

M O T I O N

The original vision of Venice's original developer, Abbot Kinney, brought to bear in 1905 when building the seaside resort community was both ambitious and artistic. His concept was to create a beachfront community resplendent with recreational and cultural opportunities as well as an old world urban architectural flavor.

Basing the design on that of Venice, Italy, Kinney included a system of canals with a lagoon and grand buildings in the Windward Avenue area, featuring arched pedestrian arcades, to house the hotels, the opera house and the indoor plunge he hoped would bring visitors streaming to Venice, California for decades to come.

The hurriedly built community did not catch on the way Kinney had hoped it would, and began to fall into disrepair after only a few years. The poorly-engineered canals began to stagnate, with their banks crumbling. The arcade columns also aged quickly in the marine air. By the mid-'20s, when the citizens of the bankrupt City of Venice voted to join the City of Los Angeles, the canals had been declared a health hazard and many of the stately buildings and their columns had been demolished.

Now, nearly 70 years later, what's left of the canals are being rehabilitated and there is widespread support to restore the unique arcades and take advantage of the pedestrian orientation of what has become one of Southern California's most popular visitor attractions, Venice Beach. Because the original arcades were privately built, it has been determined that the best way to encourage their reconstruction is to provide private developers with appropriate incentives to do so.

The City added to the momentum toward arcade reconstruction in 1991 when the City Council declared the columns at 69 Windward Avenue as historic-cultural monuments. With the building at that address being rebuilt and expanded, the preservation of the existing columns sets an example for other property owners on the block. A proposed new building at 1501 Ocean Front Walk (at the northeast corner of Windward) would also re-establish the arcades that were originally at that location, at the same time providing affordable housing units and extra parking in a mixed-use development on the site.

As a result of a series of community workshops held in 1988 by the Planning Department and the State Coastal Conservancy to facilitate the drafting of the state Coastal Act-mandated Venice Local Coastal Program (LCP), a proposal to establish a Windward Historic Arcade District has been developed. It would facilitate the re-creation of the historic arcades by addressing the multiple issues facing private developers in this important Venetian focal point: the need for a height bonus incentive, the impediments raised by designated right-of-way widths and the need for street, air and subsurface vacations, alleviating parking shortages and traffic congestion, and opportunities for affordable housing and mixed-use development.

In recognition of the opportunity the arcades present for combining innovative urban design with planning that is respectful of the needs of the community as well as its historic legacy, the City Council should adopt as a policy the City's intention to create the Windward Historic Arcade District and instruct the Planning Department to ensure its inclusion in the LCP.

NOW, I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council hereby initiate the Windward Historic Arcade District and instruct the Department of City Planning to include it in the Venice Local Coastal Program currently being drafted by the Department of City Planning; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the boundaries of this district shall be the south side Market Street between Pacific Avenue and Ocean Front Walk on the north, the east side of Ocean Front Walk between Horizon Avenue and 17th Avenue on the west, both sides of Windward Avenue between Pacific Avenue and Ocean Front Walk on the south, and the east side of Pacific Avenue between Market Street and Windward Avenue on the east; and

I FURTHER MOVE that there be established special street designations (to be included in the LCP and the Venice Community Plan) for Market Street, Ocean Front Walk, Windward Avenue and Pacific Avenue within the boundaries of the district to facilitate re-creation of the arcades with minimal need for time-consuming vacation proceedings; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include design guidelines for the historic columns, their locations and spacing; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions for preservation of the remaining original columns wherever feasible, as well as guidelines for their replacement when necessary; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions for permitting customized height bonuses, with accommodation made for certain kinds of decorative roof structures, for projects within the district boundaries which include columns in the manner prescribed by the district regulations, with the precise height limits to be determined by the Planning Department in developing the regulations; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions for measuring Floor Area Ratio (FAR) which do not provide additional FAR for square footage included in portions of a project built over, on, or under public sidewalks, except as prescribed below; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions to permit an FAR bonus for any project providing a substantial percentage of very low or low income housing units on site, with the maximum permissible FAR to be determined by the Planning Department in development of the district regulations; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions for affordable housing density increases commensurate with the FAR bonus for projects containing the substantial percentage of very low and low income

housing units to be determined in the development of the district regulations; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions permitting consolidation of multiple lots to facilitate projects which include columns in the manner prescribed by the district regulations; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the district include provisions permitting reductions in required parking for each very low and low income dwelling unit; and

I FURTHER MOVE that any project which does not include columns in the manner prescribed by the district regulations shall be subject to normal LCP regulations determined to be appropriate for the properties within the district boundaries; and

I FURTHER MOVE that this initiation be communicated to the appropriate City departments and the California Coastal Commission to facilitate their involvement in the development of the district regulations as part of the LCP.

proposed by:



RUTH GALANTER

Councilwoman, Sixth District

seconded by:



September 23, 1992

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