

Case 20-0858 // Appeal for Case CPC-2019-6069-CU-DB-CDP-CDO-SPP-MEL-WDI

1 message

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Tue, Sep 1, 2020 at 12:12 PM

****Hello,**

I initially tried to submit my comments below to your website, but it was not working after several attempt to "submit" I gave up! Please accept the following as my official comments to the case related to the Lincoln Apartment Appeal hearing scheduled for Thursday 9/3/20.

Dear City Council Members,

As a 17 year resident of Venice, Presidents Row to be specific, and a parent of a student at St. Mark School, I am writing in opposition to the Lincoln Apartments project and to express my support of the appeal for the following reasons:

Critically, the proposed project shares a property line with St. Mark School which is an elementary school, kids who attend range in age from 4 to 14 years old. I am particularly concerned by the City Planning Commission's disregard for documentation provided showing Specific Adverse Impact based on the track record of Safe Place for Youth (SPY) and Venice Community Housing (VCH).

The developer, Venice Community Housing, has a terrible safety record with its other buildings. Its Gateway Apartments supportive housing project (with only 20 units) generates more than 11 times as many police and fire responses as a market-rate building of comparable size on the same street (calls for Assaults with a Deadly Weapon, Batteries, Burglaries, and Thefts). VCH's Horizon Apartments has similar egregious calls. Records showing this were submitted to the CPC but were buried in the staff report. There is zero accountability. Prop 2 funding will be used for this project and will mandate the inclusion of "adults with serious mental illness...with symptoms of psychosis or violence," and VCH has refused to provide a security guard. These facts and records are not irrelevant to a project with two elementary schools and a nursery school within a two-block radius.

Safe Place for Youth currently operates drop-in services for clients three days a week. Over the last three years, police and fire departments have been called to SPY 117 times, for incidents ranging from Assault with a Deadly Weapon to Violent Mentally Ill, Burglary and Battery. A chain-wielding man from SPY caused a lockdown of St. Mark school in January. Over 1,000 letters from both nearby businesses and area residents were submitted detailing these concerns. These are not hypotheticals. The adverse impact is real and predictable and it is the reason the Venice Neighborhood Council voted unanimously to oppose this project.

The CPC's disinclination to consider these factors might be related to conflicts of interest held by two of the members, including President Millman. The specifics of these conflicts are laid out in the neighborhood appeal. That appeal also addresses the fact that the hearing violated Open Meeting Laws under the Brown Act. The public could not fully participate — many neighbors could not speak — because of busy signals, the lack of a local call number to join the meeting, or the fact that when people hung up after speaking, as President Millman directed them to, they could not get back into the meeting as it was full, at that point. I myself was one of these people. We were told to hang up and call back-when I did the first number I tried gave me a busy signal, and then I dialed the number from the 818 area code, which was busy. I then called the original number for the meeting and had to wait to be let back in-causing me to miss important information and lose my place in line to speak-which ultimately I was not able to do.

As for the building itself: it will not be "visually compatible" with its surroundings but rather, at four stories, loom over the surrounding one- and two-story homes. The current plan is to have a rooftop deck that will overlook the outdoor classrooms and entire school yard of St. Mark. VCH has stated they have made "concessions" with regard to this part of the design, but outside of removing the deck altogether, the issues of safety still remain. Which I also want to address that VCH made no attempts at involving the neighborhood in their process, nor did they perform any meaningful outreach with the neighbors to instill measures of good faith as a potential neighbor.

The impact this will have on parking and traffic in and around the neighborhood is excessive and irresponsible. It will have only six parking spaces for some 98 residents, 25 staff, and 20 volunteers. According to the Venice Specific Plan, it should have 104. Increased density is meant to be self-sufficient, not a burden on the surrounding community. This issue alone causes me great concern. We have ridden our bikes to school for the last 8 years and have seen the increase in traffic throughout the neighborhood grow at an amazing pace. The impact this project will have on the flow of traffic is a major safety issue.

Spending \$20 million to get little more than one tenth of one percent of the Los Angeles homeless off the streets is an unconscionable use of public funds. It lines developers' pockets while leaving the vast majority on the streets. This is not compassion it is corruption. The office of Mike Bonin, of CD 11, has declined to turn over communication related to the project, despite a California Public Records Act request. I urge you to please reconsider.

Thank you,
V Amerian