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Fwd: Case File # 11-0262 - Community Care Facilities Proposed Ordinance

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>

Thu, Feb 9, 2012 at 8:01 AM

To: Candy Rosales <candy.rosales@lacity.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Shannon Hill <shill@gblaw.net>

Date: Wed, Feb 8, 2012 at 4:37 PM

Subject: Case File # 11-0262 - Community Care Facilities Proposed Ordinance

To: "councilmember.reyes@lacity.org" <councilmember.reyes@lacity.org>, "rebecca.valdez@lacity.org" <rebecca.valdez@lacity.org>, "paul.krekorian@lacity.org" <paul.krekorian@lacity.org>, "karo.torossian@lacity.org" <karo.torossian@lacity.org>, "councilmember.zine@lacity.org" <councilmember.zine@lacity.org>, "daniel.skolnick@lacity.org" <daniel.skolnick@lacity.org>, "tom.labonge@lacity.org" <tom.labonge@lacity.org>, "renee.weitzer@lacity.org" <renee.weitzer@lacity.org>, "chris.koontz@lacity.org" <chris.koontz@lacity.org>, "paul.koretz@lacity.org" <paul.koretz@lacity.org>, "tony.cardenas@lacity.org" <tony.cardenas@lacity.org>, "eduardo.martinez@lacity.org" <eduardo.martinez@lacity.org>, "richard.alarcon@lacity.org" <richard.alarcon@lacity.org>, "dan.rosales@lacity.org" <dan.rosales@lacity.org>, "councilmember.oarks@lacity.org" <councilmember.oarks@lacity.org>, "purvi.doshi@lacity.org" <purvi.doshi@lacity.org>, "jan.perry@lacity.org" <jan.perry@lacity.org>, "marie.rumsey@lacity.org" <marie.rumsey@lacity.org>, "paul.backstrom@lacity.org" <paul.backstrom@lacity.org>, "herb.wesson@lacity.org" <herb.wesson@lacity.org>, "deron.williams@lacity.org" <deron.williams@lacity.org>, "councilman.rosendahl@lacity.org" <councilman.rosendahl@lacity.org>, "councilmember.englander@lacity.org" <councilmember.englander@lacity.org>, "phyllis.winger@lacity.org" <phyllis.winger@lacity.org>, "councilmember.garcett@lacity.org" <councilmember.garcett@lacity.org>, "marcel.porras@lacity.org" <marcel.porras@lacity.org>, "councilmember.huizar@lacity.org" <councilmember.huizar@lacity.org>, "tricia.robbins@lacity.org" <tricia.robbins@lacity.org>, "councilmember.buscaino@lacity.org" <councilmember.buscaino@lacity.org>, "doane.liu@lacity.org" <doane.liu@lacity.org>, "sharon.gin@lacity.org" <sharon.gin@lacity.org>, "wfletcher@utla.net" <wfletcher@utla.net>

Dear Council Members:

The purpose of this letter is to ask **each and every one of you council members: What is the hold up on passing the Community Care Facilities Ordinance?**

I know for a fact that my area council member, Mr. Dennis Zine, absolutely and positively opposes any sober living home in the R1 zoning. Last year, during the Reseda Neighborhood Council meeting, he stood in front of over 100 concerned citizens and stated such. I also know, that Mr. Englander holds the same position. Now, I must direct this letter to those of you who are dragging your feet and stalling a very important ordinance from being passed.

Briefly, I am a recovering heroin addict and **will** celebrate 17 years clean on March 13th. I am a member of Narcotics Anonymous and have shared my experience strength and hope with thousands of addicts in the fellowship by speaking and sponsoring many women throughout the years. I have worked hard to maintain my recovery and with that, I have two biggest gifts from being clean and that is being a mother. I have my a son who just turned 14 in January and my daughter, who is 11. My son is an active baseball player at ELL and my daughter's North Valley soccer team just took the valley district championship for GU12. By the grace of God, neither of my two children have ever seen mommy loaded and both are precious innocent children. I have worked hard to build my career as a paralegal and presently work at a West LA law firm. I am also taking college courses to finish my degree, so I can attend law school.

In 2001, I bought a modest 1950 home in Reseda on a quiet tree lined street. I wanted my children to have a safe place to live, a backyard, a dog or two. I work tremendously hard to pay my mortgage and do the upkeep involved with homeownership. In fact, I care about my neighborhood and for once in my life, I feel like a productive member of society. I pay taxes and I give back to the community. I care about my neighbors and as they care for me. We borrow an egg here and there and share our baked goods with each other. But, there is a strain with these houses on the corner and across the street from the elementary school.

In 2005, a man from Ventura County bought a home on our corner (6957 Enfield Avenue, Reseda) and turned it into a men's sober living – cramming it with as many men as possible just to make a buck. Shortly thereafter, the house went up in flames and burnt to the ground. This was tragic for myself and my neighbors. The owner also owns a construction company (how convenient) and quickly rebuilt this small 1950 home into a huge convalescent looking house with twice as many bedrooms. Today, this house has 12 men living in it. In 2010, the same man, bought the house on the next corner and tore it down in one day!! He built a second convalescent looking house which connects to the Enfield property. Now, these people have the ability to house up to 25 drug addict men – across the street from a school!!!

What really bothers me here is that these houses are across the street from Bertrand Elementary School. Each day, children walk passed these two houses as they go to school. Because there's no regulation, how is the community going to know if there's a pedophile living in these houses? I no longer feel safe allowing my children to ride their bicycles to the corner school or play outside with their friends while unattended.

We have had many incidents with the men living in these houses which I don't need to go into because the bottom line is: these sober living homes are illegal. According to the zoning laws in place, you cannot run a business of this type out of your home. R1 zoning is for SINGLE FAMILIES!!

See: <http://local.yahoo.com/info-46611595-m-mckay-out-reach-the-discovery-house-reseda>

Ms. McKay is the wife of Tom Whiting. Together they own the Discovery Bertrand house. Whiting Construction tore the house down and built the new house. The Enfield house is also the Discovery House - owned by Tony Dee but as I was informed and believe, Mr. Whiting and Mr. Dee are business partners together in both of these Discovery Houses for men. Mr. Dee also runs another sober living home in the west valley. These people are not residing in these homes and have no idea what their tenants are doing. They are charging \$1,500 per bed - with 12 bedrooms; you do the math!!

As a mother, a homeowner and a recovering woman, I do not approve of these sober living

homes in the R1 zoning. I know from experience that most people do not stay clean and sober on their first visit to a drug program. When one of those men decide to go use some meth or smoke some crack- who will stop them from robbing me or my neighbors? Who is going to regulate these two houses to make sure that the 25 men aren't child molesters?

I agree, everyone has a right to recover and some sober living homes do help the struggling addicts, but most of them only care about making money!! It is a business. Tell me why can't the houses be located in an open area? What's wrong with R2 or R3 areas? You certainly couldn't build an apartment building at the corner, so why or how do they get away with this two convalescent type houses? They certainly didn't tell Building & Safety that they were building drug programs?

Imagine that you worked your ass off to pay the bills. Worked hard to keep your children in a safe area while commuting two hours to work every day - and then your neighbor decides to run a sober living with 25 addict men across the street from your child's school ... Tell me that you would not do everything in your power to protect your family!! I bought my house with an **expectation** that I would live on a quiet street. A reasonable expectation and that is why I chose not to purchase a condo or live in an apartment building. I did what it took to buy my house and I am invested both emotionally and financially to my neighborhood. Just as many other citizens who pay property taxes are!

I ask each and every one of you to put yourself in my position. Ask yourself: how would I feel if these 25 addict men were next door to my house? Outside smoking and your children were inhaling second hand smoke. Outside cussing and talking of things that your children had no business hearing. Yet, each morning, you got on the 405 and drove an hour to work so you could pay the mortgage and property taxes!! How would you feel?

I don't need to go any further describing my feelings because by now- you understand where I am coming from, but think of my two children who are innocent and deserve to ride their bikes to the corner and play outside with their friends. Think about the 700 children that walk passed those two houses each day as they go to school. And to think that if something ever happened to these children and the City of Los Angeles was put on notice and did

nothing about it - would the city be held liable? Look at the scandal that LAUSD is going through right now because of the molestation issues at Miramonte Elementary School.

I have taken several days off of work to attend the PLUM hearings. I have been threatened by Paul Dumont. I have had my picture on the front page of the Daily News - jeopardizing my safety. I have written letters. I have attended my neighborhood council meetings. I cannot continue to sit back and wait any longer.

I urge each and every one of you to imagine this type of issue happening next door to your home and ask yourself: "what can you do?" You certainly cannot call Building & Safety because they will tell you that there's nothing they can do, but I am confused because we have an ordinance for R1 zoning already in place, yet no one is doing anything about it. These two houses are connected and operate as one home. They are not licensed. They have people coming and going at all hours, including but not limited to holding outside AA/NA meetings where we have no parking. The owners of these sober living homes are clearly running a business which is a nuisance to our quiet neighborhoods. We should not be subjected to this type of insanity. Why should we follow the ordinance laws? In 2004, I was told by Building & Safety that I couldn't convert my garage into an apartment because it was a violation of the ordinance. I was told that R1 zoning is for single family residences.

Now, I want some action and **I want something done to prevent these houses from operating in R1 zoning.** Please hurry up and do something- it's enough already!! This has been going on since 2007.

Kind regards,

Shannon Hill

Shannon Hill

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