

City Council or  
Department of Financial Management  
333 W. Ocean Boulevard  
Long Beach, CA 90802

9 Nov 05

Re: Permit for entertainment with dancing by patrons

Board Members,

I am a resident of the East Village Arts District in part because I want to be part of a vibrant and active community. I enjoy the sense of community, the variety of shopping options, dining, theatre, live band, arts, transportation opportunities (i.e. blue line and bus systems to both LA and Orange Counties) and entertainment in our neighborhood. In my leisure time I do not have to seek activities too far from home to be in the mix of things. However, there has been an addition to our neighborhood that, although they provide another venue for enjoyment, it has considerably impacted my life. The Basement bar at 149 Linden appears to be very upscale; they provide valet parking (not nearly enough) and prevent undesirable guests thru the use of a bouncer at the door. What they have not addressed to my dismay, is the traffic increase, the destructive nature of patrons as they depart from the establishment and most bothersome, the noise. For the most part the noise is kept inside the building, not too much disturbance to the immediate neighbors, and the community at large. Patrons, who've had a good time, apparently feel the need to exit the bar and have another party on the local streets and sidewalks.

I live on the fourth floor of the Lafayette, facing Linden Avenue and I cannot recall a weekend where I have not been awakened between 1:30 am and 1:55 am (sometimes the street party goes as late as 3 am) overhearing the people leaving the bar. Surprisingly, to me, is that Thursday is often the worst offense. Shouts of farewell to departing friends, reliving the funniest thing that ever happened, misfired car alarms, noise from vandalism, romantic hook-ups, I have (unwillingly) been privy to it all. Others whose units do not face Linden and whom live on higher floors have stated their frustrations at prior Lafayette Home Owner's Association Meetings. After some of the Lafayette residents complained about the noise, Mr. Najah and the management of the bar had a meeting in the establishment to allow residents to vocalize their frustration with the noise and disturbances. They offered cocktails and other treats, saying all the right and contrite things about following thru on noise reduction, the bouncers would be more active, better control in the valet parking lot, etc. All the while they have been making application in the city to do what they can to increase the quantity of patrons, and the potential for more noise, traffic, and potentially increased damage thru disregard for the improvements local residents and business owners have made to the pedestrian and shopping areas. The bouncer has stated that he will attend to any complaints made to him about noise; it seems unreasonable that someone in our building call him nightly. Good neighborliness

would dictate that they develop a better plan for self-maintenance. Theirs has been a weak response at best.

As someone interested in keeping our neighborhood from becoming the scourge of Long Beach, (most mornings after the bar has been open I find more than the usual amount of abandoned paper, beer containers and promotion cards on the street and sidewalks) I want to recommend that the City Council not grant the request to add dancing to the existing permit for the owners at the Basement Bar.

The development of the condominium project Mr. Najah has recently received approval for has every potential to continue/increase the parking and noise problem(s). This project is another in his effort to sell an idea to the neighbors of one size, while working the city to allow increases in every direction. I was dismayed to learn that the project was presented as having no opposition when I had faxed a letter (since I was unable to attend the meeting) with concerns. I have come to doubt an equitable solution can be reached, but the problems that have already arisen lead me to strongly urge you to deny the Basement Bar request.

We've already got blight on our street. The Hotel at the corner of 1st and Linden *just* had the scaffolding removed (after years of poor maintenance), and the first dog walker who came by left a steaming pile of pet waste for all to avoid – quite an allegorical statement. Both were/are ugly! Don't encourage more, please.

Sincerely,  
R Blackshere  
140 Linden Avenue  
#453  
Long Beach, CA 90802