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Website: <http://cd5.lacity.org>

Email: Paul.Koretz@lacity.org



PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, Fifth District

City Hall Office:

200 N. Spring Street
Room 440
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 473-7005
(213) 978-2250 Fax

Valley Office:

15760 Ventura Blvd.
Suite 600
Encino, CA 91436
(818) 971-3088
(818) 788-9210 Fax

West L.A. Office:

6380 Wishire Blvd.
Suite 800
Los Angeles, CA 90048
(323) 866-1828
(323) 852-1129 Fax

September 30, 2016

Dear Holmby Westwood Community,

I am a staunch believer in community consensus and have a strong record of working with residents to collaboratively improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods based on a shared vision for our communities.

When it comes to the proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ), it is important to look at this issue with a little historic perspective. Residents began discussing this initiative around nine years ago, as a way to protect the community from mansionization, and to preserve its history. Most residents in the neighborhood seemed open to exploring an HPOZ as demonstrated by the 2011 survey conducted by the Homeowners Association.

Much has changed since that time. First, the City is close to passing an anti-mansionization ordinance, which will provide significant protections against wildly oversized homes. For those who supported the HPOZ just to stop mansionization, it may no longer be necessary. Second, there now is significant opposition among Holmby Westwood residents to further consideration of an HPOZ. Many area residents have expressed to me that they oppose the many restrictions found in HPOZs around the City. While these residents generally support preserving the unique character of their neighborhood, many have told me that they do not want to go to a neighborhood board to approve what color they repaint their homes, what landscaping they can put in, what stones they can use to update their walkway, or what kind of windows they can use to replace ones that break.

I have listened and met with all sides and points of view, and my office has attended numerous community meetings regarding this issue. The common theme with the Holmby Westwood Community is a strong desire to protect the neighborhood. It is also clear, however, that the proposed HPOZ is not the type of protection a majority of the community is seeking. At the end of the day, I believe that the neighborhood itself needs consensus in order to effectively implement and live within an HPOZ. That consensus simply is lacking. Therefore, I am requesting that the Planning Department terminate the proposed HPOZ for Holmby Westwood.

Holmby Westwood Community
September 30, 2016
Page Two

I remain confident that the entire community can work with the Planning Department and this Office in the future to achieve consensus on how we best protect the neighborhood. There have been suggestions on other ways to preserve neighborhood character, such as voluntary Historic and Architectural guidelines and the creation of a community non-profit to encourage preservation guidelines. We will keep these conversations going.

I would like to thank all of you for your time, effort, patience, valuable input, and communication with my staff and myself. I share your commitment to improving the quality of life in your unique neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Koretz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P".

PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District