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P.O. Box 292359
Los Angeles, California 90029

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

October 5, 2012

Council Date:
10-24-12

CF: 12-0967

Robert R. Ovrom, Director
City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety
201 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: 5238 – 5246 Virginia Avenue, Order to Comply #2994936.

Mr. Ovrom:

The Public Safety Committee of the East Hollywood Neighborhood Council voted unanimously at its October 4, 2012 regular meeting to express to you our strong objections to an unwarranted intervention by your Acting Chief of Code Enforcement, Mr. Frank Lara, to prevent enforcement of an Order to Comply regarding the use of unpaved residential parcels in a restricted density zone as a commercial parking lot.

For the past year, this property at 5238 – 5246 Virginia Avenue has been illegally leased out by owner Petros Taglyan to a nearby grocery store for use as a commercial parking lot. The 45,301 square foot site consists of five parcels immediately adjacent to Kingsley Elementary School's playfield to the east, and restricted density housing to the west and north (see attached **Figure 1, Photos 1 and 2**). The three parcels fronting Santa Monica Boulevard are zoned C2-1D, and the two parcels fronting Virginia Avenue are zoned RD1.5-1XL. Ingress and egress to the dirt lot is via a gated entry on Virginia Avenue, which is a substandard local street heavily utilized by parents of children attending Kingsley Elementary School (see **Photo 3**). The lot also has a gated entry off of Santa Monica Blvd., which is not utilized. Vehicles parking in the lot do so on the residential parcels (see **Photo 4**), which are unpaved and covered with weeds, rather than using the commercially zoned parcels, which are partially paved. Circulation is also obviously through the residential parcels.

Representatives of our neighborhood council have received numerous and constant complaints from both area residents and parents of children attending Kingsley Elementary School regarding not only the dust kicked up by vehicles parking in the subject dirt lot, but also the fire danger poised by the excessive vegetation growth on the site (see **Photo 5**). These complaints have been repeatedly relayed to representatives of the property owner, with the request that: 1). Ingress and egress to the lot be only from Santa Monica Blvd., and that cars park only on the commercially zoned parcels, and 2). That the lot be maintained free of combustible vegetation. These requests were ignored, so in April a complaint was filed with the Department of Building and Safety. An Order to Comply was subsequently issued (#2994936), with a compliance date of May 20, 2012. At this point, however, we have been informed that Mr. Lara personally intervened and granted an extension of compliance until November. Mr. Lara has not returned phone calls or email requests to explain the basis for this extension, and we wish to ensure that another is not granted so that parking and ingress/egress are no longer permitted on this lot in the residential zone.

Mr. Robert Ovrom

October 5, 2012

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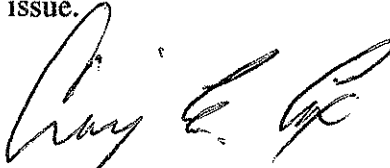
On behalf of our neighborhood council, the residents of Virginia Avenue, and the parents and teachers of the 536 children who attend Kingsley Elementary School, we would appreciate some action from your office regarding this matter. Our neighborhood council's district representative for this area is Doug Haines, and we ask that your office contact him directly. He can be reached at: (310) 281-7625.

Thank you for your time and efforts regarding this issue.

Eric Moore
Co-chair



Craig Cox
Co-chair



Attachments

cc: Jane Usher, Office of the City Attorney
Gwen Godiak, Los Angeles Unified School District
Frank Lara, Acting Chief, Code Enforcement (by fax, w/o attachments)



Figure 1: Google Earth view of lot. Kingsley Elementary School at right, with subject lot outlined.

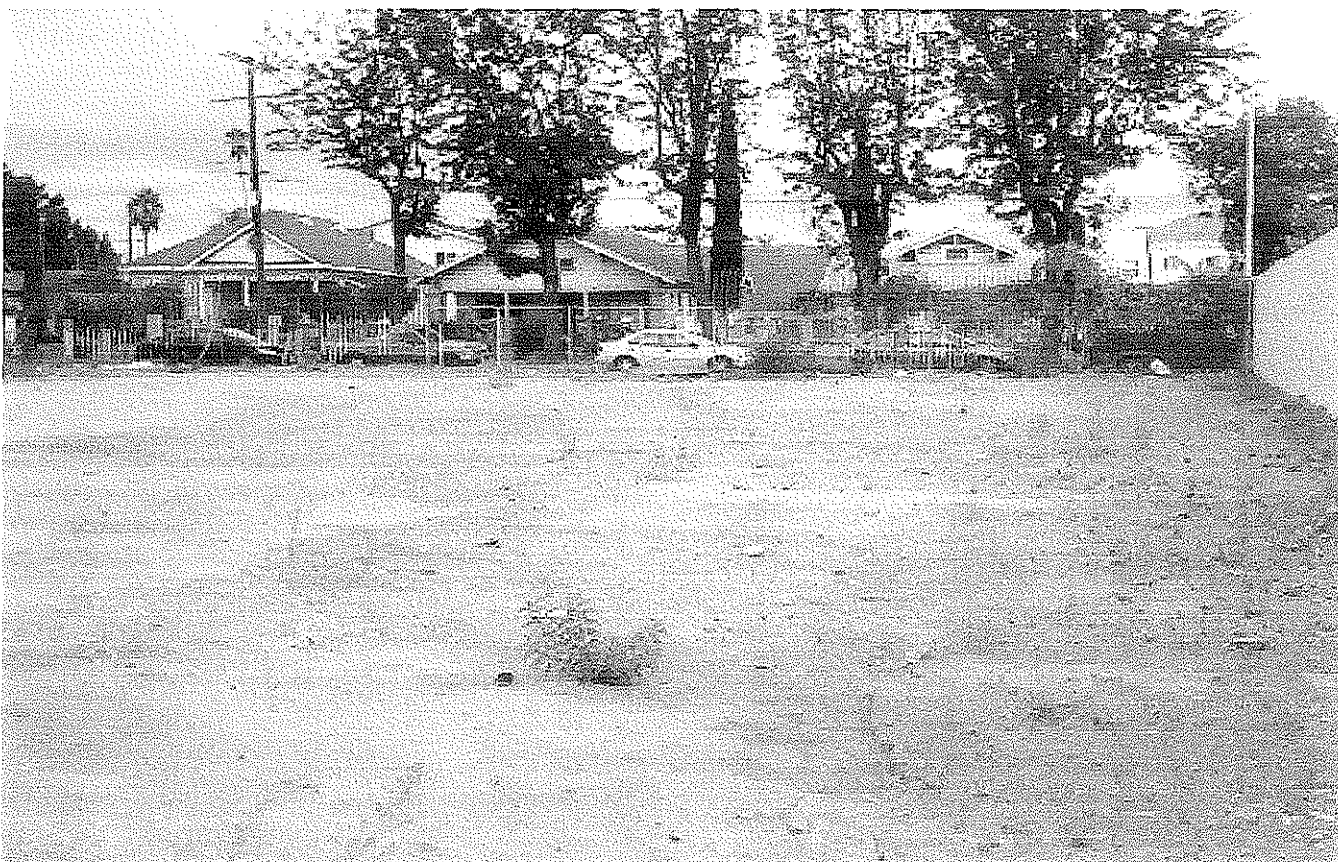


Photo 1: Restricted Density, single-family housing across from lot's entrance on Virginia Avenue. (Photo taken 11/14/2008)

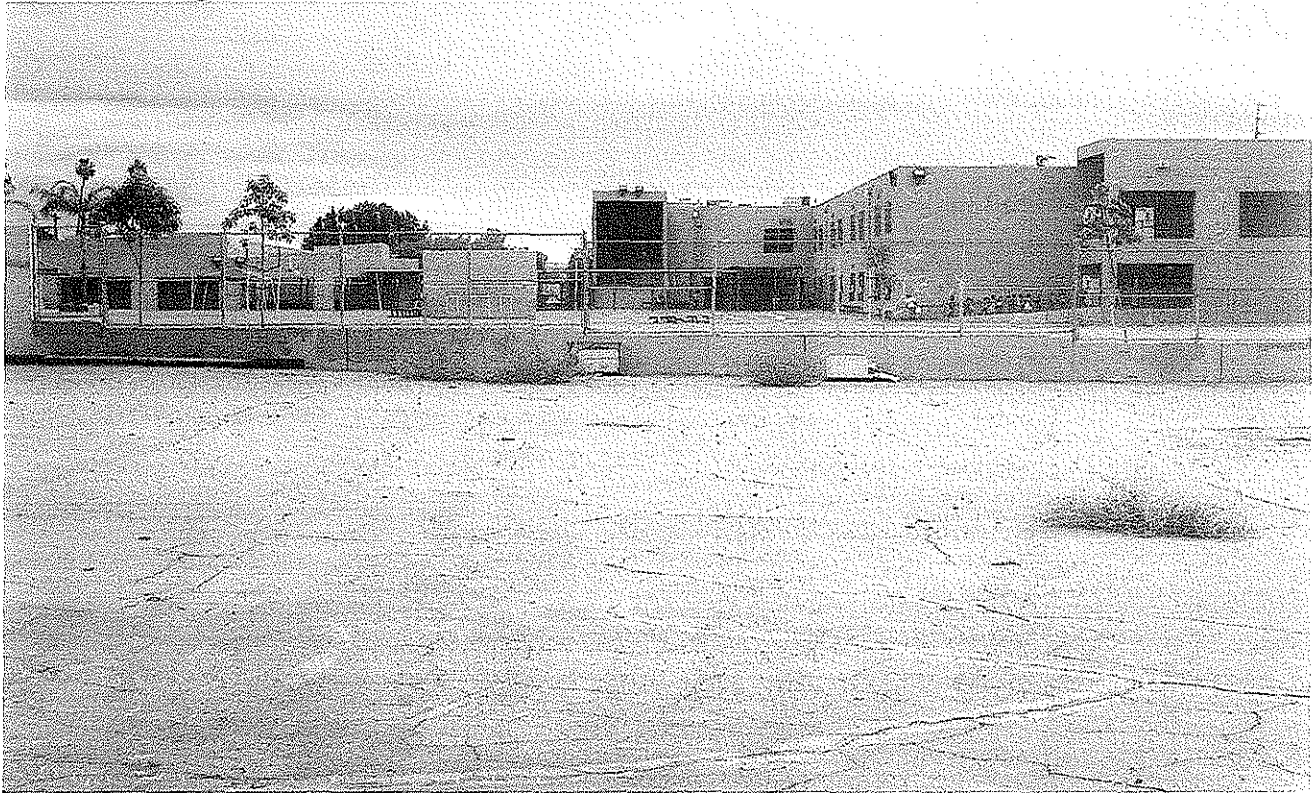


Photo 2: Campus and playfield of Kingsley Elementary School immediately adjacent to lot. Photo shows partially paved portion of site on commercially zoned parcels (Photo taken 11/14/2008).



Photo 4: 5200 block of Virginia Avenue, showing curb cut in front of Kingsley Elementary School to widen street access east of subject lot for child drop offs/pick ups (Photo taken 11/14/2008).



Photo 3: Lot as it appears today, with vehicle entrance from Virginia Avenue (Photo taken 10/3/2012). Order to Comply issued in April of 2012, overruled by Frank Lara.



Photo 5: Photo of lot as shown from Santa Monica Blvd. taken October 3, 2012, showing lack of maintenance and vehicles parked on unpaved, residentially zoned parcels.