

PRESS RELEASE

February 2, 2017

VC-PUCC LAWSUIT CLAIMING CITY OF LA SIDESTEPS ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN APPROVING VENICE DEVELOPMENTS WITHOUT PUBLIC PROCESS MOVES FORWARD

City Said: Dismiss The Case, Judge Says No

Contacts: Sabrina Venskus, attorney for the plaintiffs - 310-985-3168
Laddie Williams, plaintiff, VC-PUCC - 310-908-7174 (evenings best)

On February 2, 2017, Judge Yvette M. Palazuelos issued her ruling allowing the lawsuit filed by the Venice Coalition to Preserve Unique Community Character (VC-PUCC) against the City of Los Angeles to proceed to trial. The judge agreed with Venice activists that the burden is on the city to prove it is following its own policies and procedures in approving hundreds of demotions and huge development projects - while destroying historic neighborhoods and affordable housing, and pushing low and middle-income residents and communities of color out of Venice. The trial date was set for July 3, 2017.

“The City tried to get the case dismissed without a trial, saying that Plaintiffs have no causes of action against the City,” said plaintiffs’ lawyer Sabrina Venskus. “The Court disagreed with the City and is allowing the case to proceed to trial.”

The City of Los Angeles Planning Department’s VSO (Venice Sign Off) procedure fails to ensure that developments comply with the Venice Land Use Plan requirements that all development respect the mass, scale, character and landscaping of existing neighborhoods. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles Planning Department has illegally issued hundreds of Coastal Exemptions, which has enabled developers to by-pass important protections imposed by the California Coastal Act.

The Venice plaintiffs claim that many residents in Venice, especially in the poorer areas, have their rights to due process violated when construction occurs without the full process of notifying neighbors, as is done in many of the swankier areas of Venice including the walk streets. With the current VSOs, demolitions often proceed without any notice or input from the surrounding neighbors, causing extreme duress for many residents.

There are four causes of action that the lawsuit is going to determine: Violation of Article 1, Section 7 of the California Constitution; Violation of the Venice Land Use Plan; Violation of Section 30000 *et seq.*, of the California Coastal Act; and Violations of Sections 30003 and 30610 of the California Coastal Act.

* SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CASE NO.: BC 611549

COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF FOR VIOLATIONS OF PLAINTIFFS' CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION (Cal. Const., art.1, para.7), THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT (Pub.Resources Code, para. 30000 *et seq.*), THE VENICE LAND USE PLAN (Los Angeles Planning and Zoning Law), and CALIFORNIA CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE para. 526a

#####