

City of L.A. Needs to Start Saying “NO”

By Mary Benson

It looks to me like David Palmer and Home Depot's Latham and Watkins have nothing to loose. After all, if the City Attorney's office allows a practical joke like dog food in spaghetti to settle for half a million, what's something on the scale of Las Lomas worth?

Hasn't LA ever heard about the old saying: "The best defense is a good offense?" What about LA City counter-suing some of the mega-corporations behind these proposals? How can LA possibly have jurisdiction or be liable for land use not within the boundaries of the City? What about the inconsistencies of property ownership? Isn't there a law that you have to own or control the property before you can start making changes to the land use? How about the City suing the Las Lomas folks for all of the City's time and effort defending their decision to "Just Say NO"

But then look at Home Depot- they've gone

from denying there's a special needs elementary school within 500 feet, to re-writing the LAUSD "after the bell" rule for night time use of a school campus by a for-profit businesses. I feel this entire effort was in order to orchestrate a propaganda session. Was all of this was in order to get a free pass on complying with a law which Home Depot's own Lawyers helped to write?

Why doesn't the City sue these companies back? Didn't they lie about what they were REALLY up to?

Couldn't the City counter-sue for taking up all of the City's time trying to push through an action? If they'd told the truth from the beginning, would they have a \$10 Million bill they could threaten with?

These two mega-million lawsuits are the perfect opportunity for the City to fight back and give those who try to get their way through bullying and threatening the City with lawsuits something more to think about

than what they stand to gain when the City settles out of court

The City doesn't seem to have a problem suing Sacramento for requiring them to comply with tough rules to clean up trash in the LA River. Yet, when it comes to making it tough on developers, the City is a permanent victim that tries to negotiate its way out rather than fight for what is right.

The City needs to start saying "NO" to projects and backing up their decisions with a little legal backbone so that our land use laws and our City Planning Department does not move any further towards being a developer facilitation firm. We shouldn't even have to ask.

Editors note: Ms Benson is Vice President of the Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council, Founder of *Los Angeles Trails Project* and the *IRWMP Steering Committee* (Prop. 84)