



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Office of Gerrie Schipske
Councilwoman, Fifth District
Memorandum

R-11

Date: September 9, 2008

To: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

From: Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District (S)

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM: Request for Update on Application to Reuse Schroeder Army Hall Property for a Police Substation**

Background:

The City Council by an 8-1 vote in December 2007, approved the City's application to reuse approximately 5 acres now occupied by the Schroeder Army Hall at Willow Street and Grand Avenue in eastside Long Beach for a police substation. As a condition to reuse the surplus Army property, the City was required by federal reuse law to accommodate the homeless population. An accommodation was reached with a provider – Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHA) – to use an approximately one-acre parcel of land south of the police substation on Grand Avenue and Burnett Street to provide a day time health care access center for homeless with mental illness. The Grand/Burnett property is owned by the City and currently utilized by the City's Department of Health and Human Services. The Grand/Burnett site is within an industrial/commercial area. MHA agreed to utilize this site because of its proximity to the Health Department.

Since the approval of the application for reuse, a number of residents have held protests and have spoken repeatedly during public comment time at City Council meetings in opposition to the proposed location of the MHA facility and about their concerns for the homeless.

My council office has arranged two lengthy meetings with these individuals and MHA representatives and City staff – including: City Manager, City Attorney, Chief of Police, Director of Community Development.

During the last meeting, the residents requested that an alternative site be found for the MHA program and that the City sell the Burnett/Grand site so that such a site could be purchased. The residents also provided a list of city-owned properties for review by City management. City management has reviewed those locations and indicated none were appropriate for the intended use. The residents also raised a number of questions to which I followed-up and sent the questions to City management for response. The questions were responded to, however, the residents continue to express concerns that the City has not located an alternate site.

Following this last meeting, I met personally with the leader of these residents who expressed his frustration that the Council was not taking action to rescind its vote on the City's application. He indicated that he has also met with the Mayor's

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Chief of Staff and has spoken to City management on numerous occasions to express his concerns but did not feel his and the concerns of the residents he works with are being listened to on this issue.

Consequently, these residents continue to believe that the City is not being responsive to their concerns about the location of the MHA facility nor to their suggestions that the MHA facility should be moved to another location. As it has been almost ten (10) months since the City Council approved the application for reuse of the surplus army property,

Recommendation:

Respectfully request that the City Manager provide a complete update during the City Council meeting of September 23, 2008 concerning the status of the City's application with the federal government to reuse the surplus army property as the Eastside Police Station, including the status of efforts to locate an alternate site for the MHA program; the timeline and steps needed to be approved prior to the location of MHA; and the consequences to the City of Long Beach if it fails to accommodate the homeless in order to reuse the surplus army property for a police station.