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The Scourge Of Pinkberry Angers Venice Residents

Monday, July 16, 2007, by Marissa Gluck



[Cellphone image taken by Kyle Richardson]

While co-editor Josh spent the weekend straining to [eavesdrop](#) on a bunch of suits in Hollywood, we spent a little time with the hippies over on the westside. More specifically, we attended a panel discussion hosted by the [Venice Collaborative](#) to discuss the ongoing gentrification of Venice. With rose! And brie! In the new [live-work lofts](#) at 1212 Abbott Kinney Blvd with a mural that has spawned some [consternation](#) from locals (pictured above). The panel featured [DnA](#) host Frances Anderton (who rode her bike to the panel), John Chase, Urban planner for the city of West Hollywood, and Tibby Rothman, the publisher of the *Venice Paper*, the mukrackers who have singlehandedly waged a [war](#) against the encroachment of Pinkberry in their hippy paradise. Moderating the panel was Greg Goldin, architecture critic of *LA Magazine*.

The discussion focused on managing growth for Venice while retaining its unique character. Is that possible? The panel seemed to think so - Frances warned that the alternative is a stagnant, fossilized city, not unlike that other Venice. **The panelists also agree on the need for greater economic diversity amongst its residents.**

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And just about everyone agrees there's a need for greater planning so developers don't run roughshod over Venice. But how? No one seemed to address how difficult it is to come to some kind of consensus, especially in a burg that sees itself as the last refuge of counterculture in Los Angeles.

Also a target of the panelists (or rather, Tibby's) ire, other than Pinkberry: [The Ray Hotel](#). And it's not even a chain hotel.

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Reader Comments (13 extant)

1. Ugh, as if I didn't already dislike Frances for her obnoxious radio show that bike comment just sealed the deal.

By Daniel Gonzales at [July 16, 2007 4:51 PM](#)

2. Was at the loft opening on Saturday myself... would someone please take away Tibbys soap box. It's getting old! And don't we all find it a bit ironic that the panel on the current Venice gentrification chose a \$3.5 million loft to party in?

By In Venice at [July 16, 2007 6:01 PM](#)

3. Discussing the Perils of Gentrification in a spanking new loft building that is priced out of reach of 95% of the residents of Los Angeles...

Hmm, do I smell Irony here?

I am sure that once Pinkberry is banished and the local 'hippies' can enjoy their fois gras at Joe's without having their view sullied by obnoxious green coffee-chain logos, that all of the problems of the homeless, underfunded public education, lack of workforce housing, and failing inner city hospitals will magically disappear.

Well, at least you won't be able to see them from Abbot Kinney. And that's what really counts.

(Yeah, I'm not buying the bike thing either)

By aldorossi at [July 16, 2007 6:14 PM](#)

4. Greater economic diversity?

Just give it time. There will be a lot of newfound poor people in Venice once the housing market starts correcting.

I love stupid do-gooders. Rather than trying to make the neighborhoods where poor people currently live safe, so that people can live and work and educate themselves and build their own lives without the constant fear of being victimized, let's give them all subsidized waterfront housing so that they will remain dependent for another generation.

Sweet.

I wouldn't worry though, a housing correction will do more to improve the neighborhoods than any amount of urban planning. It will be pretty impressive to see how retail friendly and poor person unfriendly these



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gentle little hippies become once they find themselves upside down on their mortgages.

Hell hath no fury like a hippy forced to face a very expensive and unpleasant reality.

By John at [July 16, 2007 6:54 PM](#)

5. If they don't like this mural, then here's an idea to get their panties in a bunch. Let's move the Triforium to the Windward Circle!

By spinsLPs at [July 16, 2007 10:06 PM](#)

6. That "piece of art" makes me sick to my stomach.

By murallover at [July 17, 2007 12:39 AM](#)

7. "Economic diversity?"

Not if you're paying \$2,995,000 for the PriceSpotter cottage above.

Most people shelling out multi-millions probably would not appreciate low-income housing next door.

So go live next to Frances Anderton.

By Kendall at [July 17, 2007 1:05 AM](#)

8. While I agree with the concept of #4's points, a housing correction in a place like Venice means a really, really, really bad market downturn... usually accompanied by a significant decrease in public safety. I don't think that is going to happen in the next ten years in Venice, unless oil and water dry up overnight (I'm talking about anarchy/roving gangs of evil on the streets after dark). Let's face it, the new condo owners there can afford to not let that happen.

Anyway, the point is: real estate prices are generally only as high as public safety is good.

By Karl H. at [July 17, 2007 1:42 AM](#)

9. anyway, the mural i think, is ugly. I didn't realize the lofts were \$3M but not shocked.

whatever hippie paradise existed in venice is certainly history -

economic diversity? wow, what a joke. prices don't make sense - and, if I'm paying (well, if could afford it and i can't) the \$3M entrance fee to be hip in venice, i don't want low income housing neighbors - that's not elitist or racist - it's just common sense due to safety concerns. ain't going to happen in venice.

a price correction will occur in venice but what it'll be remains to be seen - you may see more stagnation in prices due to over supply everywhere(even in venice) over next few years. time will tell.

oh, I had dinner in venice on sunday at joe's but didn't have the foie gras (didn't recall it on menu but could be there)- there was a line at pinkberry out the door. (i've not tried it so can't comment but it's amazing - you market up yogurt (or faux-yogurt) in an high income area and mark up prices and everyone comes a running.

By travelingman at [July 17, 2007 10:00 AM](#)

10. Oversupply? Show me the numbers.

By Karl H. at [July 17, 2007 11:35 PM](#)

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11. I wonder what these folks are afraid of losing? They already have some pretty strict zoning laws, quiet streets shielded from cars (for the most part), and an economically diverse neighborhood.

The one thing I would be worried about (if I still lived in Venice), would be automobile traffic. I would be terrified that more streets and thoroughfares would be turned over entirely to cars. I think that is what worries people about a chain store on Abott Kinney - rampaging hordes of annoying motorists.

I think people protest against construction when the only measurable negative impact development will have on them is the auto-centric design of buildings that our zoning code calls for. The anti-development tip always felt like a big lie to me - evidenced by this meeting of rich folks in a newly developed and expensive loft.

To capture the spirit true spirit of anti-development they should have held their meeting at the drumcircle on the beach, or in a tent pitched over the site of the venice pavillion.

By [ubrayj02](#) at [July 18, 2007 11:57 AM](#)

12. Whoa! What a lot of venom for Venice! I guess most of the people that posted here spend much time on the streets in V., since they distain it so much. If you build a \$3mil loft, someone will buy it eventually. Gentrification, seemingly, cannot be stopped, but at least these people (including the infamous Ms Rothman) are making some effort to check it a bit. And though they don't seem to have the answers, at least they have the grit to try to hold the community to some standards.

By [NotHipInVenice](#) at [July 19, 2007 4:10 PM](#)

13. Not so fast. The Zoning Administator just turned down the project based on it's height and density. Here's an excerpt of the report:

The proposed project has become a point of contention in the Venice community galvanizing a major letter writing campaign that has flooded this Hearing Officer's e-mail. Most of the issues presented have been addressed in the findings as part of this report. The applicants' did meet with the some members of the community prior to the public hearing through the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council and other private meetings. Although these pre-public hearing meetings are not required as part of the City Planning process, they are often very important in gauging local reaction and resolving issues before proceeding to the Planning Commission. It is apparent that not everyone was involved in this process nevertheless many were able to respond through the Planning Department proceedings.....

Over 160 letters (majority e-mails) have been received with comments of the proposed project. Approximately 50 letters have been received in support of the project. Supporters express the need for a hotel in Venice, the design of the building and its LEED elements, and the reputation of the applicant as a quality hotelier. Approximately 110 letters have been received against the project. Opposition to the project is based on excessive height, increase in traffic and parking impacts, compromising the regulations of the Venice Coastal Specific Plan, and uncooperative applicant (not willig to meet the needs of the community).....

Many of those opposed to the requests are not necessarily opposed to a hotel on this site.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Disapprove Specific Plan Exceptions for the following:
 - a. a project with a varying height from 40 feet 6 inches to a maximum of 55 feet;
 - b. to permit four roof access structures to exceed 100 square feet;
 - c. to permit a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.06:1.

By [Marta](#) at [July 27, 2007 10:27 PM](#)

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