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LUPC Application Questions

1.a. As a 36-year resident and business owner and operator in Venice I would like to serve this community where I have raised my family and lived happily for most my life.

We are all aware with each passing year, month and day that very big and real change has come to what was the last relatively underdeveloped and low-income place on the coast of California.

Change is upon us but there is still a small moment wherein we can shape the change so that Venice does not lose its legacy as a creative center with a diverse populace.

b. I have operated, built and organized several businesses in Venice. As a resident and businessman for over three decades I have built many strong and lasting relationships with people from all walks of Venice life. I have watched the effects of the transition of Venice on business and the community. I have been before the LUPC and the VNC as both a business owner and resident. This experience has afforded me the opportunity to see the Specific Plan and Coastal Plan in action. I understand the basic issues and have seen and participated in the analysis, negotiations and results.

2. Long time residents and commercial building owners are cashing in their chips due to the astronomical leap in property values. In order for the new owners to realize the potential of their big dollar investments, there will be a propensity to over-build with the necessity of value engineering that will have the effect of a bland homogenization and a gutting of the unique qualities that attracted people to Venice in the first place. Under section 3, Paragraph F of the Purposes part of the Specific Plan it states: *to provide for the consideration of aesthetics and scenic preservation and enhancement . . .* I think this is evermore pressing if we are going to preserve and shape Abbot Kinney and Rose Avenues in particular, so that Venice will not become just another faceless place.

This also applies to reviewing how the Oakwood area is developing in regards to keeping some affordable housing available. The Lincoln Place apartments are a good example of the community getting involved and saving a historic landmark while allowing some new building.

3. Section 562 seeks to balance *individual property rights* with the *communities well being* protected and the ongoing integrity of The Specific Plan honored. It leaves room for discretion, which I think is essential to a balanced and effective board.

It is important that exceptions do not create precedent that dilutes the Land Use and Specific Plan to the point of being irrelevant. It is however necessary at times for a governing body to know when the greater good is served by knowing when a literal interpretation of a regulation can be amended with concessions on both sides that will serve the residential and business community for the good of the whole.

4. Most my knowledge comes from my participation in building and operating projects that fall under the Specific Plan and the Land Use Plan. In that sense I have lived those plans.

It seems to me that the Land Use Plan is the framework that informs the Specific Plan. The Land Use Plan being the Key and the Specific Plan being the design not unlike a set of blueprints.

Both plans exist to make sure that all of the public can always participate in the great treasure of our coast and beaches. It gives a framework to allow the area to progress and prosper and at the same time maintain a quality of life that is sustainable for future generations.

I believe that the legacy of Venice is as important as Greenwich Village and the Left Bank and the thoughtful use of the guidelines in the Land Use Plan and Specific Plan can be the guide to sustaining and moving our community forward while preserving our unique creative spirit.

I have read through the plan in preparation to answer the questions for this application and have a heightened desire and interest to serve and be part of LUPC.

Thank you for reviewing my application,

Robert Schwan