- **Community Liberation Program (CLP) Boycott Continued:** As many legacy building users are aware, Omni Commons had an active boycott on the building prior to the CALLI/EBPREC stewardship transition. EB PREC met with representatives from CLP over various months, but after a communication hiatus the boycott was reactivated causing harm and taking an emotional toll on BIPOC members of the stewardship pilot hosting a critical benefit concert raising funds to release a community member from ICE detention. Within two weeks a prominent talk with renowned Black Left scholars and activists switched venues after panelists received pressure to uphold the boycott. While these actions were disheartening it prompted introspection among our team and led me to conduct a deeper investigation into the conflicts that we inherited from Omni Commons. I provided my reflections to our team and recommendations that I hope are considered into the future. While I have had conversations with select individuals, if anyone is interested in hearing my thoughts I am happy to share them.
- **Oakland Theatre Project: (OTP) as a catalyst:** **This weekend is your last chance to see [The House of Bernardo Alba](#), the** 11-show play run that has been happening in the ballroom. This opportunity presented itself in March and we negotiated the terms of their rental up until their move in date on April 22nd. Once they made the decision to move forward with an 8 week buy-out of the

ballroom it enabled us to reinvest the funds received into long-awaited building improvements. While expenses have gone beyond what came in from the OTP buy-out, the effort to make space upgrades enabled us to think broadly about future event capacity in the building. The following high level changes were done from March-May with a level of outstanding building improvements still set over the next few weeks.

- Ballroom Improvements completed:
 - Removal of the popcorn ceiling above the ballroom bar
 - Expansion of the wood floor refinishing to the upstairs mezzanine area and AV tech room
 - Installation of a rigging system to better support a variety of events with different light and sound needs.
 - Repair of speakers, and enhancement of lighting and sound offerings to be able to better support events rentals post OTP
- Bathroom Improvements completed:
 - Updated ballroom restrooms with new fixtures, partitions, hvac, walls, and floors.
 - Epoxed ADA and legacy groups restroom floors
 - Purchase of additional fixtures and supplies
- Entrance Hall Improvements completed:
 - Completed repair and replacement of windows near the front entrance facing Shattuck
 - Removal of acoustical tiles and drywall installation
 - Installation of house and ambient lighting
 - Procurement of a countertop for an entrance hall bar, concession area, and/or food serving needs for events
 - Additional furniture, decor, and plants were brought in
- Basement & Second Floor completed:
 - Second floor VCT floor installation was complete
 - Additional functionality was added to the discoroom
 - Second floor CALLI offices were set up
 - Basement acoustical tiles were painted
- **Interior doors were FINALLY installed:** I have been mentioning the interior door project for months, and doors have finally been hung with door hardware installed. This project had many unforeseen delays, from product sourcing, procurement, installation capacity and mishaps along the way. As a refresher we applied for a City of Oakland permit for a two-door installation project as a voluntary fire safety improvement. The first (red) door discharges directly from the second ballroom entrance/exit closest to the microstall restroom. Its intent is to create a clear evacuation path that is different from the previously existing basement entrance/exit. The second 4 ft door installed has a big window and faces the hallway that leads to the storage, walk-in, and trash

room area. These doors have been used on a limited basis, but moving forward we want to establish some guidelines.

On the Horizon

- **Interior door expectations and use:** Now that the door leading to the back hallway has been installed with a programmable keypad, there is the opportunity to initiate additional building security protocols. Moving forward we hope to keep both doors primarily closed. The door that leads to the back part of the building has a push rim device from the entrance hall that discharges into the hallway and enables use of the side doors in cases of emergency. From the hallway back into the entrance hall the door will be locked. **Our primary focus is to restrict access outside of normal business hours and on weekends which means that the door separating the two areas of the building will be locked and closed from 6 pm through 9 am. Wednesday-Friday the door should be closed earlier (~3pm) right before the Free Store is opened** so that it reduces the chance of people wandering beyond the limits of the Free Store. While this is a different practice, we don't anticipate that it should compromise groups use of their designated spaces or impact programming. Individuals can still use the side door to get to their destinations and if front door Brivo door access is required there is one-way access to the back area so it isn't blocked off.
- **Reasoning and Grounding the Change:** I want to contextualize that this change is coming from a desire to be responsive to feedback, increase safety prevention measures, and prepare for sustainable growth of the building. Some examples of that are as follows:
 - All of the groups in the back portion of the building operate outside of standard business hours with the expressed desire from many to be able to support 24-hour building access. That type of flexibility is challenging to uphold in a porous building and has historically brought about safety risks, squatting concerns, and other building stewardship challenges and conflicts. Tightening access points strengthens building security and reduces risk.
 - Secondly, as we grow, team members and building users will have higher expectations around the level of building security available and will be protective of their personal items left in the space. For areas that are not locked like the ballroom, entrance hall, and upstairs mezzanine, it provides more peace of mind that we have a process to minimize unnecessary exposure to theft or loss of personal property. This strategy reduces safety concerns without compromising existing building uses in the other parts of the building.

- Lastly, with the side door operating on the old access control system and each legacy building group operating different visitor, volunteer, and membership management processes, access control remains nebulous. There is still uncertainty about who is a member of building groups and who should have access into the building which can put folks working the front door in difficult or compromising situations. Therefore legacy groups who have vetted their members, volunteers, and users should continue to encourage entrance and exit through the side door. We want to reduce negative or stressful interactions and prevent scenarios where event staff feel like they have to control the door, or event users have to determine who is affiliated with the larger building.
- **Next steps: Phil will be scheduling a brief safety training and provide door credentials to the primary and secondary points of contact submitted to us in February via the building directory sheets.** These designated building leads from each group will be the door access points of contact. They will facilitate ADA door access, usher general members and users through if needed, and help maintain the door security schedule outlined. For those given the code on behalf of your organization, PLEASE DO NOT BE SHARE THAT INFORMATION WITH OTHERS. Security breaches can result in loss of credentials or appointed leadership roles.
- **Backhallway upgrades and improvements:** In my last newsletter I mentioned that we would be introducing cleaning and improvements in the legacy group spaces a couple of hours a month. There has been cleaning in the common areas and legacy restroom, but with constant building improvement it may not have seemed as noticeable. In the coming weeks there will be an effort to renovate the back restroom, adding tile around the toilet fixture, HVAC that vents out the light shaft, a new faucet, and painting. If you have suggestions that you would like to provide to that capital improvement project feel free to share those with Phil when you see him.
- **Name Change & Rebirth:** Since I started there have been questions about the future direction of the building. Our earlier stewardship prioritized learning and getting the building on stable footing. We experimented, and envisioned possibilities, but we were primarily slow moving and also patient with how changes were unfolding with the Omni Commons organizational entity that still exists. Now with a team behind the building, and the lessons of the last six months, the CALLI & EB PREC crew are ready to take their stewardship to the next level and cultivate a space that elevates our values and attracts more users. The Omni Commons building will become Revival Hall! A concept deck has been created that provides more detail on the what and why [HERE](#). This

change will happen gradually over the next year with a soft launch in the works leading up to a post Oakland Theatre Project event happening next **Friday, June 12th**. This decision will inevitably bring up mixed feelings depending on your past relationship and affinity to Omni Commons, but the transition marks the beginning of CALLI/EB PREC's tending to the larger vision of a burgeoning community center and venue.

- **Attend next Friday's Cultural Events Kick-off:** In my last newsletter I shared that CALLI's bonus team member Jeremy Redford was developing a cultural event series that brings different artists and cultural bearers into the building to host culturally relevant events. This Friday is the first of many. Please consider buying a ticket.



- **Let's Capture the Buildings Legacy:** In the past I've brought up the idea of an Omni scrapbook. Now with all of the painted wallspace there are many blank canvases throughout the building that create opportunities to showcase the space's rich history. I was able to purchase a frame for the original photo of the building that currently lives in the entrance hall. Let's add to that collection by submitting photos that you have from the past. Whether it was during the Omni Commons days or memories of attending past shows at the Omni, or anything else in between we would love to collect those memories and preserve those experiences. Feel free to add pictures to [THIS FOLDER](#) or send them directly to Phil.

Thank you for making it to the end of this newsletter. Don't forget if you would like to discuss anything written here I will be in the Entrance Hall on Wednesday, June 10th during Free Store hours. I am also attaching a PDF copy of this information for ease of distribution.

Take Care & Be Well!