

WH Manhattan Beach LP
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October 9, 2020

Carrie Tai
Director, Department of Community Development
City of Manhattan Beach
1400 Highland Avenue
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
By email to: ctai@citymb.info with a copy to qbarrow@citymb.info

Re: Residence Inn, 1700 North Sepulveda Boulevard, Manhattan Beach, CA (the
“**Hotel**”)

Dear Director Tai:

Thank you and City Attorney Barrow for taking the time to meet with me and Timi Hallem (our counsel) yesterday. We both appreciated the opportunity to discuss with both of you the City’s (and our neighbors’) questions and concerns regarding the Hotel, and to make you both aware of the steps Hotel management and ownership have already taken, and the steps we are currently exploring, to appropriately and expeditiously address those questions and concerns.

We were gratified to hear at our meeting that the Manhattan Beach police department has already noted a marked decline in reported disturbances since Hotel management was made aware of the neighbors’ and City’s concerns and took responsive action. As we mentioned yesterday, the Hotel promptly took aggressive actions in response to the concerns (as outlined below). As we noted at the meeting, since acquiring the property in 2015, the Hotel owners have invested in excess of \$20,000,000 to comprehensively renovate the Hotel, and the owners are absolutely committed to having the Hotel continue its positive relationship with the City and our neighbors.

As we mentioned on our call, Hotel ownership has been working with the Hotel’s manager (Evolution Hospitality) in consultation with the Hotel franchisor (Marriott) to evaluate and implement a number of operational and security adjustments that as noted are already having a positive impact in addressing the stated concerns. Hotel ownership



is also in the process of evaluating longer-term potential physical changes to the property that may provide additional security enhancement, if the changes can be implemented.

Let's start with the steps the Hotel has already implemented:

- The Hotel has increased security so that there are now 3 security guards patrolling on Friday and Saturday nights, and 2 security guards patrolling on Sunday through Thursday nights
- Hotel security has created a coned-off area in front of the Hotel gatehouse (office/check-in) for late arriving guests starting at 9 PM nightly
- The Hotel is in the process of adding an additional 88 signs around the property reading "This Hotel Has A Smoke Free Policy". There will be 4 new signs attached to each of the Hotel's 22 guestroom buildings. As we noted in our meeting, the Hotel is entirely a non-smoking property (including the parking area), and signage to that effect is prominently displayed at the front desk check-in area and within all Hotel guestrooms. Hotel management is vigilant in trying to enforce this policy, and asks offending guests to vacate the property.
- The Hotel is not currently accepting walk-in reservations
- The Hotel is not currently accepting same-day reservations after 5:00 PM
- There is currently a 2 night minimum stay required for penthouse units on weekends
- The minimum deposit required to be pre-authorized for penthouse reservations is now \$1,000, with a \$200 deposit pre-authorization required for studio units

In addition to these operational adjustments, the Hotel has been considering whether there are physical changes to the site that could be helpful in addressing the City's and neighbors' concerns. As we mentioned yesterday, before any physical changes to the site can be made we would need the City to confirm that potential access restrictions would not conflict with fire department access requirements. We will also need to consult with a qualified traffic management consultant to ensure that the property traffic flow remains safe and operationally functional while hotel registration remains accessible for our handicapped guests. As discussed in more detail below, we also need to consult with prospective vendors to obtain preliminary design proposals and bids and with the Hotel's investors to obtain approval of any additional capital costs. That means that it will be some time before the Hotel can commit to making physical changes at the site.

However, we thought it might be helpful for you and the City Council to be informed about the types of physical changes we are evaluating (again, with the caveat that the Hotel is not yet in a position to agree to make any of these changes). Potential areas under review include the following:



1. The viability of installing some type of Parking Control Gate(s) System:

- Prior to our meeting, on Tuesday October 6, I spoke with the City's Traffic Engineer, Erik Zandvleit, to discuss the possibility of adding parking control gates to enhance the security of the parking areas within the property. Erik and I noted that there were complications associated with installing any mechanical equipment within any of the hotel property drive aisles due to fire department access requirements, and we agreed to meet at the hotel and walk the property together the following day (Wednesday, October 7) to consider what options might be viable. During that walk-through, we jointly came to the conclusion that the limited parking areas closest to the main Gatehouse building would need to remain accessible to the public in order to grant access to arriving guests, including those needing to access our handicap parking stalls. Our preliminary conclusion was that the best potential way to control the majority of the parking areas would be to install two sets of parking gates; one that would block access to the primary drive aisle that runs parallel to the southern property line along buildings # 1 through 6 (which would become exit only), and one immediately north of the Gatehouse building. This second set of gates would prevent vehicular access to the majority of the property except by guests who had checked into the hotel, registered their vehicles with management staff and obtained a room key or a similar parking access card that would activate the parking gates.

2. Construction of additional fencing; addition of security lights:

- We have been informed that the fence along the eastern boundary of the property was jumped by someone who came from the Hotel property. That person was reportedly intoxicated and urinated in the private backyard area of a neighbor who lives in the home just to the south of the fire department's access gates to the property (gates that are controlled by the fire department and to which the Hotel does not even have a key). At this location, the fence connects directly to the neighbor's property (whereas to the north of the Fire Department gates, the fence connects to a public sidewalk which separates our property from the homes to the east). The height of a significant portion of the existing southerly fence is limited to 6.5 feet. We are in the process of obtaining multiple bids to potentially increase the height of the fence in this area by an additional 24 to 30 inches. The ultimate decision to modify or replace this fence would follow the capital expenditure approval process outlined below. As an immediate step, we have decided to install motion-activated flood lights in



this area to discourage guests from entering the area between the guestroom buildings nearest the eastern fence and the fence itself. Our manager is also evaluating the feasibility of adding one or more security cameras in this general area.

3. Fire Department Access Gates:

- As noted above, the gates at the center of the eastern border of the property are locked and have remained so since completion of the major renovation project in December 2018. We believe that only the Manhattan Beach Fire Department has keys to access these gates. We had a special permit to open the gates for purposes of allowing construction vehicle access while renovation work was on-going, but the permit expired and has not been extended by the City. At this time, the gates are permanently locked. Any changes to the gates would have to be requested of the fire department, which controls the gates.

Please note that there are several major steps that must be taken before the Hotel could commit to or implement the installation of a mechanical parking control system or the installation of additional fencing. First, management would have to identify multiple qualified vendors who could review the site conditions, provide a preliminary design recommendation and submit a cost estimate. Second, management would need to present a recommendation to ownership's investment committee and our investors and obtain their approval to move forward with the projects. This would need to be done in conjunction with the annual year-end budgeting and planning process, and it would likely take until year-end to obtain formal approval. Only after receiving that approval could management sign a contract with the selected vendor to prepare the design work and obtain any required City permits for construction. We anticipate this process could take 90 days or more. Once final design documentation is complete and City permits are obtained, management could proceed with the work. If the parking system vendor is a licensed contractor, the work required could potentially be completed within a period of 30 days or less from issuance of a permit. However, if an outside contractor is required, this could take 90 days or longer to bid, select a contractor, and complete the installation.

The last item we discussed yesterday was that there are some containers on the northwest corner of the parking area that the City would like to have removed. We have informed the Hotel management team of that, and are working on resolving the problem to the City's satisfaction. Because the containers are in use for storage, appropriate alternative storage needs to be identified before they can be removed.



In light of the many steps already taken to resolve the concerns expressed by the City and our neighbors, and the steps under way to explore additional responsive actions, we respectfully request that the City continue the Hotel's annual CUP review for four months so that the Hotel can provide a complete report on actions taken by the Hotel and that the Hotel is in the process of implementing, and the City police department has sufficient time to evaluate the continuing efficacy of the actions taken to date.

Thank you again for your courtesy in meeting with us to discuss these important issues.

Very truly yours,

WH Manhattan Beach LP

David Millard

By: David Millard

Its: EVP

CC Quinn M. Barrow, Esq., City Attorney

Timi Anyon Hallem, Esq.

