

FOR RELEASE: September 19, 2007

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Media Release

OAKLAND MAYOR DELLUMS AND COUNCILMEMBER KERNIGHAN JOIN AFFORDABLE HOUSING & CHINATOWN COMMUNITIES IN ANNOUNCING SETTLEMENT OF PACIFIC RENAISSANCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAWSUIT

Who: Pacific Renaissance tenant families, Mayor Ron Dellums, Councilmember Pat Kernighan, Alameda County Public Health Director Dr. Anthony Iton, other community leaders

What: Announcement of settlement of Pacific Renaissance litigation pursued by the City of Oakland and tenant/community plaintiffs against the Pacific Renaissance Plaza developers

When: Wednesday, September 19th, 2-3pm

Where: Oakland City Hall, Hearing Room 2

(Oakland, CA) –Oakland city leaders along with tenant families and community leaders will report on the results of the settlement of the Pacific Renaissance development litigation that went before Oakland City Council for approval on September 18th. States Oakland City Councilmember Pat Kernighan, who represents the Chinatown community, “By working together, we’ve been able to craft a win/win resolution out of the contentious litigation that has spanned over four years. The centerpiece of the settlement agreement results in preserving the 50 Pacific Renaissance affordable housing units as well as facilitating the development of at least 50 more new low-income housing units in Oakland Chinatown, a community that has been heavily impacted by the affordable housing crisis.”

“The affordable housing need of the Chinatown community greatly outstrips the current housing stock. With the growing numbers of families and seniors overburdened by rent, it was imperative for me to resolve the Pacific Renaissance litigation in a way that would optimize the number of new affordable housing units in Chinatown to provide stable, quality, and affordable housing,” states Mayor Ron Dellums.

Built with \$30 million in City subsidies, the Plaza has served as a showcase for Oakland as the gateway to the Pacific Rim and features model development principles of mixed use, mixed income, transit-oriented, cultural arts, intergenerational, and multicultural use. In April 2003, the 50 affordable housing units were almost converted to market-

rate condo use when the developers attempted to evict the low-income predominately immigrant and elderly tenants from their homes. The highly profiled controversy led to broad community outcry about the evictions with lawsuits filed by tenant and community plaintiffs, as well as the City of Oakland against the Pacific Renaissance developers. The lawsuits included claims that the developers violated the affordable housing requirements as well as defrauded the City of Oakland out of a \$7 million loan.

Francis Chang, the son of the last remaining original tenant, speaks to the human cost of the Pacific Renaissance story, “The evictions were like a death sentence to many of the elders who had no where else to go. Five of the elderly tenants have passed away since the eviction proceedings. My 98 year-old father, who has been living under the daily stress of not knowing if he would be forced from his home, can now live in peace knowing that he will be able to live out the remainder of his life at Pacific Renaissance.”

Professor Russell Jeung, from San Francisco State University’s Asian American Studies Department, explains the national significance of the Oakland resolution, “Oakland’s Pacific Renaissance Plaza is emblematic of the gentrification destroying Chinatowns throughout the country. News headlines herald an impending crisis facing Chinese American communities—who can afford to live or do business in our neighborhoods anymore? From Los Angeles to Boston, even the family associations of Chinatowns feel the pressure to sell out.”

By 1982, Oakland Chinatown had lost 30 percent of its affordable housing stock due to public and private development, including the freeway and EBMUD development. There is limited land left to build new affordable housing. Recent housing projects include luxury condo buildings that sell for around \$400,000 to 700,000 per unit.

Photo opportunities include a special tour inside the affordable housing units at 3:30 pm.

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