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February `16, 2010

West Los Angeles Planning Commission
200 North Spring St. Rm 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Case Number: DIR-2008-5009-(BSA)
10333 Santa Monica Blvd.

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Dear Commissioners:

The Los Feliz Improvement Association supports the appeal of the recent Zoning Administrator's finding that the City's Department of Building and Safety erred when they allowed the issuance of a building permit (Permit 07048-10000-00251) for the conversion of an existing static billboard to a digital display sign on a designated Scenic Highway. Property contiguous to the street is known as a Scenic Corridor. The language of the community plan is intended to protect citizens from the adverse affects of billboards and signage.

The Zoning Administrator's finding relies upon the City's billboard settlement agreement. However, that agreement has been deemed void per the court decision rendered in the Summit Media case. In that case, a Superior Court Judge stated that the settlement illegally exempted "modernizations" from zoning regulations and requirements for public review and hearings. Building and Safety relied on a categorical exemption from CEQA for minor alterations but in his ruling the judge stated, "Because the cost to convert an existing static, wood and vinyl sign to an LED digital display exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of both the sign and sign support structure, such a conversion would not be a mere alteration, repair or rehabilitation..." Further, there has not been any environmental review or clearance for the billboard. The sign and its lighting have a negative impact on aesthetics, enjoyment of nearby residences and energy consumption. The sign creates potential hazardous driving conditions and should have been referred to DOT and the Planning Dept. for review prior to permit issuance. Finally, as part of the Santa Monica Blvd. Parkway Project, large sums of money were spent to REMOVE the billboards along the median of the street. It makes no sense to allow the expansion of any remaining signs.

We join with all those seeking the removal of the digital sign face.

Sincerely,

Donald A. Seligman, President

cc. Barbara Broide

