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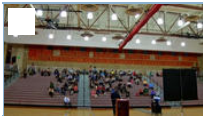
Barrio Logan Land Use Changes Draw 53K Opposition Signatures

By Gene Cubbison | Thursday, Oct 31, 2013 | Updated 7:59 PMPST

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Politics Swirl Around Barrio Logan Plan

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The Barrio Logan community plan – aimed at tightening rules on maritime industries north of Harbor Drive – includes a lot of politics on both sides. San Diego shipyards and their suppliers have submitted signatures aimed at reversing the land-use decision. Meanwhile, one councilmember is on the side of waterfront interests while another backs quality-of-life issues pertaining to Barrio Logan residents. NBC 7's Gene Cubbison explains.

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San Diego's bayfront shipyards and their suppliers now see themselves as on a roll against a city land-use decision they say they can't accept.

On Thursday morning at City Hall, they submitted a boatload of petition signatures aimed at reversing recent, [City Council-approved changes to Barrio Logan's community plan](#) that tighten rules on maritime industries north of Harbor Drive.

"Based on our success in the collection of these signatures," said Derry Pence, president of the Port of San Diego Ship Repair Association, "we believe it's clear that the voters think the Barrio

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Logan Community Plan update jeopardizes jobs and the economic investment in our region."

The signatures -- numbering more than 53,000 and packed in some 50 cardboard boxes delivered to City Clerk Liz Maland and her chief deputies -- served as impressive photo-ops for journalists at a briefing attended by dozens of industry leaders and workers.

Said Councilman Kevin Faulconer, a top mayoral contender who was outvoted along with three colleagues in a [5-4 Council tally](#) on the new Barrio community plan rules: "I am urging my council colleagues to listen to these 50,000 San Diegans that have signed this petition. I urge them to join me in [rescinding this community plan](#) to threatens thousands of jobs, so we can bring all sides back to the table and work toward a real solution..."



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"And if this solution cannot be reached at City Hall -- and I'm hopeful that it will be -- this effort we have here today will allow San Diego voters to have the final say at the ballot box."

If there's no Council reversal of the disputed decision, nearly 34,000 signatures verified by the clerk's office as those of registered voters would qualify the measure for a citywide ballot in June.

Backers of the plan changes accuse signature gatherers, and industry interests, of misrepresenting the issues with scare tactics.

Said Councilman David Alvarez, another leading mayoral candidate who attributes his lifelong asthma to growing up in Barrio Logan: "The business that's here now could stay here forever. They get grandfathered in. Any other business that produces anything that helps the maritime industry can exist for eternity under the plan. That's why the lies that are being put forward by the campaign to get these signatures was so unbelievably unethical..."

"And I trust that voters will decide what's right to do in this city. Voters will say that we cannot allow corporate interests to buy the decision-making that occurs in this city."

The high-yield petition campaign has sent shudders through community planning activists and their supporters throughout the city.

This, from Environmental Health Coalition Exec. Director Diane Takvorian: "If every community that thinks they can do a community plan on their own, create their own vision for their community -- which is part of our General Plan -- now sees that someone who doesn't like it has enough money to upend it, they're in danger as well."

The industry's money, political muscle and a highly promotable "jobs" message can't be underestimated.

But civic observers won't be surprised if the Council members behind the plan see the differences as irreconcilable, and refuse to back down to the maritime coalition.

"I think it's going to be really hard to imagine what, exactly, they could do that would appease them that isn't basically giving them exactly what they want," says Andrew Keatts, who covers land-use issues for [Voice of San Diego](#), "which is -- full rein to have these maritime-supporting businesses operating 'by right' in this few-block area just north of Harbor Drive."

Meantime, the waterfront interests are now gathering signatures on more petitions aimed at overturning two laws the Council passed to implement the community plan changes.

Costs for all three petition campaigns could reach -- or top -- \$250,000.

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