



WANA • Wrigley Area Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.

December 16, 2008

SENT VIA FACSIMILE

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Long Beach City Council
333 W. Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Agenda Item #08-1272
Tuesday, December 16, 2008 Council Meeting
Hearing for the consideration of an appeal of the Planning Commission decision
to approve a 45, 101 square foot church expansion, 3332 Magnolia Avenue. (District 7)

Dear Mayor Foster and Members of the Long Beach City Council,

I am the President of the Wrigley Area Neighborhood Alliance (WANA) representing the largest neighborhood organization in the City of Long Beach with 260 members. On behalf of WANA, I am writing this letter in support of this project.

Pacific Baptist Church has been in the neighborhood for at least 14 years that I know of. I met them when they were on Pacific Avenue just south of Willow St. prior to their current location. At that time, the other neighborhood group I was with gave money to their basketball program and there was a period of time that they delivered newsletters for us. They have always been good neighbors by taking care of their property and being sensitive to the residents.

Pacific Baptist Church has demonstrated that they are an anchor in the community and are here to stay. Their pastors and families reside in the area and over 100 of their parishioners live right here in Wrigley. We should be elated by the fact that they are growing and need a larger building for their congregation. That's why churches are typically large in size.

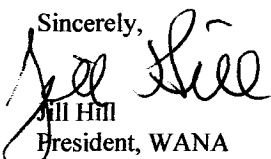
Which brings me to my concern over the Special Conditions for Approval, item #24 regarding the "mass" of their proposed building. With 10 changes in design, they are still being asked to make yet another and that seems excessive. Another architectural change would create a substantial burden on the church regarding the additional money needed to make such a structural change and I wonder if that would be in violation of the RLUIPA act, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, which, in a nutshell, states that government shall not create any basis for restricting or burdening religious exercise. Additionally, special condition #27 regarding the church purchasing non diesel powered shuttle buses within two years of building completion is an unenforceable condition.

Earlier this year, Pacific Baptist Church asked to come to a WANA meeting to present their plans. They listened to any concerns or issues residents had and returned to a later meeting to express how they resolved them. They have been open and receptive and have done their due diligence.

The appellant's statements are merely unsubstantiated opinions of why the church should not be allowed to move forward while presenting no hard facts to back them up.

Therefore, I respectfully request the Council to: 1.) uphold the Planning Commission's decision to approve the site plan review and standards variance, and 2.) remove Special Conditions item #'s 24 and 27 from the conditions for approval.

Sincerely,


Bill Hill
President, WANA

Cc: City Clerk

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