

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Alex Kondracke

**Date Submitted:** 06/18/2019 09:05 AM

**Council File No:** 16-0185-S1

**Comments for Public Posting:** June 17, 2019 LA City Council John Ferraro Council Chamber Room 340, City Hall 200 North Spring Street Los Angeles, CA 90012 Dear City Clerk, I'd like to submit into record evidence that Gevork and Gohar Afifi, the applicants for the project at 4511 Russell Avenue (Case File 16-0185-S1, Case Number ENV-2018-2765-CE), who also own the dry cleaning business, Celebrity Cleaners at 1857 Hillhurst Ave directly adjacent to this property have owned and operated this dry cleaning business for almost 30 years at this same location, by their own public comment. In a Los Angeles Magazine article dated September 5th, 2018, the applicant, Gevork Afifi, refers to an event that happened at his business "29 years ago." In response, the reporter asks him "Is that when you started this place?" to which he responds "Yes" (Exhibit A). Seeing as this was written almost a year ago, that would make Afifi's business nearly 30 years old. Furthermore, on the Better Business Bureau's website, in response to a comment about a ruined pair of tailored pants, the owner responds on August 17, 2018 saying "We been in this business same location for 29 years" (Exhibit B). Again, this comment was made almost a full year ago, making their business 30 years old. It is standard practice for the city to require a full CEQA review for properties that are on a site which previously housed a dry cleaning business however the property in question, 4511 Russell, was given a categorical exemption even though it is only separated by a thin wall from a site which has housed a dry cleaning business for thirty years and separated by a thin fence from a gasoline station which existed from at least the 1930's to 2004. The assumption that chemicals from one or both locations did not seep underground (fences and walls do not prevent gasoline and chemical seepage) could gravely impact both the health of future tenants and the surrounding community. Thank you, Alex Kondracke

June 17, 2019

LA City Council  
John Ferraro Council Chamber  
Room 340, City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Thank you,

Alex Kondracke

# EXHIBIT A



## A Los Feliz Dry Cleaner Walks Us Through His Collection of Celebrity Headshots

From Tim Curry to a guy named Paul, Celebrity Cleaners has taken its collection into the 21st century

By **Rico Gagliano** - September 5, 2018

*In our **Strip Mall of the Month** feature, writer Rico Gagliano picks a random L.A. shopping plaza and reports back on the hidden treasures found therein.*

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Autographed celebrity photos are an interior-decor standby at L.A.'s dry cleaners. Typically what you'll find is a smattering of character actors, recognizable mainly to viewers of soap operas, along with an A-lister or two. Once, at a Mid-City cleaners, I noticed Arnold Schwarzenegger's signed photo over in a corner next to some local TV news reporter's. The joint down the street from my apartment has a rakish-looking John Cho stapled to the wood paneling over the counter, along with a half-dozen lesser-known faces.

I find these displays poignant and beautiful—the humble, everyman version of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Anyone with a headshot and some acting credits can end up beside a star.

The proprietors of Celebrity Cleaners, located in a strip mall on Hillhurst Avenue in Los Feliz, are among the kings of the practice. For years their display of dozens of autographed headshots blanketed an entire wall of the store. When they remodeled three years ago, management took the game into the computer age by digitizing the entire collection and displaying it on a flatscreen TV in a continuously looping slideshow. Faces, both familiar and obscure, crossfade silently, one into the other.

Recently, I stopped in to speak with the shop's genial owner and manager, George Afifi. "I don't have a favorite photo," he told me at one point. "They're my customers. I treat them the same

way, whether they're celebrities or not. Every customer, for me, is a celebrity."

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**So first of all, how many autographs do you have, total?**

Close to a hundred.

**And are all of those from actual clients?**

Yes, mostly clients.

**Do you ask them for their autographs or do they just give them to you?**

Ninety percent of the time I ask them, because I recognize them. Some of them, after a few times coming, they introduce themselves. Or one of my other customers says, "Oh! This is that person," you know? So I ask for a picture, and then they bring it the next time they come in.

**Who was the first one, do you remember?**

Oh no, I don't remember. That was 29 years ago.

**Is that when you started this place?**

Yes. My wife started this business. Then I started helping her. Now she's retired and I'm doing the whole job now.

**And you get to meet all the cool famous people.**

Yes, yes, yes! She started collecting the pictures, but now I do it.

**Which is the most famous autograph you have, do you think?**

Well...[he pauses a long time, watching the celebrity photographs scroll by] Oh! [Tim Curry](#)! Tim Curry.

**When did you get Tim...whoa, did I just see a photo of [Rob Reiner](#)?**

Yes. But Tim Curry, I got him maybe 15 or 17 years ago.

**I guess that was back when he was doing the miniseries *It* on TV.\***

No, *Home Alone*, I think.\*\*

**What did Tim Curry bring in to get dry cleaned?**

[Laughs] Ah—everything! Whatever he wears.

**I just imagine him having makeup on his collars a lot, 'cause I think of him from *Rocky Horror* and as the clown in *It*.**

Sometimes he might have, yeah. That's why people bring their clothes here; because we're good and we can get makeup out. [Looking up at the screen] Oh—there's Barry! From the show *Storage*.

**Oh yeah! Barry [Weiss], the guy with the glasses from *Storage Wars*.**

*Storage Wars*, yes. He still comes in here. [To an employee:] Who else still comes in here? Oh, Drake Bell does, the singer. He was on a Nickelodeon show. That's for kids, though—we don't watch, we don't watch! [Laughs] And also Zaillian.

**Steve Zaillian, the great screenwriter [*Schindler's List*, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*]?**

Yes. I have his picture but I didn't put it on the video yet.

**And there's you standing with somebody.**

That's me with Avo, the big cigar guy.

**I don't know who that is.**

He was a cigar distributor.

**[Unimpressed] Oh.\*\*\* You have several shots with the guy who played "Big Pussy" on *The Sopranos* [Vincent Pastore].**

*Sopranos*, yeah!

**He comes in here?**

Uh, no—I met him in Las Vegas, I think. That's why I said *mostly* the pictures are of clients! The others are like that, where maybe I met them in Vegas during a dry cleaning trade show, or other trade shows I go to.

**Big Pussy was at a dry cleaning trade show?**

No, I was there for the show, and he happened to be at the hotel. He was playing blackjack at some table. I went up to him, we start talking, we played. My wife, she was there, and the picture is me, my wife, and him. I got Sherman Hemsley's photo at a trade show, though.

**Sherman Hemsley from *The Jeffersons*! His character George was a dry cleaner, right?**

Yeah. That was at a show in Vegas or New Orleans, I'm not sure. [Laughs] He was a guest of the dry cleaning show! Every two years comes a big show in New Orleans, Vegas, or New York. And usually I go to see new equipment, new machines, meet new people. And I met him over there.

**Was he a speaker, or just there signing photos?**

For fun he was there, just signing pictures.

**I see Paul Lynde up there, from *Hollywood Squares*. He was a client?**

Yes. He's passed away.

**Did he have his print shirts cleaned here? I remember him having amazing shirts on that show. If you cleaned those that's like handling a piece of history.**

I think so. If he was wearing it, then we cleaned it.

**They would have been brightly colored.**

For sure.

**And...is that Oprah?!**

Yeah, Oprah, but she doesn't come here. The guy standing *next* to Oprah—*he* was a customer.

**Is that her husband or her friend, or...?**

Friend, maybe. I guess. [Laughs] One of the famous guys who hang around Hollywood people—I don't know! He brought that to me.

**These photos used to be physically on the wall, right?**

Yes. But now everything is digital. Because after 30 years of hanging on the wall, the pictures were getting faded. The color was changing, the frames were getting broken from the sun, from the heat. Even the signatures were starting to get faded. We decided, "In another ten years"—and I *am* gonna be here in another ten years—"These photos, you're not gonna be able to see anything!" This way, at least, everything stays fresh.

**Oh there's [Max Perlich](#), the character actor! I loved him in *Drugstore Cowboy*.**

And there's Paul, the standup comedian! Paul...uh...I can't remember some of the last names, or some of the first names! [Gestures to screen] There's [Cynthia McFadden](#). She used to work on ABC, I believe. She was here during the O.J. Simpson trial, covering from the courtroom. She used to come here. But after, she moved to New York. She's there now.

**She hosted *Nightline* for a while. Did you talk to her about the O.J. trial, while it was happening?**

No, no, of course not. I didn't care.

**You didn't care? Everybody cared!**

Not me. You know, you don't discuss politics with the customers—that's the number one rule. My father taught me: don't be involved with the politics. Not with your friends, with your *brother*, even. No politics.

**If you could get one celebrity to add their photo to your collection, who do you wish it would be?**

Clint Eastwood. I like his Westerns.

**I think he lives up north.**

Carmel, yeah.

**Maybe he'll read this and come down with a suit or something.**

Sure, I'm here.



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\*\* Also wrong—*Home Alone 2* came out in 1992.

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# EXHIBIT B

« [Complaints](#)

## Complaints



# Celebrity Cleaners

📍 1857 Hillhurst Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90027-4426

☎ (323) 666-1203

**Complaint Type:** Problems with Product/Service    **Status:** Answered

07/24/2018

### Desired Outcome

I am seeking a full refund for my jeans \$119 + tax and a full refund for the alterations an additional \$20.

### Customer Response

07/18/2018

The tailor at the cleaners ruined my brand new jeans. On Thursday, July 12, 2018, I took 4 pieces of garments to be altered at Celebrity Cleaners. The seamstress showed me where she would cut my jeans and I agreed. Upon pickup on Wednesday, July 18, I noticed that the jeans were cut 4 inches more than what I had asked for. I went back to the seamstress and she rudely, while raising her voice, told me that she did exactly what I asked for. I told her that it's her mistake, because I had never ask for my brand new jeans to be cut that short. In addition, she took off all the tags off the jeans and discarded them without my permission. I asked for a full refund of the transaction, including what I had paid for for the jeans (\$119 + \$20 for alteration), because she ruined it and it is not fixable in any way. She rudely refused. When I asked to speak to the owner or a manager, the front desk lady, \*\*\*\*\*, lied to me and said they are unavailable for a month, and I wouldn't even give me their name. This facility is unprofessional and has provided me with the worst customer service experience I have received. I have been their customer for over two years. I am requesting a full refund for my jeans( I have the receipt) and the alteration services provided by Celebrity Cleaners.

### Celebrity Cleaners Response

08/17/2018

Good morning My name is \*\*\*\*\* I am the owner of this business. And let's start from beginning. She came and tried the pants. Tailor shortened exactly how she wanted and asked her more then ones if this is what you want , if this is the length you want and she replied yes , yes. Now maybe she changed her mind later after she picked it up For whatever reason it's not the tailors fault at all. **We been in this business same location for 29 years.** We know how to take care of our customers. After any alterations yes we do take the tags out obviously so it will be ready to

wear .When \*\*\*\*\* told her that owners are not available is because me and my husband went to vacation in Armenia for one month. She didn't lie . Now that's a very rude thing to call someone a liar . We seen customers like her many times when they don't wanna pay for service and trying to find some type of an excuse not to pay. And her young teenage daughter was the loud mouth. You can go on Yelp and read all the beautiful reviews about the tailor. And by the way I actually tried to call her but she never answered so I can explain to her the situation. Anyway this is not our problem. We did nothing wrong. And we don't do free alterations. Thank you \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

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**Who was the first one, do you remember?**

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**Is that her husband or her friend, or...?**

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# EXHIBIT B


« [Complaints](#)

## Complaints



# Celebrity Cleaners

 1857 Hillhurst Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90027-4426

 (323) 666-1203

**Complaint Type:** Problems with Product/Service    **Status:** Answered

07/24/2018

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wear .When \*\*\*\*\* told her that owners are not available is because me and my husband went to vacation in Armenia for one month. She didn't lie . Now that's a very rude thing to call someone a liar . We seen customers like her many times when they don't wanna pay for service and trying to find some type of an excuse not to pay. And her young teenage daughter was the loud mouth. You can go on Yelp and read all the beautiful reviews about the tailor. And by the way I actually tried to call her but she never answered so I can explain to her the situation. Anyway this is not our problem. We did nothing wrong. And we don't do free alterations. Thank you \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

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## Communication from Public

**Name:** Jamie T. Hall

**Date Submitted:** 06/18/2019 09:29 AM

**Council File No:** 16-0185-S1

**Comments for Public Posting:** Dear Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council: This firm represents Los Feliz Improvement Association (“Petitioner”). On or about October 2, 2018 the City of Los Angeles (“City”) approved permits designed to approve a new multi-family dwelling at 4511 West Russell Avenue, Los Angeles, CA (“Project”) and determined that said Project was exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). On or about February 25, 2019 Petitioner submitted an appeal pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21151(c). The City has scheduled a public hearing for the appeal on May 21, 2019 before the Los Angeles City Council. This letter explains both that the City is required to provide required notice to Petitioner of the City Council hearing and that referral of the hearing to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee (“PLUM”) violated CEQA. Under Public Resources Code Section 21151(c), the City Council sits as the appellate body. Neither the Los Angeles Municipal Code nor CEQA authorize or direct the City Council to delegate any portion of the public hearing to a subordinate hearing officer or committee. Just like countless provisions of the City’s municipal and administrative code, when the City Council is required to conduct a hearing, it does so by scheduling a public hearing on the City Council’s regular meeting agenda. Yet for some unknown reason, the Council President has and did make a referral of the land use appeals in this case to PLUM. The referral in this case was inconsistent with City Council Rule Nos. 8 and 16. Rule No. 16 provides in part: “The Presiding Officer shall cause all matters filed with, or presented to the Council to be referred to the appropriate Council Committee, except as otherwise provided by the Rules or where required by law to be first presented to the Council.” Council Rule No. 8 provides in part: “Public hearing items scheduled for regular meetings are afforded special notice for a specific Council meeting date and are intended to receive separate public input or a specific matter. Interested persons (for example applicants, appellants and property owners) shall be given reasonable opportunity to present oral arguments for or against any proposed action.” In this case, a public hearing is required by law to be conducted by the City Council to conduct the quasi-judicial hearing of the pending CEQA appeal. Under Council Rule No. 16 such hearing was

required to be placed directly on the full City Council's regular meeting agenda, just like a public hearing on imposition of nuisance liens or placement of lighting district assessments whose governing laws or regulations require the City Council to conduct a hearing. Simply having a hearing before PLUM does not suffice. Conclusion In sum, the Los Angeles Municipal Code, the City Council rules, and CEQA impose a duty on the City Council to conduct a quasi-judicial hearing. Moreover, the law requires a public hearing of the City Council. Because the City has violated the above-cited provisions, we demand that the City cancel and reschedule the hearing in accordance with law. Please include this letter in the City Council File administrative record for this matter. I may be contacted at 310-982-1760 or at [jamie.hall@channellawgroup.com](mailto:jamie.hall@channellawgroup.com) if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Regards, Jamie T. Hall Channel Law Group, LLP

# Channel Law Group, LLP

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JULIAN K. QUATTLEBAUM, III  
JAMIE T. HALL \*  
CHARLES J. McLURKIN

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\*ALSO Admitted in Texas

June 18, 2019

## VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Members of City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org](mailto:clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org)

**Re: Development Project Located at 4511 West Russell Avenue (Council File No. 16-0185-S1); (*Los Feliz Improvement Association v. City of Los Angeles et al.* (Case No. 19STCP00567))**

Dear Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council:

This firm represents Los Feliz Improvement Association (“Petitioner”). On or about October 2, 2018 the City of Los Angeles (“City”) approved permits designed to approve a new multi-family dwelling at 4511 West Russell Avenue, Los Angeles, CA (“Project”) and determined that said Project was exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). On or about February 25, 2019 Petitioner submitted an appeal pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21151(c). The City has scheduled a public hearing for the appeal on May 21, 2019 before the Los Angeles City Council. This letter explains both that the City is required to provide required notice to Petitioner of the City Council hearing and that referral of the hearing to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee (“PLUM”) violated CEQA.

Under Public Resources Code Section 21151(c), the City Council sits as the appellate body. Neither the Los Angeles Municipal Code nor CEQA authorize or direct the City Council to delegate any portion of the public hearing to a subordinate hearing officer or committee. Just like countless provisions of the City’s municipal and administrative code, when the City Council is required to conduct a hearing, it does so by scheduling a public hearing on the City Council’s regular meeting agenda. Yet for some unknown reason, the Council President has and did make a referral of the land use appeals in this case to PLUM.

The referral in this case was inconsistent with City Council Rule Nos. 8 and 16. Rule No. 16 provides in part: “The Presiding Officer shall cause all matters filed with, or presented to the Council to be referred to the appropriate Council Committee, except as otherwise provided by the Rules or where required by law to be first presented to the Council.”

Council Rule No. 8 provides in part: “Public hearing items scheduled for regular meetings are afforded special notice for a specific Council meeting date and are intended to receive separate public input or a specific matter. Interested persons (for example applicants, appellants and property owners) shall be given reasonable opportunity to present oral arguments for or against any proposed action.”

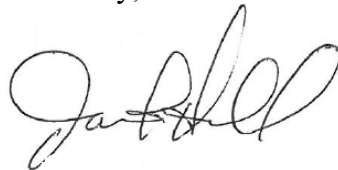
In this case, a public hearing is required by law to be conducted by the City Council to conduct the quasi-judicial hearing of the pending CEQA appeal. Under Council Rule No. 16 such hearing was required to be placed directly on the full City Council’s regular meeting agenda, just like a public hearing on imposition of nuisance liens or placement of lighting district assessments whose governing laws or regulations require the City Council to conduct a hearing. Simply having a hearing before PLUM does not suffice.

### Conclusion

In sum, the Los Angeles Municipal Code, the City Council rules, and CEQA impose a duty on the City Council to conduct a quasi-judicial hearing. Moreover, the law requires a public hearing of the City Council. Because the City has violated the above-cited provisions, we demand that the City cancel and reschedule the hearing in accordance with law.

Please include this letter in the City Council File administrative record for this matter. I may be contacted at 310-982-1760 or at [jamie.hall@channellawgroup.com](mailto:jamie.hall@channellawgroup.com) if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie T. Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" being the most prominent part.

Jamie T. Hall