

Attorney's fees awarded

A Los Angeles Superior Court judge last week ordered that the defendants in the Via Panorama land-swap case pay a citizens group's legal fees of \$235,716.88.

Judge Barbara Meiers, who ruled in favor of the Citizens for Enforcement of Parkland Covenants in June against the city, PV Homes Association and two private homeowners, ordered on Jan. 25 that the defendants must pay the fees of Jeffrey Lewis, who represents the citizens group.

Meiers' June ruling reversed a 2012 land swap that transferred 1.7 acres of public parkland to Robert and Delores Lugliani, who live on Via Panorama. John Harbison, who also lives on Via Panorama, organized the Citizens for Enforcement of Parkland Covenants, which includes members throughout the city.

Lewis said the ruling is significant because the only basis to award an attorney such fees is if the court finds that the case vindicated an important public interest.

"This ruling is contrary to the arguments that the city, HOA and Luglianis have been making that John Harbison is motivated personally to protect his view, that he is a NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) opponent of the sale," Lewis said.

PVE City Attorney Christi Hogin said that because all parties are appealing Meiers' ruling, the question of who pays Lewis' fees remains undetermined.

"(They are) only entitled to the fees if the plaintiffs are the prevailing parties (on appeal)," Hogin said.

— Ed Pilolla