

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: July 23, 2018

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 10(a): Consideration of resolution adopting a comment Letter to the California Coastal Commission on Case No. A-5-PPL-18-0035, 1525 Palisades Drive, Pacific Palisades.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy not adopt a letter to the California Coastal Commission given the Commission's vote to deny the project appeal at its July 11, 2018 meeting and provide direction to staff.

Legislative Authority: Section 33211(c) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: A representative opposing the subject elder care residential project in the Palisades Highlands testified during the public comment period at the June 2018 Conservancy meeting. Members of the Conservancy requested that staff bring the item back at the July meeting. The project sits next to City of Los Angeles-owned Santa Ynez Canyon Park that is in turn connected to Topanga State Park.

The community groups attempting to downsize the project exhausted all of their administrative remedies through the City of Los Angeles. At its July 11, 2018 meeting, the California Coastal Commission confirmed its staff recommendation that the project as approved posed no substantial issues to approve the appellant's appeal to the Commission regarding the Coastal Act.

The opponents only remaining options involve litigation.

The most concerning aspect of this project approval was the use of a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Categorical Exemption to address the environmental issues. A large, four story residential building located next to Santa Monica Mountains core habitat fully under public ownership warrants a better analysis of impacts and potential mitigation measures. Had staff had a Mitigated Negative Declaration to review, without question meaningful mitigation measures, particularly with lighting and fuel modification could have added to the conditions of approval.