



WANA • Wrigley Area Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.

PUBLIC COMMENT: CITY OF LONG BEACH COUNCIL MEETING

TO: MAYOR FOSTER AND MEMBERS OF THE LONG BEACH CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JOAN GREENWOOD, VICE PRESIDENT, FOR MARIA NORVELL, PRESIDENT
 WRIGLEY AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE, INC. (WANA)
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SUBJECT: CITY STORAGE OF DAISY AVENUE CHRISTMAS TREE LANE DISPLAYS

DATE: 1/19/2010

CC: CITY CLERK, CITY ATTORNEY AND CITY MANAGER

JGH

Good evening Mayor and members of the City Council. My name is Joan Greenwood. I reside at 2091 San Francisco Avenue in the Wrigley District of Long Beach. I am here today to speak on behalf of Maria Norvell, President of WANA, the Wrigley Area Neighborhood Alliance. As you all know, Maria Norvell has been one of the driving forces behind Daisy Avenue Christmas Tree Lane (The Lane") since its rejuvenation under Mayor Kell in 1988 and its continued revival under former Mayor O'Neill.

WANA was incorporated as a California Public Benefit Corporation in September 2007 because the City and another organization no longer wanted a stewardship role for displays. Since that time, WANA has been asking for a MOU with the City. But, the City refuses and instead issues joint permits for the Lane and the Parade.

In a letter postmarked December 28, 2009, the City informed WANA that the City didn't have any storage space available for the displays. Approximately 1,000 to 1,500 square feet of warehouse space is needed.

There were no serious problems on The Lane until three years ago when the City changed its approach toward managing Lane activities. Since that time, WANA has been told that (1) the City didn't own the displays (April 2008), (2) WANA should take possession of the displays until storage was freed up at the Oil and Gas Department (June-July 2008), (3) the City couldn't store them because WANA didn't have legal ownership (December 24, 2008) and finally (3) after WANA completed a costly legal action based on "replevins and conversion" to get a court order establishing ownership, told WANA that the City is not obligated to, nor is it in the business of, finding storage for private property.

Christmas Tree Lane Displays are not private property. They are community assets held in trust. WANA has identified at least three potential locations on City owned land - two indoor and one outdoor facility with ample empty space for this purpose. WANA is also aware that the City does store property owned by other nonprofit organizations for projects that are collaborative efforts. WANA is asking for the same courtesy. **Mayor Foster, WANA needs your help.** A timeline is presented on the back of this page.

(Over)

In 1988, former Mayor Ernie Kell in collaboration with all Council Districts worked with nonprofits throughout the City to bring back this cherished City tradition. Until three years ago, the Lane thrived through a collaborative effort with the Mayor's office doing the fundraising, while the Sixth District spearheaded the events on the Lane and the Seventh District handled the Parade. This delegation of responsibilities worked well.

If the City is not willing to show its support by providing storage space, then WANA requests that an MOU with the City be established as soon as possible and that WANA be issued a separate permit from the Parade for The Lane and the Holiday activities on The Lane. Here are the relevant facts in timeline order:

- October 2007: City Attorney states in a letter that the displays will be turned over to City Volunteers for transport, set up and take down - no indication that continued storage by City was at issue
- February 2008: City Volunteer Maria Norvell is asked to help the City find new storage space for the displays -- timeline for demolition of the Port warehouse in which they were stored during their refurbishment had been moved up.
- April 2008: WANA meets with City to present a proposal to take on responsibility to manage the displays provided City will continue to store them. City states that it does not own the displays even though they were built by City carpenters, stored, moved, set up and taken down under City supervision
- June 2008 City sends letter accepting WANA proposal, but asks WANA to find storage for the displays until it can make arrangements with Gas & Oil Department for site on its Spring Street location. City Manager urges WANA to take possession of the displays. WANA applies for City permit
- August 2008 WANA transports displays to private storage arranged through a WANA member with understanding that the Gas & Oil Department site would be available for storage after Christmas.
- October 2008 WANA is denied a separate permit for display set up and take down; four-party permit is issued.
- December 2008 On Christmas Eve, WANA was informed that the City will not store displays until ownership issue is resolved
- January 2009 City informed WANA that only acceptable proof of ownership is a court order
- October 2009 City formed the Daisy Avenue Christmas Tree Lane Holiday Program Committee under the direction of the 7th District Council Office
- December 2009 On the 29th, WANA received a letter from the City Manager stating that the City doesn't have any storage space and extends the deadline for taking down the displays to January 15.
- January 2010 WANA found temporary storage on a **month-to-month basis** and moves the displays by the deadline