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From: murez@venice.net [mailto:murez@venice.net]
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2008 10:50 AM
To: president@venicenc.org
Cc: lupc@venicenc.org; board@venicenc.org
Subject: Please read before 10/21 meeting

Hi Mike and Board Members:

I'm hoping you all can be as informed as possible for tomorrow nights meeting when you will again bring up the issue of the selling City owned property in Venice. To this end, I want to share two details with you.

The property which was exempted from the board motion last month was included in a Council Ordinance granting the sale to move forward. Here is a link to the City Clerks file which describes the sale.
http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2008/08-2142_ord_180235.pdf

There are two very notable issues that MUST be address up and beyond all other issues related to the VNC Boards prior passage of a motion that excluded the property know as 520 Venice Way. First, is the City Charter Reform requires Neighborhood Notification of all issues which impact their communities. Second, what assurance does the community have that funds will remain in Venice?

To address the second point first, I want to point you and the other board members back to the Council File. The City Clerk's file system shows the complete progression of documents that lead up to the final ordinance motion being passed (this is the link:
<http://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=08-2142>).

On 8/12/2008, the General Services Department documented the funds from the sale will go to the General Budget 2008-2009. This document is signed by the acting head of GSA Department and City Attorney. No where else in the clerk files is there anything about our councilman amending this condition for the outcome of the funds, although other council members did amend the ordinance for their districts to address their concerns.

Therefore, as written, the City will be able to use these funds as they see fit... to balance the budget as described. This key point is a conflict from everything that you have told me about how these funds will remain in Venice to help fund a parking structure. We have nothing from the Council and counter signed by the Mayor that backs up your spoken promises - to the contrary, we do now show the City intends to use the funds for the general budget (signed by the Mayor and Council).

Now back to my first point about community notification. In August 2008, the City started a formal process to sell said property (http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2008/08-2142_rpt_gsd_8-7-08.pdf). At that time nor at any time in the future did the City nor the council office inform our Certified Neighborhood Council of their intent to sell part of our community, an issue which clearly effects the stakeholders of Venice. As I understand from the Charter Reform, this notification is a mandatory requirement.

Our Land Use and Planning Committee who informed the VNC Board, only found out about the sale because one of it's members was reading the news website Curbed.com. And to this date, we have not been shown anything from the City that documents their intentions. We have nothing that describes why they want to sell our property, how they will use the funds and anything that shows this proposed sale of property is the highest and best use for the land for the long term benefit of our community.

As a result of the lack of notification, the LUPC committee asked the Board to slow down the process. The Board agreed on all but the one property that is included on the presently scheduled November sale - the only item which has any immediate impact us.

What is the rush, I ask?

The approved ordinance (No. 180235) gives the City five years to act on the sale of the property, it does not have to be done next month. By requesting the City to postpone the sale of this one property, the VNC could notify the community, gather factual details about what will be done with the funds and hear other proposals for this site to determine the best and highest use.

Why are we marching to the beat of their drum - why I ask? This is not what Charter Reform intended for Neighborhood Councils!

No reply please - I look forward to seeing you at tomorrow nights Board meeting.

Sincerely,
James Murez

BCC: community and friends

PS: The meeting agenda for tomorrow night is: <http://venicenc.org/node/1095>