

Communication from Public

Name:

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Council File No: 21-1272

Comments for Public Posting: At it's meeting of September 14, 2022, the Westwood Neighborhood Council voted to support full revocation of the Habibi Cafe. Attached is the text of the motion.

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

September 14, 2022

Agenda Item # 12

MOTION TO SUPPORT REVOCATION OF HABIBI CAFE

Whereas, Habibi Cafe does not have a tobacco license (for hookah), liquor license, entertainment license, retail license, and no conditional use permits; and

Whereas, Habibi Cafe has a restaurant license only; and

Whereas, there are a multitude of major violations against this establishment from LAPD, planning, and Vice; AND

Whereas, in 21 years of doing business, Habibi Cafe has never applied for any other permit other than a restaurant license; and

Whereas, the location of this establishment is only one block from a major university; and

Whereas, the owner of this establishment has made no attempt to comply with the laws and ordinances of the City of Los Angeles;

Whereas, Habibi Cafe has been a magnet for serious crime, violence, and chronic law violations in Westwood Village for more than 20 years; and

Whereas, the most serious incidents of gun violence include a fatal shooting and homicide that took place at Habibi Cafe early Christmas morning, December 25, 2005; and

Whereas, two additional incidents of dangerous gun violence took place in the summer of 2020, including a shooting on August 11, 2020, followed by a second nearly fatal shooting at 3:50 a.m. on Saturday, August 22, 2020; and

Whereas, both of these incidents of gun violence in August 2020 took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when all such businesses were ordered to be closed by the California Governor, the L.A. County Health Department, and the Mayor of Los Angeles due to the public health emergency; and

Whereas, despite these clear public health and safety orders, Habibi Café illegally operated on a nightly basis during summer 2020, as an unlicensed, unpermitted, after-hours nightclub, where alcohol was served and consumed on the premises without an ABC License and without a Conditional Use Permit, where live entertainment was provided without a Conditional Use Permit or a required Live Entertainment Permit, where tobacco was sold without a required Retail Tobacco License, and where Hookah smoking took place in connection with a restaurant in blatant violation of both State and City law; and

Whereas, most recently, on Saturday, August 20, 2022, even after the ownership of Habibi Cafe was put on notice of their multiple law violations during the Zoning Administrator nuisance abatement hearing in May 2021, yet another incident of serious gun violence took place when two armed and masked robbers, using two guns, violently robbed two Habibi Cafe patrons at gunpoint as they left the establishment at 4:30 a.m.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Westwood Neighborhood Council fully supports the full revocation of the Habibi Cafe business, as stated by 5th District Councilmember Paul Koretz in his August 31, 2022 letter to the City's Planning and Land Use Management Committee supporting revocation.