

Briefs

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PALOS VERDES ESTATES

Judge denies challenges to PVE parkland lawsuit

A judge has denied the most recent set of challenges from the city of Palos Verdes Estates, including a motion to dismiss, to a lawsuit filed in May 2013 by a group of residents seeking to reverse a deal that ended one lawsuit and resulted in the exchange of city parkland for two empty school district lots. The 2012 deal was brokered among the city, the Palos Verdes Homes Association, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District and a PVE couple. It resulted in a \$1.5 million donation to a cash-strapped school district, which in turn dropped a two-year lawsuit against the Homes Association regarding the association's deed restrictions on two district-owned lots. In addition, the district transferred the own-

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ership of the lots back to the association, preserving them as open space. The Homes Association transferred ownership of lots to the city, in exchange for a 1.7-acre parcel of parkland; the Homes Association then transferred ownership of the 1.7-acre parkland to Robert and Dolores Lugliani.

The 2013 lawsuit filed by Citizens for Enforcement of Parkland Covenants seeks to invalidate the deal, arguing the transaction was illegal because the city violated land use covenants when it conveyed parkland to the couple, who had encroached on the property for years, and after acquiring it, sought to have it rezoned to residential space.

Jeff Lewis, who represents the residents, said the judge's Nov. 4 decisions mean the case will likely go to trial next year. PVE City Attorney Christi Hogin called them minor procedural developments and said the city will soon be filing a response.

The case will next move to the discovery period.

An attorney for the Homes Association declined to comment, but the Luglianis said they "are confident that the validity of the Memorandum of Understanding which was duly approved by the city, the Palos Verdes Homes Association, and school district and which has conferred and is continuing to confer great benefits on the PVE community will be upheld through the judicial process."

— Megan Barnes