



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

### COUNCIL PRESIDENT TODD GLORIA

THIRD DISTRICT

#### THE REAL STORY ABOUT COUNCIL PRESIDENT GLORIA'S ROLE WITH THE OUR LADY OF PEACE PROJECT

The Voice of San Diego article, "Gloria Might Have Played Key Role in Move That Cost the City \$500K," written by Andrew Keatts, purposely ignores several key facts, including several shared with Mr. Keatts during a telephone interview.

Prior to the Council hearings on the Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) Modernization Plan, the school had been in violation of its Conditional Use Permit (CUP), exceeding the 640 student cap on enrollment by 110 additional students. Even though he did not agree with the project because he felt it violated the North Park Community Plan's emphasis on the protection of historic resources, Councilmember Todd Gloria did not want to cause 110 girls to be expelled. Therefore, at the January 26, 2009 City Council hearing, he made a motion to Certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and grant the Neighborhood Development Permit and the Conditional Use Permit allowing for the increased enrollment, but to deny the project. His goal was to allow for the girls to remain enrolled at OLP and to preserve the work that was done in the EIR, but to require OLP to revise their project so as to preserve the significant historic resources that would be impacted by the initial proposal. In response to Councilmember Gloria's motion, there was a lengthy Council discussion with numerous other Councilmembers expressing their support. At a point when it appeared as though Councilmember Gloria's motion would carry, the City Attorney raised a concern that denying the project and allowing for the increased enrollment would make the EIR inconsistent with the parking and traffic impacts associated with a failure to build the project. The hearing was subsequently continued to March 3, 2009 and public testimony was closed.

Having already heard all of the public testimony, and already stating his intentions on the record, Councilmember Gloria met with City staff a few days later to see if there was a way to make the environmental document consistent with his decision on the matter. Staff changed their proposed findings because they already knew the direction that Council wanted to go with it, and they were doing their job to make sure the documents were consistent and defensible under CEQA. Staff proposed some revised findings, and at the March 3 hearing, after the school and the community confirmed that they had not yet been able to reach any agreement, Councilmember Gloria re-stated his previous motion and read the findings into the record. The motion passed 5-3.

The City Council is asked to rule on land use issues all the time. There is an expectation under the law that the City Council will consider testimony and make an independent determination as to whether or not to approve the matters before them. Without the ability to make changes to approvals, such as in the OLP case, Council would be nothing more than a rubber stamp. In the case of OLP, it was not possible to carry out the will of the Council without consulting with the City's professional staff first. Councilmember Gloria was transparent with his desires from the first City Council hearing on the topic. Any suggestion that the meeting with staff to determine how to carry out the will of the Council was improper is blatantly false.

Angling the story like Mr. Keatts did when he focused more on the allegations of attorneys than on the facts of the situation was of questionable value. The lawyers paid by OLP were trying to win a case with their allegations about Councilmember Gloria's role in the decision making process; Councilmember Gloria was representing the best interests of his constituents. The neighbors know the real story, and Councilmember Gloria doesn't regret fighting for them.

