



Date: January 10, 2006
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Bonnie Lowenthal, Councilmember, First District *BL*
Subject: Over-Concentration of Parolee/Sex Offender Housing

BACKGROUND:

Throughout the City of Long Beach, some property owners have converted their residential units into "sober living facilities." State law states these types of facilities "do not provide alcohol or drug recovery or treatment services and are, therefore, not subject to regulation or oversight by the State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP)." In addition, there have been documented cases where sex offenders have been found to be residing in what have become known as "six packs," or units of six or less bedrooms, that are also not regulated by the State of California. These six-packs are often jammed with as many beds as will fit into the bedrooms and then rented out, by bed, to parolees exiting incarceration, sex offenders seeking re-entry into society, and/or drug or alcohol abusers seeking rehabilitation.

Cities throughout Southern California, including Riverside, Fontana, and Pomona, have passed zoning ordinances aimed at restricting these facilities in an attempt to curtail over-concentration of this type of housing. These facilities have the potential to overburden neighborhoods and city departments, such as our Police Department.

In a recent example, City representatives recently toured one sober living facility consisting of two dwellings on one lot. One dwelling had two (2) bedrooms with twelve bunks while the second dwelling had converted attic space to accommodate nine (9) bunks. Information surfaced that there were plans to add additional beds to the facility. It was also learned that each occupant at this facility was being charged \$350.00 a month for a bed.

We acknowledge that there are operators of sober living facilities within the City of Long Beach who exceed expectations and operate their facilities without negatively impacting neighborhoods. These operators provide a needed service to those seeking re-entry into communities and rehabilitation and recovery. However, the over-concentration of "six-packs" and the potential to overwhelm neighborhoods already impacted by negative activities must be curtailed.

Recommendation:

I, therefore, request with the support of my colleagues, that this item be referred to the Housing and Neighborhoods Committee for further study to ascertain whether local governments can regulate the over-concentration of facilities for sex offenders, alcohol or drug abusers, and parolees. I also request that the City Attorney, City Prosecutor, Long Beach Police Department, Planning Department, and any other affected department contribute to the discussion that will be held in the Housing and Neighborhoods Committee.