

Communication from Public

Name: Casey Maddren

Date Submitted: 02/16/2022 11:15 PM

Council File No: 21-1493

Comments for Public Posting: I am submitting the attached comments in support of the appeal filed by Citizens for a Better LA.

February 16, 2022

Planning & Land Use Management Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Citizen News, 1545-1551 N. Wilcox
Case No. ENV-2021-3350-CE-1A
Council File No. 21-1493
Appeal, Comments to PLUM Committee

Members of the PLUM Committee,

We are writing to submit the following comments and exhibits in support of our appeal.

Sincerely,
Casey Maddren
Citizens for a Better LA

The Project Is Not Exempt from CEQA

The proposed project is not exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, which is only appropriate for projects that involve “negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.” In the past the Citizen News building housed a business that published a newspaper. In recent years it’s been leased for office space. The applicant now proposes to reinvent the space with two restaurants and an event space serving a full line of alcohol and offering live entertainment. This is obviously completely different from the previous use. The project does not qualify for a CE under Section 15301.

This Is the Latest in a Series of Piecemeal Approvals for Hotel/Nightlife Campus

The project also does not qualify for a categorical exemption because this is the latest approval in a years-long process by which the City has allowed Relevant Group to create a hotel/nightlife campus through a staggering series of piecemeal approvals. The Citizen News restaurant/event space is the latest addition to Relevant’s hotel/nightlife campus, which also includes the Thompson Hotel, the tommie hotel, and the Dream Hotel. (There is also the Dream 2 Hotel, AKA 6421 Selma Hotel, which has been approved but not yet built.) All these components of Relevant’s hotel/nightlife campus are within 500 feet of Citizen News. These projects are operationally related, as they’re all operated by Ten Five Hospitality. Filings with the State of California for Relevant Group, Ten Five Hospitality, Citizen News, the Thompson Hotel and the tommie hotel all use the same address, 1605 Cahuenga, which is the address Relevant Group has used when submitting applications for numerous components of its hotel/nightlife campus.

Not only does Ten Five Hospitality’s Application to Register as a Foreign LLC use the 1605 Cahuenga address, but it’s signed by Dan Daley, who is listed on LinkedIn both as Relevant’s Chief Operating Officer and the Principal of Ten Five Hospitality. The various components of Relevant’s hotel/nightlife campus are operationally linked through use of shared spaces, use of

shared parking, and use of shared staff. As with all the other components of Relevant's hotel/nightlife campus, Citizen News was only required by the City to assess impacts related to this one application, when the City should have required an EIR to assess the cumulative impacts of all the elements of the larger project. Citizen News does not qualify for a CE.

The Citizen News event space is operationally linked to both the Thompson Hotel and the tommie hotel, as the web sites for both hotels advertise event space at Citizen News.

From Thompson Hotel Web Site:

"[W]e offer 15,000 square feet of traditional event space next door within the Citizen-News Building." [See Exhibit A.]

From tommie hotel Web Site:

"Have your event on our rooftop deck, or take advantage of 15,000 square feet of flexible event space within the Citizen-News Building, located next door to our hotel." [See Exhibit B.]

Further proof that Citizen News is operationally linked to these other projects can be found on the Ten Five Hospitality web page, where it is listed along with the Thompson, tommie and Dream hotels. A composite of images from the Ten Five web page is included as an exhibit. [See Exhibit C.]

Determination Letter Appears to Deliberately Exclude Significant Relevant Information

On page 15, under Previous Relevant Cases on Subject Property, the determination letter only lists the case regarding historic designation. It does not even mention related cases ZA-2017-755-MCUP SPR or ZA-2021-3264-MPA, even though both are included in the letter's heading.

Also on page 15, under Relevant Cases on Surrounding Properties, the letter states, "There are no relevant off-site cases." This is false. There are numerous other cases in the surrounding area that need to be considered as part of the context for this approval. Both the owner/operators and City Planning staff know well that there are numerous uses serving alcohol on surrounding properties, including the Thompson Hotel, the tommie hotel, the Dream Hotel, and Tao Restaurant, all Relevant projects. In fact, the March 18, 2016 determination letter for Tao Restaurant, about 200 feet away from Citizen News, lists over 30 cases:

Project Property:

Case No. ZA-2012-039-CUB - On June 13, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption, in conjunction with a restaurant bar/lounge.

Case No. ZA-2005-8661-CUB - On May 25, 2006, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption in conjunction with an existing restaurant.

Case No. ZA-2003-4377-CUB - On February 12, 2004, the Zoning Administrator denied a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a proposed cocktail lounge with live entertainment.

Surrounding Properties:

Case No. ZA-2014-1619-CUB - On November 5, 2015, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing cafe located at 6360 West Sunset Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2015-2489-CUB - On July 1, 2015, the applicant filed for a conditional use to allow the sale and dispensing of beer and wine for on-site consumption in conjunction with a proposed restaurant located at 1542 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2014-2008-MCUP - On June 4, 2015, the Zoning Administrator approved a Master Conditional Use Permit for the on-site consumption of a full line of alcoholic beverages, in conjunction with three new restaurants establishments located at 6523 West Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2014-3016-CUB-ZV - On January 29, 2015, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a proposed restaurant located at 6500 West Selma Avenue.

Case No. ZA-2014-4690-CUB-ZV - On December 16, 2014, the applicant filed for a conditional use to allow the continued sale and service of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption in conjunction with an existing restaurant/bar located at 1608 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2014-2325-CUB - On October 23, 2014, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of beer and wine for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a proposed restaurant located at 6507 Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2014-3893-CUB - On October 20, 2014, the applicant filed a request to upgrade an existing beer and wine grant to allow a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption in conjunction with an existing restaurant located at 1544 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2013-3618-CUB - On June 9, 2014, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a proposed restaurant located at 6325 Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2013-3857-CUB - On April 9, 2014, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a restaurant located at 1634 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-3049-CUB-ZV - On October 22, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a bar/lounge with live entertainment located at 1623 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-2991-CUB - On August 22, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a new restaurant located at 6541 Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2013-601-CUB-CUX-ZV - On August 15, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption with live in conjunction with a restaurant located at 6500 Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2013-609-CUB - On June 27, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a request allow the sale and dispensing of beer and wine for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a new restaurant, located at 6333 West Sunset Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-0530-CUB-CUX - On January 10, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption with live entertainment and patron dancing in conjunction with an existing nightclub, located at 6535 West Hollywood

Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-0528-CUB - On January 10, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a beer and wine for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a restaurant located at 6535 West Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-2167-MCUP - On January 25, 2013, the Zoning Administrator approved a Master Conditional Use Permit for the on-site consumption of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with five new restaurants located at 6390 West Sunset Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-1252-CUB-CUX - On December 20, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption with live entertainment and patron dancing in conjunction with an existing nightclub, located at 6523 Sunset Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-1053-CUB - On October 18, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing restaurant, located at 6377 Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2013-832-CUB-CUX - On August 19, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption with live entertainment and patron dancing in conjunction with an existing cocktail bar/lounge, located at 6364 West Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-223-CUB-CUX - On July 25, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption with live entertainment and patron dancing in conjunction with an existing nightclub, located at 6553-6555 Sunset Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2012-117-CUB - On June 29, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for offsite consumption, in conjunction with a proposed pharmacy located at 1501-1555 North Vine Street.

Case No. ZA-2010-891-CUB - On June 1, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, located at 1558-1564 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2011-2732-CUB - On February 23, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing restaurant, located at 1624 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2010-1986-CUB-CUX - On January 25, 2012, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption and public dancing, in conjunction with an existing nightclub bar/lounge, located at 6356 West Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2011-1369-CUB - On November 7, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale and dispensing of beer and wine for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a new restaurant, located at 6554 Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2011-164-MCUP - On October 12, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a Master Conditional Use Permit for the on-site consumption of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with four new restaurants and one bar located at 6523 West Hollywood Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2011-724-CUB-CUX - On October 3, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the sale of beer and wine only for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing 26,471 square-foot theater located at 1611-1615 North Vine Street.

Case No. ZA-2011-1473-CUB-ZV - On October 3, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of

alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing restaurant, located at 1613 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2010-3260-CUB-CUX - On August 19, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing restaurant, located at, 6541 Hollywood Boulevard, #105.

Case No. ZA-2010-2366-CUB - On August 10, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing restaurant, located at 1729 North Hudson Avenue.

Case No. ZA-2010-2203-CUB - On May 6, 2011, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with an existing restaurant with live entertainment, located at 1612 North Cahuenga Boulevard.

Case No. ZA-2010-661-CUB- On June 29, 2010, the Zoning Administrator approved a request to allow the continued sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a restaurant with live entertainment, located at 6541 West Hollywood Boulevard.

The fact that the determination for Citizen News claims that, "There are no relevant off-site cases," seems to indicate that City Planning staff is deliberately withholding information from the public.

The Decision-Maker Has Erred/Abused Their Discretion

The decision-maker erred/abused their discretion in the following ways:

1. The project does not qualify for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, because it is clearly a significant and unprecedented use for this structure.
2. The project also does not qualify for a categorical exemption because this is the latest approval in a years-long process by which the City has allowed Relevant Group to create a hotel/nightlife campus through a staggering series of piecemeal approvals.
3. The City has not proceeded in the manner required by law.
4. The decision is not supported by the findings and the findings are not supported by the evidence. The findings include grossly inaccurate and contradictory information. The findings also fail to provide appropriate, necessary context for the public's understanding of the issues.
5. The Department of City Planning appears to be shutting the public out of the approval process by waiving a public hearing, even though members of the public have expressed concerns about previous entitlements granted for this project.
6. The determination letter appears to deliberately exclude significant relevant information.

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EXHIBIT A



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Host a wedding reception, business event, or reunion within 10,000 square feet of flexible space on the rooftop and 4,500 square feet in the ground floor restaurant. Bar Lis rooftop lounge features three distinct spaces for hosting your event, an outdoor bar with retractable roof, and a poolside cabana. [SKIP MAIN NAVIGATION](#) We offer a variety of event packages for all types of events. Our full-event staff and A/V specialist will help you tailor each space to your needs.

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In addition to the 10,000 square feet of space provided by our lobby bar and rooftop deck, we offer 15,000 square feet of traditional event space next door within the Citizen-News Building.



Weddings

Whether an intimate ceremony, large dinner, or a grand reception, we can accommodate your perfect occasion with more than 10,000 square feet of customizable space.

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Meetings

Run all-hands meetings or team gatherings in 15,000 square feet of space inside the Citizen-News building, or plan a business lunch inside Thompson Hollywood.

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Contact Us

Let's start the planning process! Contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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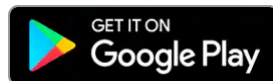
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EXHIBIT B



Special Events

Host business meetings, conferences and summits, lectures and roundtables, galas, weddings, launches, junkets and fashion presentations all within 10,000 square feet of flexible space at tommie Hollywood. Our versatile space includes a rooftop deck with panoramic city views and offers a full event staff, including an audio-visual specialist to help you tailor each space to your needs.

Total Sleeping Rooms

212

Largest Space

6,600 sq. ft.

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Weddings

Tying the knot in Hollywood? Our full event planning team and audio-visual specialist will make your vision a reality. Host your ceremony or reception in a ballroom that holds up to 515 people, or reserve our outdoor space for an inspired touch of neighborhood ambiance.

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Meetings

Gather colleagues for company outings, annual meetings, or presentations in the sophisticated spaces at tommie Hollywood. Have your event on our rooftop deck, or take advantage of 15,000 square feet of flexible event space within the Citizen-News Building, located next door to our hotel.

Contact Us

Let's start the planning process! Contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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EXHIBIT C

Composite of Projects Featured on Ten Five Web Page



Mondrian South Beach



Thompson Hollywood



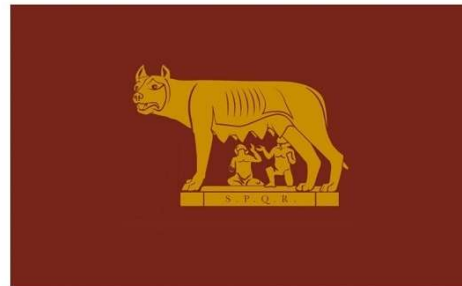
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