

June 20, 2022

Habibi Cafe  
923 Broxton Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

This letter is in reference to the current public hearing dated June 21, 2022 for Habibi Cafe in Westwood.

The word corruption is defined as dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. The many organizations involved in this public hearing coincidentally are involved and initiate the process of many other appeals filed against Westwood businesses. These individuals seem to coordinate with the governmental agencies who are to remain impartial. It seems there is a correlation between members of the council and the city to disassemble groups who engage in the lawful consumption of hookah. This also seems apparent with the liquor licenses throughout Westwood. Americans have the constitutional right to assemble and that includes businesses and their customers. It is clear the council is targeting groups of businesses who offer something more than food. The corruption extends to conditional use permits. Habibi cafe is located in the sub-city of Westwood not the suburb of Westwood. Please view the definition, "cities are often considered the core metropolitan and commerce area whereas suburbs are primarily residential communities located on the periphery of a city". We have been in the city of Westwood for over 20 years and have never been a nuisance worth calling a public hearing for. This arbitrary and capricious action being called upon is a frivolous case being filed by individuals who have a personal problem with Mr. Saad Fathi. It is a shame to see the city has not been able to identify the frivolous claims made over the past years by the same people. This brings up one of two concerns, either there are clear signs of corruption between the Westwood city council and organizations who carry their claims forward again and again, or perhaps the governmental agencies have not been able to verify the claims made and the reasoning of the individuals involved in calling the public hearing. To make good use of the city's resources let me summarize. If you review the case information which is factual and relevant regarding the genuine concern of the benefit of the city of Westwood, you would see the influence, benefits, diversity, industries and voices of Westwood stand with Habibi cafe and outweigh those who stand against Habibi cafe regarding personal problems. Despite the overstepping of these organizations, we have

agreed to do what is best for Westwood and work on some changes and resolve this without a public hearing, clearly all organizations have refused and our door remains open. Please contact Mr. Martin Wolf and resolve this in a more civil manner if you care about the city of Westwood and represent the views of business owners, students and residents.

The word frivolous is defined as not having any serious purpose or value. That is the basis of this public hearing. If hookah and the branding of the business was a concern this action would have been taken 20 years ago or anytime between then. We have a more youthful customer base and individuals who have recently come into money from the entertainment industry. Please let us know if you have any concern with our customer base as clearly the allegations made and description provided border multiple racial issues and discrimination. Perhaps you would like to revise your concerns especially since the homeowners associations have made a majority of these concerns and descriptions claiming the residents of Westwood align with their concerns, we have done our own analysis and found this is not true. We live in a new age and era where diversity is appreciated, this differs from descriptions which previously outlined redlining which is illegal.

There are too many articles, verbalized concerns and a history of problems regarding the individuals who called for the appeal. More specifically Steve Sann who works frequently with the homeowners association and the city of Los Angeles to file appeals. He mentioned in the article provided, he does not consult with anyone and independently files appeals. To our knowledge he has filed over 22 appeals against businesses in Westwood. We are sure this flagged the City of Los Angeles and the LAPD to make sure this is not a situation of the famous boy who called wolf. This may be the reason so many allegations such as a mobile strip club are being pushed on us. The city and businesses resources cannot and should be used for frivolous claims made by Steve Sann whenever he pleases. If each claim he filed was carried out there must be some coordination amongst the organizations involved which benefit Steve Sann. He specifically paints Mr. Fathi and Habibi cafe as some cabaret he fantasizes of which explains his uncomfortable comments on the belly dancer mentioned in the previous public hearing. He also has caused many scenes directly in front of Habibi cafe causing conflict and then reporting it. He is welcome as a member of the public just as we are. All we ask is given his frivolous and litigious nature, we be given a fair chance to be heard just as he is. Every business encounters problems and changes. These are the challenges entrepreneurs like Mr. Fathi enjoys it, which is why he has an open door policy to discuss any changes the organizations would like, so long as they are cost effective and work with him.

Clearly the City of Los Angeles, the LAPD, the Holmby Hills Homeowners association, the Westwood city council, and the LADBS have refused to hear the voices of Westwood. They want Habibi Cafe to stay and we are an asset, they have spoken. This outweighs the voices who dislike Mr. Fathi personally or are anti-diversity Westwood. If further proof is needed for this please let us know. We can prove it to you. With a few minor changes and working with us we can keep Habibi Cafe operating efficiently and remove any concerns the business may cause making Habibi a “nuisance”.

All the organizations involved are experts at negotiating, why is there no cooperation from your side? Perhaps the goal is to shut down Habibi and bombard us with fees until there is nothing left? We assume all the organizations will allow that corrupt action to take place unless some cooperation is made. The voices of Westwood have not been expressed or heard.

Business owners are upset with the city of Los Angeles, the LADBS, the LAPD and members of the Westwood organizations who use their power to push their personal agenda. It is unfair that the city’s organizations are counting flaws of the businesses in Westwood but will not count the flaws of the individuals calling for the hearing. It is gross negligence to ignore the misuse of power used to take down businesses in Westwood. The “vision” of Westwood which the Westwood city council is trying to achieve is false. Even with minor violations and a little night life in Westwood the city is safe and additional plan approval and restrictive business rules are not necessary.

Similar to the precedent cases, businesses who entered Westwood should not be harassed and bullied out of Westwood. The Westwood Specific plan is constantly being amended. June 10th, 2021 there was a public hearing regarding a change as well. The plan amendments need to coordinate with businesses existing in Westwood which predate the plans. Clearly the changes the Westwood organizations have made are causing severe vacancy issues. They are tanking the Westwood real estate industry which is causing a homeless issue and making the village decline in foot traffic. All these actions are making business owners suffer and many used to fear public hearings and being shut down.

The Pandemic has brought many issues forward such as gun violence which our business was a victim of. Gun violence is prevalent all over Los Angeles and the states right now and rather than accept the proven notion that businesses and schools are not the problem, we are blamed. There are shootings and robberies at the most famous restaurants in Beverly Hills who share our customer base. Do the Westwood organizations and the LAPD expect us to decline quality clients because they do not

wish to patrol the area? We, like others throughout Westwood, have experienced crime since the Pandemic and are not the cause of the problems. Perhaps you would like to overlook the concerns in reference as a cause of the Pandemic. Pre pandemic we did not have any complaints. We are being targeted for this public hearing because of the crime which occurred as a result of the choices the City of Los Angeles made during the pandemic. If we are wrong please explain why these actions are arbitrary and capricious. Since it is clear your concerns are a result of the pandemic, we recommend you revise your requests to a more reasonable stance as this too shall pass.

We will pursue this further along with the many other residents, industries and business owners of Westwood which heavily outweigh the few complaints you have received. We are not the only business which has received a public hearing notice or had issues with the Westwood organization's restrictive actions and intentions to financial distress business owners. Many are upset and ready to have the real voices of Westwood heard by the business owners and residents who actually boost the local economy. We urge you to withdraw the requests from the public hearing and speak to us directly about what would work for the city of Westwood. This meeting would include not only Habibi Cafe but many influential leaders in Westwood which will surprise you.