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Walter & Andrea Yoka
196 S. Orange Grove Blvd, Unit #104
Pasadena, CA 91105
wyoka@yokasmith.com

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CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

February 3, 2020

Members of Pasadena City Council
Pasadena City Hall
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: Revocation of CUP No. 5535-Fowler Garden

Dear City Council Members:

We write in support of the revocation of City Ventures' CUP No. 5535 for Fowler Garden.

Our home sits immediately above Fowler Garden. Given this location, we are clearly impacted in regard to the current and future use of Fowler Garden, and therefore have a vested interest in the outcome of this matter.

The City's Planning and Community Development Department has undertaken an extensive review and examination of this entire situation, including the change of circumstances that has occurred over the years, and the obvious impact that the future use of Fowler Garden will have on this new community that has sprung up at and around the garden. In so doing, the Planning and Community Development Department has afforded ample opportunity to City Ventures, due process if you will, to make its case for why it should continue to have the ability to operate an event space for profit in this small historic garden.

We have attended each of the hearings leading up to the City Council's consideration of this revocation, and quite appropriately City Ventures' position has been roundly rejected.

When City Ventures purchased this property it came with 4 historical sites, the Merritt Mansion, Terrace Villa, the Italian Garden and Fowler Garden. The original CUP was issued in order to permit City Ventures to use these sites collectively for the purpose of offering, for profit, event spaces. The homes, Merritt Mansion and Terrace Villa, provided City Ventures with access to restrooms, kitchens, amenities, and the like. Fowler Garden has no such facilities.

Along the way, City Ventures turned the Italian Garden into a community swimming pool for HOA members, and ultimately sold the Merritt Mansion and Terrace Villa to private parties for millions of dollars. As a result of all of this, they find themselves holding on to a small historic piece of land. As I mentioned, it is devoid of any facilities. There are no restrooms, there is very limited access, and there is no available kitchen area. Additionally, the parking that they were relying upon in having events, is no longer available. It is literally a small island in the middle of a larger historic garden which is now surrounded by hundreds of homes.

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What did City Ventures think would happen under these circumstances? That they seriously would be able to run an event space in a historic garden in perpetuity? How can they with a straight face claim that there has been no change of circumstances, or that these new homeowners, having paid City Ventures millions of dollars, are somehow prevented from playing a role in their own future, a future by the way which does not include City Ventures, as they have long ago left the Ambassador Gardens area and Pasadena. In fact, their sole tie to our community is this isolated historic garden.

There is no small amount of irony to City Ventures' efforts to cast themselves in the role of some every day Pasadena citizen trying to simply use a piece of property in a profitable way. Let's not forget that City Ventures had sales nearing \$200 million. So, the idea that they would somehow be unfairly treated by having the CUP revoked strains credulity.

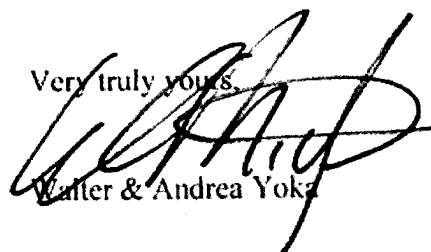
It is also worth mentioning that City Ventures is a real estate development company. It is not a for hire event planner. City Ventures cannot possibly suggest that being precluded from holding a limited number of events at this historic garden results in a taking of property or that it is somehow serious financial detriment to them. Again, they took these historical properties as they found them, turned them over for huge profits, and can hardly be heard to complain about having miscalculated what to do with an unusable piece of property.

To the extent that City Ventures claims that they are somehow doing a service to the community by maintaining this historic garden, the Council should know that they have done a very poor job of maintenance. This is not due to their lack of profit making, but simply due to neglect. Additionally, the Council should know that they have had every opportunity to turn over this historic garden to the Master HOA, which maintains the entire historic garden area, including the former Italian Garden, which they turned over to the Master HOA. We, as homeowners, pay HOA fees for the maintenance of all of the historic gardens.

Fowler Garden has no real economic value, other than a historic value. City Ventures knew this going in, and they cannot possibly with a straight face suggest that this piece of property has ever had any real economic value to them.

If they are, as they wish you to think a citizen of this community, then they should do what they know is right and allow this garden to take its place with the other historic property that surrounds it.

Very truly yours,



Walter & Andrea Yoka