

Coalition for Justice in Hawaiian Gardens & Jerusalem

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Hawaiian Gardens members not included because they fear retaliation

www.stopmoskowitz.org

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NEWS! Coalition calls on Attorney General and District Attorney for action on peculiar loan by Hawaiian Gardens City Council.

February 20, 2001. The Coalition for Justice in Hawaiian Gardens & Jerusalem is asking California Attorney General Bill Lockyer and Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley to undo – and investigate – the Hawaiian Gardens City Council's recent vote to loan the Community Redevelopment Agency money that the agency has already received from the city and spent on Irving Moskowitz's Hawaiian Gardens Casino.

The City Council did not make the resolution and loan agreement available for public inspection before taking up the matter. The Coalition believes this to be a violation of the state's open meetings laws.

The agreement, passed by the council in a matter of moments on February 13th, obligates the agency to repay – with interest -- a \$3.2 million loan that the city accepted in September 1999 from casino mogul Moskowitz. That 1999 agreement, which gave Moskowitz total control of the loan's disbursement for improvements to his casino on Carson St., was premised on the city's ability to repay the loan out of casino revenue taxes.

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It is impossible to know the precise motivation behind the loan or why it was suddenly enacted. But it will make the agency responsible for payments out of property tax increment. The agency is already staggering under millions of dollars of debt incurred in its lopsided deal to develop Moskowitz's casino.

Additionally, stated Coalition for Justice Coordinator Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak, "it was clear that City Council officials had no idea what they were voting on. The pro-Moskowitz council majority voted without questions or discussion, indicating that the group, as usual, was following marching orders from the Moskowitz organization." Beliak watched the quick council action on the item, which totals more than half the city's annual budget.

No member of the Council asked how the loan would affect Hawaiian Gardens residents and taxpayers. Council members double as directors of the redevelopment agency, which for several years has spent all its available resources on Moskowitz's casino.

"Distressingly, the agency will keep on paying for the casino and putting interest in Moskowitz's pocket instead of carrying out its mandated purpose of removing blight from this very hard-pressed city," said Beliak. "That is why we're asking the Attorney General and the DA to undo the council vote and investigate the legality of the loan."

The Coalition, comprised of Jews and Latinos, is campaigning against the licensing of the casino because of Moskowitz's abusive treatment of Hawaiian Gardens, a poor Latino city in southeast Los Angeles County. The Coalition also opposes Moskowitz's use of proceeds from his Hawaiian Gardens "charitable" bingo to support violence-prone Israeli settlers fighting Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Available:

- **The Coalition's 2/20/01 letters to Attorney General Bill Lockyer**
- **Hawaiian Gardens City Council's agenda and loan agreement**

for background information, please see www.stopmoskowitz.org

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