

Line in the Sand

A Newport Beach Political Action Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 21, 2016

Contact:

Tim Stoaks 714.655.7499
Jennifer McDonald 949.614.9755

Signature Goal Exceeded: Museum House Referendum

Newport Beach, CA: Line in the Sand Political Action Committee (LITS) concluded gathering signatures to request a public vote on the Museum House tower approval a week early due to the strength of support the referendum petition has received. Line in the Sand's goal of 8,000 signatures was significantly exceeded; an estimated 13,837 signatures were gathered and submitted and in less than two weeks.

In spite of hurdles and deterrents placed on the Referendum process, there was a groundswell of support by thousands of Newport Beach voters to put the Museum House tower project on a ballot for a public vote.

Hurdles like City Council's requirement for documentation in each Referendum Petition packet, rather than at centralized public facilities like Newport Beach Library branches, which resulted in each of the 450 Referendum Petition packets weighing ten pounds, and measuring 11" x 17" and 2 ½" thick, and totaling over two tons of paper.

Deterrents like physical and verbal harassment, mailings, phone calls and other tactics were used to intimidate Referendum Petition signers, allegedly by the developer (Related California) and its affiliate (OCMA Urban Housing LLC).

Line in the Sand, a local grassroots organization dedicated to the quality of life in Newport Beach, launched a referendum drive immediately after the City Council's November 29 vote to approve Museum House with a plan to obtain 8,000 signatures in 30 days. The estimated number of signatures gathered and submitted for verification was 13,837 in less than two and during the holiday season.

Given the complexity and size of the referendum petition packet, dictated by City Council's decision, circulation could not start until December 8. In less than two weeks, the signature gathering process successfully concluded. On December 21, the signed Referendum Petition packets were delivered by Line in the Sand to the Newport Beach City Clerk, a full week ahead of the mandatory deadline and significantly exceeding its goal by almost double.

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The City Clerk is responsible for delivering the documents to the OC Voter Registration Office for validation. Results of the validation process are expected by early February.

As background, on November 29, the Newport Beach City Council pressed on with its agenda and approved the Museum House, a 25-story, 391,158 sq. ft. condo tower that would replace the OC Museum of Art in Newport Center with a high-rise, high-density residential building. This action was directly contrary to project opposition voiced by thousands of residents in multiple meetings, letters and petitions leading up to the November 29 decision.

It is the right of Newport Beach voters to call for a public vote to decide a single political question. Line in the Sand is hopeful that this referendum will succeed in bringing voters and city leaders together for an open conversation about the future character of our town. By talking and listening to each other, the hope is that a true consensus will develop for future planning purposes.

For more information about Line in the Sand, visit LineInTheSandPAC.com.

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