



VIA EMAIL and U.S.MAIL

January 31, 2013

Ms. Maria Cabildo,
President
East LA Community Corporation (ELACC)
530 S. Boyle Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90033

Re: The New Wyvernwood

Dear Ms. Cabildo:

For years, ELACC has waged a campaign of misinformation about the New Wyvernwood project. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts by Fifteen Group, ELACC has refused to meet with us to discuss the future plans for the property. Today the organization continues to convey information about the redevelopment to the Boyle Heights community that is inflammatory and simply untrue.

To date, ELACC's primary contention has been that resident protections being offered are not legally enforceable, alleging that Costa Hawkins makes it illegal to have rent control in new construction. In truth, Costa Hawkins does NOT prevent the commitments in the plan from being enforced. *The rent guarantee will be backed by a development agreement with the City, and the City Attorney has already exhaustively vetted the plan.* Moreover, the City Attorneys of Los Angeles and San Francisco agree that this is a legally binding contract that is enforceable by the City. And, if that were not enough, Fifteen Group is also guaranteeing this commitment in offering covenants on the land enforceable by each and every tenant independent of the development agreement or any other City regulation.

Contrary to ELACC's assertions, the truth is that the organization cannot point to any evidence that current Wyvernwood residents will not be able to exercise these important rights – because no such evidence exists.

Now, ELACC has allowed its opposition efforts to take a darker turn. By hosting and promoting a screening of the film "Chávez Ravine, A Los Angeles Story" on January 29 at Costello Recreation Center – immediately next to Wyvernwood – ELACC is clearly asserting similarities between that



highly regrettable chapter in Los Angeles history and the redevelopment proposal currently before the City. By encouraging Wyvernwood residents to “learn how the community of Chavez Ravine was betrayed by not knowing their rights and for not knowing they could fight...,” ELACC is directly linking the experience of families at Chávez Ravine in the 1940s and 1950s with the experience of current Wyvernwood residents.

Make no mistake -- to suggest that the two experiences are in any way analogous is beyond the pale and demonstrates a level of insensitivity and poor judgment that is far below any ethical standard.

ELACC’s representative at the screening made a number of comments on a range of subjects that are similarly false and irresponsible. Attendees were told that current Wyvernwood residents would not benefit from rent stabilization in the new project. Attendees were also told that job training for local residents would not be available, and that Fifteen Group will not follow through on its commitments to current Wyvernwood residents. It is one thing to oppose a project. It is another to willfully mislead the public in a way that falls far short of the ideals that ELACC espouses.

The New Wyvernwood project has been enthusiastically embraced by a majority of current tenants and received the support of the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council last week. It is rather shocking that ELACC – a non-profit organization dedicated to creating “an environment that supports a productive, healthy, and fulfilling life” – would degrade its mission by instilling fear in Wyvernwood residents and perpetuating such a false, misleading and offensive campaign.

In crafting the project’s Resident Retention Plan, Fifteen Group has created an unprecedented housing program that not only protects current residents beyond the requirements of the law, but sets a new standard for resident protections in Los Angeles. First, the project will also create a substantial increase in much-needed affordable housing units available in the community. Currently, Wyvernwood’s 1,187 units are rent-stabilized, but the current site has no designated affordable housing. At the time the EIR was prepared, using Los Angeles Housing Department criteria, 221 units had rent levels that would qualify as affordable to low- or very-low income households. As part of the redevelopment proposal, 15 percent of all units will be designated as affordable housing for low and very low-income tenants. This will total up to 660 covenanted, affordable, units, or the equivalent of 55 percent of the number of units currently on the site, and triple the amount of similarly affordable housing on-site today. In addition, the proposal includes as many below-market-rate, rent-stabilized units (RSO) as necessary to accommodate all current tenants, regardless of income. In short, Wyvernwood residents who can afford to live on the current property will be able to live on the redeveloped site.



The Resident Retention Plan gives current tenants priority access to new units, including designated affordable housing. As a result, many low-income tenants who currently live on the site will actually pay less in rent at the redeveloped site than they're paying now.

The impact of our project is clear: when it comes to improving housing options and affordability for the people of Boyle Heights, the New Wyvernwood delivers in a meaningful way. That's just one of the many reasons this project has been endorsed by a majority of Wyvernwood households as well as a large number of respected community leaders, nonprofit groups and others.

These are some of the facts. We continue to be open to meeting with you to share more. In the meantime, I ask that you put an end to the false and distorted messages ELACC is conveying to the community. Wyvernwood is no Chávez Ravine.

Sincerely,

FIFTEEN GROUP

Mark Sanders

MS/kk

Cc: City Councilman Jose Huizar, via email
Assistant City Attorney Peter King, via email
Deputy Mayor Matt Karatz, Office of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, via email
Planning Director Michael LoGrande, via email
Rushmore Cervantes, Los Angeles Housing Department, via email
Alfred Fraijo, Jr. Chairman, ELACC, via email
Amy Forbes, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, via email