

From: Amy Alkon
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 8:34 AM
To: lupc@venicenc.org; ...
Subject: about the Gjelina meeting

First of all, thank you to all of you on this committee -- it's enormously important, what you're doing, and I'm grateful for your service.

I'm writing because I was dismayed by the gray-haired (male) board member who seemed to equate our opposition to Gjelina's flagrant abuse of their conditions and the ensuing flagrant abuse of our neighborhood as an anti-business move and/or some desire to turn Venice condo.

We in my neighborhood didn't like this deal where Gjelina got these grandfathered spots -- spots existing "on paper" but not in reality. (Can you park on a sheet of paper? We can't, either.) But, their application passed -- for 60 seats -- and we accepted that.

Had they stuck with the seats they were given, and had they not had loud music playing outside, and continued doing it -- even after zoning board judge Fernando Tovar told Robert Schwann that this was not permitted -- there would have been no meeting last night.

Furthermore, the notion that Fran Camaj "provided" parking spaces is laughable. Our neighborhood is wildly taxed in terms of parking, and a public street being opened up for parking is not a business "providing" parking.

I'm a fiscal conservative, pro-business libertarian, but I quoted the late British economist Pigou when I spoke last night: "A business must pay its costs out of its profits." One of those costs is parking, and we in the neighborhood are made to pay that price. Because of loopholes in the law that allow this ridiculous "grandfathered" nonexistent parking and because nobody enforces the laws or codes.

Also, it is laughable that Abbot Kinney needs help fostering business growth. Been on Abbot Kinney lately? Come on.

If Gjelina is allowed to ignore the law, why should any business stick to it? It is correct that their permit to remain open should be revoked -- after they have flagrantly flouted the laws and codes with no attempt to come into compliance. The fact that they are popular is not a valid argument. Had they opened, say, at Venice and Abbot Kinney, where the garage used to be, and where there's ample parking, I would probably be eating there weekly and cheering their success.

I cannot cheer their success at taking residential parking just because they can. Greedy, piggish, and unneighborly behavior. And behavior which can have a terrible impact on the lives of those who live here and need to park safely. Consider that.

Also, how do all these businesses keep getting to open with zero parking? That's something you might look into and try to change. I will write to Whitney Blumenfeld about the businesses valeting cars to our neighborhoods.

Best, -Amy Alkon

PS And again, no matter how often Robert Schwann and Fran Camaj claim

they are "neighbors," they are anything but. They are merely people who live in the vicinity. I wrote about how to be a neighbor in the LA Times -- a person who looks out for the interests of those around them, and beyond. That's quite the opposite of what they do.