

Los Feliz improvement association

April 26, 2015

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Los Angeles City Council

Attn: Herbert J. Wesson Jr., President

200 No. Spring Street Room 530

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File 14-1500-S1 RAP Self-operation of the Greek Theatre

Dear Council President Wesson and Councilmembers:

The Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA), representing 1000 households on the edge of Griffith Park hereby submits comments pertaining to your review of the Staff Report regarding the Department assuming operation of the Greek Theatre that was approved by the Recreation and Parks Commission on April 15.

The LFIA stands opposed to this course of action and strongly concurs with the points expressed in the April 8th letter sent to the RAP Commission by the Greek Theatre Advisory Committee (GTAC).

We would especially like to emphasize our agreement with GTAC on the following:

- 1. Opposition to the Department taking on the operation of the theatre:** It would be ill advised for Staff to take on this massive and complex task for which it has no prior experience and few resources. We would like to add that there is strong opposition in the community that arises out of skepticism as to the Department's ability and resources, along with a strong sentiment that this course is inconsistent with the Department's core mission. The depth of this opposition stems mainly from past and present experience, such as the current disruption imposed on Los Feliz due to the relocation of Hollywood Sign tourism traffic. It is largely felt that the Department is at its best when focused on core park management functions, such as correcting the substantial back-log of deferred maintenance including such basics as unusable bathrooms, crumbling retaining walls and other hazardous conditions that desperately need attention at parks and recreation centers all over this city.
- 2. Support of a two-year extension of the current contract:** Such an extension would continue smooth operation of the Greek with a predictable revenue stream for the City and allow time for the Department to design and issue a new RFP. The Department's repeated claim that this cannot be done has been refuted. We hope that the Council will vote to direct the Department to begin talks with Nederlander at once regarding an extension.

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Considering the two big issues of the RAP Greek Theatre self-management and Hollywood Sign tourism Traffic that stand to negatively impact our residents there should be no surprise at the wide community bafflement as to why the Department should be exploring such an option at all. Especially so, given the Greek Theatre, under its current management, is a national, award-winning model for smooth operations and neighborhood relations.

We urge you to step in, slow down the fast track, closely scrutinize this self-operation plan and determine whether or not the RAP staff has explored alternatives that provide comparable guaranteed revenue, far less risk for the City and less disruption to the neighborhood.

Respectfully yours,



Los Feliz Improvement Association
Chris Laib, President

Cc: Tom LaBonge, Councilmember CD 4
Paul Krekorian, Chair, LA Council Budget & Finance Committee
Paul Koretz, Councilmember CD 5
Mitch O'Farrell, Chair, Arts, Parks, Health, Aging & River Committee
Michael Shull, General Manager, Recreation and Parks

Kindest regards

Jay Handal
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April 26, 2015 Editorial

Should L.A. really manage the Greek Theatre?

By **THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD**

L.A. has a hard enough time keeping park bathrooms clean, much less managing the Greek Theatre

The city of Los Angeles, which has enough problems getting the streets paved and the trash picked up, may now be getting into the concert business. Earlier this month, after a nasty, political fight over which of two entertainment giants should be awarded the multimillion-dollar contract to operate the venerable Greek Theatre, the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners threw out the bids and decided to let the city staff have a crack at running the venue. This is a bad idea, and Mayor Eric Garcetti and the City Council should put a stop to it.

Clearly, the decision on who should run the Greek became excessively politicized. The Recreation and Parks Department spent nearly two years on a complicated, multistage evaluation designed to insulate the contract process from outside meddling. But when the commission picked Live Nation instead of the Nederlander Organization (which has managed the theater for four decades) and its partner Anschutz Entertainment Group, all sides brought their lobbyists, lawyers and community supporters to the fight at City Hall. The City Council eventually rejected Live Nation and directed the staff to redo the bidding.

With time running out on the current contract, Recreation and Parks Department managers came up with a new idea. Why not run the theater themselves? City employees could handle the concert calendar, maintenance, concessions and parking, and professional promoters would book and advertise the acts. The city might even make more money by cutting out the middleman, officials said.

Here's the problem: The city doesn't have a good track record of running profitable entertainment venues. The city hired AEG in 2013 to take over operation of the money-losing city-run Convention Center with the hope that the company could cut costs and increase the number of conventions. Last year, the Los Angeles Zoo brought in a private nonprofit to manage marketing and promotions and to attract more visitors and donors. In general, the city should focus on its core responsibilities of public safety, infrastructure maintenance and basic services. Does it really make sense to hire the professional staff needed to manage a large concert venue or to take on the responsibility for making much-needed capital improvements to the facility when the city already has a hard time keeping park bathrooms clean?

The answer to the Greek Theatre mess is to fix the contracting process, not to give up on private management or have the city get into a business in which it has no expertise.

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-greek-theatre-20150426-story.html>