

September 18, 2023

Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee

Re: Recommendation for 1537 - 1543 West Cambria Street.

Dear Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee Members,

Our Council Office has been working diligently for the past few months to remedy several issues as a result of four fires at the original six unit multifamily rent stabilized property on Cambria St. These fires resulted in the displacement and loss of personal property for all 43 tenants, 13 of which were children, who lived at the site, as well as an ongoing public nuisance for the surrounding community.

When a group of displaced tenants originally contacted our Office, they had already been housing insecure for two months and were having difficulty communicating with the property owner in order to collect their remaining possessions, receive their security deposits, their prorated rents for April, and needed assistance with finding housing and moving on. In addition, the site was becoming a hot spot for nuisance and was disruptive to the surrounding community.

Our Office's Community Advocacy and Planning teams began coordinating together to ensure that a line of steady and trusted communication was established between the former tenants and the owner, that tenants would be compensated for their loss to the best extent possible, and that several City and County agencies were providing all parties with the resources needed to remedy the situation. Families in two of the six units voluntarily chose to not participate in this process.

First, our Office began working directly with the tenants and the owners of their new housing units in order to apply for a variety of programs such as financial aid to secure quality housing and furnish their units. Second, our Office coordinated with the original owners and met several tenants at the site on a day the property was going to be opened up for insurance purposes, which gave the tenants an opportunity to collect what remained of their possessions.

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In working with the owners and development team of the Cambria property, we were able to secure the following:

- The owners provided one family with housing at a different property they owned, offered to discount the rent for one year, and temporarily waive the security deposit.
- The owners returned all of the security deposits plus interest earned for participating tenants after being prompted by a courtesy letter that our Office encouraged the LA Housing Department to issue, which references recent State law.
- The owners provided all participating families who were displaced with financial compensation which totaled at least \$10,000 per unit.
- The owners are still in the process of returning one tenant with their prorated rent for April

We simultaneously began working with the LA Department of Building and Safety to declare the site a public nuisance, resulting in a fine for the owner as well as an order to more properly secure the site to try and prevent further nuisances. Despite this effort, the LADBS was not able to determine that the site should be immediately demolished, and we have learned that it is necessary for this case to move through the Council process so that the site can finally be cleared.

For these reasons we recommend denying the appeal and supporting the development of the Cambria St. Transit Oriented Communities project.

Our Office would like to thank all agencies who have been working on this case with us, especially the LA Homeless Services Authority, the LA Housing Department, the Department of Building and Safety, and the Department of City Planning. We would also like to thank the People's Project as we continue to help find rental assistance and aid for these tenants. Last but not least, many thanks to the tenants, owners and community members for your patience as we work together to remedy these issues.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eunisses Hernandez".

Eunisses Hernandez
Los Angeles City Councilmember, 1st District