

CITY OF OAKLAND



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March 25, 2013

Dear Community Members:

As you know, last year the City Attorney's Office went to trial to shut down the Economy Inn and the National Lodge for running businesses that relied upon prostitution as a business model. Alameda County Superior Court Judge Brenda Harbin-Forte ruled in the City's favor closing the National Lodge and the Economy Inn for the maximum period of one year provided by state law.

The Economy Inn's owners have requested that the Court allow the business to reopen before the end of the year (August 1, 2013). The City Attorney opposed the request but asked the Court to retain jurisdiction (oversight) over the Economy Inn and impose a number of conditions on the operations IF the Court decided to allow reopening.

At the hearing on the Economy Inn's request to reopen, Judge Harbin-Forte announced that she will grant the Economy Inn's petition to reopen the motel before the end of the year. Instead of re-opening August 1, 2013, the Economy Inn may reopen as soon as May 1, 2013. But importantly, the owners will not be permitted to run the operation for two years; during the two year period a court receiver will oversee the operations and the Economy Inn must comply with a number of court-ordered conditions.

We believe this is a positive outcome. The conditions expected to be imposed on the Economy Inn owners will include but are not limited to the following:

- Continue court-appointed receiver's supervision of the Economy Inn's operations for an additional two year period.
- Hire a professional hotel management company to run the Economy Inn, which will be rebranded "America's Best Value Inn" before the motel can reopen.
- Provide security patrol by a private company from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m.
- Meet with community members at least twice a year to discuss and address any concerns related to the motel.
- File periodic reports updating the Court regarding the motel's operations.

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- Make all the cosmetic changes outlined in owners' proposed business plan, including but not limited to upgrading the room décor, replacing mattresses and repainting.

Two other important provisions of the court's order are:

- The permanent injunction against any prostitution activity at this property will remain in place.
- The City Attorney has the right to immediately ask the court to close the motel if there are any incidents of prostitution without filing a new lawsuit or having a new trial.

The above conditions are important because the City Attorney brought this case under the Red Light Abatement Act, and there is little guidance as to what the Court or the City can do once the motel reopens after one year as allowed by state law. Granting the petition to reopen with conditions attached allows for continuous supervision for two more years to make sure prostitution does not return.

How You Can Help

If you see prostitution activity at this property or anywhere else, please call the Oakland Police Department and file a police report. Police reports can be used as evidence in civil lawsuits against property owners who are allowing or catering to prostitution activity. You can call the Police Department's Prostitution Hotline at (510) 238-2373 (calls can be anonymous).

We are committed to doing everything within our powers to assure that Oakland businesses comply with the law and that they do not cater to or profit from prostitution and the exploitation and abuse of women and children.

Please don't hesitate to contact Rich Illgen, supervising attorney for the Neighborhood Law Corps, if you have any questions. His direct number is (510) 238-6517.

Very truly yours,

Barbara J. Parker
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Patricia Kernighan
Oakland City Council President
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