

Riverside Local News

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Sides debate effect of ruling on Chinatown site in Riverside

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By ALICIA ROBINSON
The Press-Enterprise

A preservation group that sued to stop construction on Riverside's historic second Chinatown cheered a court ruling this week that appears to delay development at the site.

The Save Our Chinatown Committee on Friday claimed victory in the decision, which said a pending deal to sell the Chinatown site can't be completed because the seller didn't follow the law.

Committee members said in a written statement they believe the ruling "opens the way to a possible settlement that will preserve the site."

The Tuesday ruling from Judge Sharon Waters did not stray from a tentative ruling she issued in July. It could slow or potentially derail developer Doug Jacobs' plans to put a medical building on the site.

Jacobs made a deal in 2007 to buy the 2.3-acre site from the Riverside County office of education. The city of Riverside later approved Jacob's development plans.

The committee challenged the land sale and the city's approval of the medical building. Waters' final ruling maintains the city's actions followed state environmental law, but the education office did not follow procedures for selling surplus land.

Riverside County board of education officials are disappointed with the ruling and "believe the court misapplied the relevant law to the circumstances of this case," a written statement from board President Adolfo Mediano Jr. said.

The board will review its legal options, Mediano said in the statement.

If the education office wants to make a new deal with Jacobs, it might have to first re-offer the parcel to other public agencies, though Waters declined to rule on what specific procedures a future sale would require.

Jacobs said Friday that he doesn't see the decision as a victory for the preservation committee and he doesn't expect it to halt his project.

"I'm very optimistic that I'll be under construction soon," he said.

Reach Alicia Robinson at 951-368-9461 or arobinson@PE.com

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Leon1726 26 minutes ago wrote:



By this Court ruling, Riverside at least saved some face on the name of culture and history city. Economy developing is always the top priority of legislators and administrators, especially in this economic downturn. But when it comes to the culture and history preservation, it is always preservation first as there is no way back. Historic sites will be gone once for all if proper mitigation measures are not implemented. Besides, Riverside Chinatown will greatly promote the name of Riverside and add value to the land if handled more carefully and patiently. One thing I would like to remind Mr. Doug Jacobs is: As a developer, your goal is to build Riverside better and making a reasonable profit; Your goal is not to win a case by challenging the preservation courage and determination. There is always a short term interest and long term interest for Riverside. Preservation is focusing on the long term interest of Riverside.



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Kevin1950 1 hour ago wrote:



The comment of "Bahhumbug" is simply false. I helped a bit with the archaeological dig in 1984-5, and have carefully followed all the developments since. The richest portion of the archaeological site has not been excavated, though the developer almost got to it with his bulldozers before the court shut him down. Please do review the paperwork - you will learn that bahhumbug is absolutely wrong.



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bahhumbug 6 hours ago wrote:



I;m quite sure these three idiots have never even seen this weed infested lot or understand that it was previously excavated by archaeologists. There is nothing left of significance. Read the documents. If these pinheads want the property, then buy it.



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hey ralph 7 hours ago wrote:



I'm very optimistic Jacobs has no idea of the intensity of the spotlight that will soon be his to bask in.



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Kevin1950 9 hours ago wrote:



Well, it's worse than that. You see, the developer gave contributions to the previous County Schools superintendent, and to all the members of the city council. Then the deal was made, and the city council approved the very destructive plan. There is much more detail available, and I hope the PE shows some interest in the incriminating documents. We need to tell the County Board of Education: No more backroom deals! Save the Chinatown site!



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P4Corona 15 hours ago wrote:



Uh...one would think that an office of education would know the value of historic property. But then again maybe they did but they were more interested in the money. Are my tax dollars going toward a public agency

that is now a real estate agency vs education?

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