



October 19, 2016

Case No: **VTT-73704-SL, ENV-2015-2618-MND**

Council File: **16-1048**

Address: 5261, 5263, 5303, 5305 Hermitage Ave., 12300, 12301, 12302 Weddington St.

To: councilmember.huizar@lacity.org / councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org

councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org / councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org

councilmember.englander@lacity.org / sharon.dickinson@lacity.org / etta.armstrong@lacity.org

Dear Honorable Members of the PLUM Committee,

Has the PLUM Committee read the letters from residents pertaining to this case? Has the committee ANY IDEA WHAT THESE APPLICANTS HAVE PUT THE RESIDENTS OF THIS COMMUNITY THROUGH? INCONCEIVABLE ACTIONS. They have managed to substantially have the entire neighborhoods crime increased, dozens of calls to LAPD, exposure to toxic and dangerous conditions all because of this stained and noncompliant proposal.

Thus far the DCP has ignored ALL evidence in the record that proves this proposal has a significant effect on the environment.

The DCP Director has found this proposal to somehow comply with the Valley Village Specific Plan whose intent and mere purpose for existing is neighborhood preservation.

TWO of The South Valley Planning Commissioners saw it for what it is and **VOTED TO SUSTAIN THE APPEAL.**

NEIGHBORHOOD:

There are no small lot subdivisions in this neighborhood.

There are no buildings that exists 8 inches a part.

90% of the buildings on this block were built between 1930 and 1978. THE OLDEST HOUSE ON THE BLOCK IS THE LAST OF ITS KIND - ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL PLAN THAT MUST BE PRESERVED.

90% of this block is AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALREADY IN PLACE.

NO HOUSING EXISTS IN THE AREA WITH EQUIVALENT RENT FOR TENANTS.

The public street the applicants believe they deserve is not for sale, nor is it intended to be given away - PUBLIC STREETS BELONG TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE.

APPLICANTS:

DO NOT OWN ALL OF THE PROPERTIES AS THE PROPERTY REMAINS IN LITIGATION OVER TITLE.

APPLICANTS are abusing the planning process to further their personal interest which is what this entire proposal is based on.

APPLICANTS have a history of perjury, evicting tenants illegally, not playing by the rules, harassing tenants, harassing communities, intentionally inflicting harm on residents, bullying, manipulating, bribing...the list goes on. YOU WANT TO GIVE THESE INDIVIDUALS PERMISSION TO TAKE OVER A NEIGHBORHOOD?

A decision like that would demonstrate a complete disregard for state and city legislation written to protect us.



It would also demonstrate a complete disrespect towards the citizens. Please consider that.

saveValleyVillage requests the PLUM Committee read the attached letter from a resident who has already experienced the brunt of Urban-Blox. This needs to be seen as a lesson learned to do different next time. This is next time.

The Valley Village community has been victimized by as a direct result of unacceptable behavior inflicted by the applicants. This unfortunate preview should serve as a warning; an opportunity.

The Committee also needs to know that every member of the community who has reached out to the district council member has been ignored. NOT ONE PHONE CALL RETURNED. NOT ONE EMAIL RESPONDED TO. Despite never having the council member's support in the past, residents stayed persistent in hopes of something being different this time, due to the controversial nature of this project. Residents were let down one more time.

We know how the game is played, we know you all agree to vote which ever way the council member wants for his district. **If the PLUM Committee could please remember - this community was here long before its current council member (what is left of it). It intends to be here long after he is gone.**

Councilmember Kerkorian was responsible for seconding **Council File 13-1478** where he asserted how small lot subdivisions disrupt neighborhood character. That they are not compatible. He signed another Motion encouraging adaptive reuse - perspiration of properties just like the ones on site. So you can see why this confuse and disappoints voters.

Decisions you make today such as this one have years of after effects that we feel are not being considered. These decisions go way outside the bounds of City Hall.

The quickest way sVV can explain this to you is a brief bullet list of what this project guarantees to do:

- * **EVICT** tenants/members of the community who HAVE NOWHERE TO GO
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** Affordable Housing
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** Open Space, Sidewalks, Public right of ways, Public Streets
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** Dozens of Mature Trees
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** Habitat to Wildlife
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** Neighborhood History and Culture
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** the last remaining example of Original Ranch Style / Bungalow buildings
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** 14 Parking Spaces from the public who ALREADY STRUGGLE WITH PARKING
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** the Original Grid and Design of the Streets/Area
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** the Natural Dynamics of the Neighborhood
- * **PERMANENTLY REMOVE** the HISTORIC NATURE OF THE ENTIRE AREA.

In closing, the Members of saveValleyVillage and additional members of the community **URGE THE PLUM COMMITTEE** to DO WHAT IS RIGHT. PLEASE REVIEW THE RECORD AND CONSIDER EVIDENCE.

Respectfully,

*Member #57
saveValleyVillage*

To: PLUM COMMITTEE (Planning and Land Use Management Committee)
sharon.dickinson@lacity.org
Case NO: VTT 73704-SL / DIR-2015-2697-SPP / ENV-2015-2618-MN

To Whom It May Concern,

The company Urban Blox is not in the business of building houses as they claim. Their business model is to buy property, evict middle and working class families from affordable existing rental homes and then resell the land with entitlements to other developers. Their job is to bully tenants into leaving so they can sell unoccupied lots at an extremely high profit margin. They pay one of the top 5 lobbying companies to smooth their way at city hall who give big donations to city council members. The lots in their possession remain abandoned and uncared for, as they try to sell it for outrageous prices. Urban Blox properties become run down eyesores, with trash accumulating and squatters moving into abandoned homes. I urge you not to welcome these vulture developers into your community.

Urban Blox engages in dubious business practices. On a recent project Urban Blox submitted a proposal in which they took a solar report from another project and simply changed the front page heading- expecting no one at the DCP's Expediting Office to read this important state mandated and critical report- and no one at the office did. But community members did. They found that the solar report was falsified and actually pertained to a property 2 miles away on a completely different site. When this was brought to the attention of the DCP they ignored it and never addressed it. The Solar report was prepared by the firm DHS and Associates Inc operated by Steve Nazemi.

They also lied on notarized documents pertaining to the amount of rent current tenants were paying. Urban Blox claimed current tenants were paying in the area of \$1,200 a month. The next question asked whether current tenants could find "like rent" in the neighborhood and to this they answered "yes." If the current tenants were paying \$1,200 rent this would have been an honest answer, but they were not. They were paying half that. This is important because these two questions pertained to the demolition permit. The city is supposed to take into consideration whether existing structures can be demolished based on whether existing tenants can find "like rent" in the neighborhood. The tenants clearly could not find \$600 rents, so Urban Blox lied and claimed that they had paid \$1,200. Moreover, the family in question was struggling to care for a severely disabled child. Urban Blox lied in order to kick out a family with a severely disabled child while the DCP didn't even bother to check the paperwork. This is deeply disturbing and is why it is vital that you carefully consider whether you want this type of firm doing business in your neighborhood.

When pressed by the community on this issue, Urban Blox claimed that one of their contractors, Steve Nazemi for DHS and Associates had made an unimportant clerical mistake. It was then completely ignored by the DCP. What community members knew was that Steve Nazemi had nothing to do with the notarized document because he did not sign it. It was signed by Raffi Shirinian, a principal at Urban Blox. It should also be mentioned that Steve Nazemi has been in business for over 20 years and these are all standard forms that a person in this line of work would be extremely familiar with. Urban Blox persuaded Steve Nazemi to lie about filling out a notarized document he did not sign.

Again, the DCP ignored the fact that his signature was not on the document and treated the information as irrelevant. The entire reason the DCP requires documents to be notarized is to stop developers lying on applications. The DCP requires developers tell the truth about their projects on applications and they do this by requiring that documents be notarized.

This history may be important to you because it shows two things: the questionable business ethics of Urban Blox and the DCP's questionable capacity to correctly judge a project, or even look at it especially if the developer has paid extra to have the project "expedited." That is why it is so important that we have an independent review process to uphold community members appeals.

The community depends on the appeals process to look into whether the DCP correctly judged the merits and legality of a project for a given neighborhood. Unfortunately, there is a glaring defect in the process. If a community group appeals the determination of the DCP, there is an appeals hearing. At the hearing there is a panel of commissioners charged with judging whether to uphold or deny the appeal. The appellant appears with various members of the community. The DCP as defendant is represented by the City Attorney. The City Attorney also acts to advise the commission on legal questions. Therein lies the problem. The commission must ask legal advice from the lawyer of the defendant. Is it any wonder so few appeals are ever upheld?

This puts the commission in a very unfortunate position. And it is also why the commission must resist the temptation to ask the City Attorney if they can legally uphold an appeal. It can be done. If you couldn't, there would be no appeals process. The lawyer for the DCP is going to deliver information that is best for his or her client- the DCP. Hopefully this process will be changed, but in the meantime we respectfully ask the commission to make up its own mind as to whether this is a good project for the neighborhoods you are all working so hard for. It takes courage for a commission to stand up to the City Attorney and the DCP and uphold an appeal. I urge you to do exactly this to keep Urban Blox out of the neighborhoods you represent.

Please uphold this appeal. The property in question does not even belong to the developers and this process should never have even started. Urban Blox has a reputation for bullying and cheating tenants and abandoning properties while they try to resell entitlements for huge profits. They are not in the business of building more much needed housing. They are in the business of driving up the price of real estate so average families can not afford homes. They are in the business of profiteering from homelessness and the housing crisis. The community researched this company and found out who they really are. Please help your community.

Thank you. Respectfully,

-William Hawxhurst Wheelock III

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To Whom It May Concern:

Speaking on behalf of the independent film community, I would like to state categorically that the plan to close off Weddington Street will cause irreparable harm to adjacent properties as viable locations for film production.

Our film organization - as well as many other film companies - have a long and vibrant history of film production at those locations. As an affordable, accommodating, and distinctive location, it enjoys immense popularity within the indie film community as a choice filmmaking location.

Current plans would make it impossible to effectively access the surrounding properties thereby extinguishing all future film production – indie or otherwise - in that area.

On behalf of the independent filmmaking community, I ask that you please reconsider your plans as well as the location's value as a prime filmmaking destination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacques Thelemaque". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jacques Thelemaque
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