

IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

March 2, 2016

Contacts:

Laddie Williams
savevenice.me@gmail.com

Sabrina Venskus, Esq.
213-482-4200
venskus@lawsv.com

VENICE COALITION TO PRESERVE OUR UNIQUE COMMUNITY CHARACTER TELLS THE L.A CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH – STOP DESTROYING OUR COMMUNITY AND VIOLATING THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION, THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT, AND LOCAL LAND USE PROTECTIONS

Developers are destroying Venice’s quaint, historic neighborhoods and affordable housing at an alarming rate, and the City of Los Angeles is complicit. Local residents have come together to fight back against the destruction of their homes and communities.

[Venice, CA] The City of Los Angeles Planning Department, real estate speculators, and developers are irreparably altering the neighborhoods and communities that make Venice unique. In the last two years, the Los Angeles City Planning Department approved hundreds of colossal developments in the Venice Coastal Zone in violation of laws that protect residents’ constitutional rights and Venice’s special community character. Aided by the City Planning Department, developers are pushing low and middle-income residents and communities of color out of Venice. Now, the Venice Coalition to Preserve our Unique Community Character has filed a lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles to stop this egregious and unlawful pattern and practice:

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CASE NO.: BC 611549 - COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF FOR VIOLATIONS OF PLAINTIFFS' CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION (Cal. Const., art.1, para.7), THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT (Pub. Resources Code, para. 30000 et seq.), THE VENICE LAND USE PLAN (Los Angeles Planning and Zoning Law), and CALIFORNIA CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE para. 526a

For years, the City of Los Angeles Planning Department has ignored planning and zoning laws regulating the Venice Coastal Zone. The City has approved huge development projects through the “Venice Sign Off” or VSO procedure, which effectively allows developers to side-step their responsibilities under the California Constitution to construct large developments without first notifying neighbors or holding public hearings regarding potential projects. The City of Los Angeles Planning Department’s VSO procedure fails to ensure that developments comply with the Venice Land Use Plan requirements that all development respect the mass, scale, character and landscaping of existing neighborhoods. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles Planning Department has illegally issued hundreds of Coastal Exemptions, which has enabled developers to by-pass important protections imposed by the California Coastal Act.

As a result, huge construction projects have spread across Venice, *substantially and irrevocably destroying* the character, density, and charm of Venice neighborhoods; blocking airflow and sunlight; destroying vegetation; obstructing picturesque views; and eliminating *affordable housing units* in this fragile and unique coastal zone. These projects have completely blindsided residents, who often do not realize that construction has been approved on their streets until bulldozers arrive at 7 a.m. and it’s too late to raise their voices. Today, the Venice Coalition to Preserve our Unique Community Character says enough is enough. It’s time for the City to honor Venice residents’ Constitutional rights, comply with the law, and respect the neighborhoods and communities that make Venice unique.
