

Dear Commissioners,

It is with frustration and deep disappointment that you have sent a notice to terminate the lease agreement with Old School Square Center for The Arts, Inc. Old School Square is the heart and soul of Delray Beach, and you have effectively severed the artery that keeps its heart pumping.

There has never been a time in the history of Old School Square where the organization has achieved more growth and development goals than under the current leadership. OSS's team was among the first in the U.S. to adapt, create, and implement a socially-distanced entertainment venue, allowing for audiences to safely enjoy live performances. Their efforts earned Delray Beach national recognition and garnered the interest of global performers like Jimmy Buffett, among many others.

- In the most difficult time in history for live entertainment, OSS has booked twice as many shows as in previous years.
- Their show attendance is already up 1600%, ticket sales are up 134% and sponsorship is up 446% over last year and we are only in the third quarter of the year.
- OSS also created a virtual music series that has been viewed by millions.
- They've grown their art class offerings and student participation exponentially in the past year.
- They've launched a childhood literacy program that has been distributed to more than 600 libraries nationwide and was also provided free to all Delray Beach Schools.
- They also partnered with the South Florida Children's Theatre to create a virtual summer children's camp.
- They reopened their museum, launched virtual tours and art talks, showcased the work of celebrated emerging artists and photographers, and celebrated diversity through the arts.
- When the City was unable to hold the holiday village due to the pandemic, OSS's Museum Director curated a contemporary holiday art exhibition that included work from artists from Louisiana, Florida, New York, and Santa Fe on an almost non-existent budget, and partnered with the Boca Ballet Theatre to display ballet costumes from fairy tales.
- Their team has been incredibly successful in cultivating, growing, and expanding OSS's arts, cultural, and educational programs and events for our community in some of the worst conditions possible.

We as your constituents find ourselves asking, "Why would our commission of elected officials make the decision to eliminate a team that has reached such unprecedented levels of success for Old School Square???" We have learned that your vote to terminate was based on compliance issues- compliance issues that were inaccurately and misleadingly presented at a City Commission meeting. We have learned that you received all of the requested documentation required for compliance as per the City's request- documentation that was critical to understanding OSS's absolute compliance and transparency, and which showcased remarkable and record-breaking key performance indicators and accomplishments from this team in what has easily been the most challenging 1.5 years in its history- but that these documents were not reviewed, presented or factored in prior to the City Commission vote on this issue. We learned that your city auditor received critical reports requested from the OSS team but admitted to not having the time to review them prior to the meeting. We learned that that same city auditor failed to mention at any point at the meeting that those documents were even received, and although Old Schools Square's leadership was at that meeting to present

hard copies of all the documentation that was sent to the City Commission as a backup, we learned that the agenda item was discussed and concluded before any public comments were allowed to be made. We also learned that the agenda item was hidden within the full agenda, without even a mention of the organization that would be impacted by the discussion. You cast a vote without all the facts in front of you, effectively silencing the organization that complied with your every request. We as constituents know by now what a calculated, unethical, and intentionally misleading effort among our elected officials looks like, and your actions in this matter are the clearest example we've seen yet of these tactics.

Your decision- made without cause- not only impacts the events and programming that OSS's leadership has secured to-date- both at its arts and entertainment venues- but also impacts the community support OSS provides to our city. Old School Square is Delray Beach's greatest economic development driver, responsible for over \$100M of economic activity in Delray Beach annually. It is also the most widely attended cultural venue in ALL of Palm Beach County!

**We urge you as our elected officials to do the right thing. You owe it to our community to bring this issue back to vote *after* every single City Commissioner and the City Auditor has had the opportunity to fully review the compliance documents, and only *after* hearing all public comments and from OSS's leadership team.**

We cannot let the soul of our community be destroyed, and we believe there is no better team to uphold the vision, mission, and enduring purpose of Old School Square than the organization that created it- Old School Square Center for The Arts!