

# Zoning Raised Land Value, Court Told

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When the City Council granted a conditional use permit for the construction of a multimillion-dollar condominium project in Chatsworth, it was claimed the value of the 92 acres on which it was to be built increased by nearly 150%.

This was brought out in testimony Thursday in the trial of Bryan E. Gibson, Woodland Hills land developer.

Paul E. Griffin Jr. testified in Superior Judge Arthur Alarcon's court that the land was purchased for \$15,000 an acre (\$1,380,000) and was appraised at \$37,000 an acre (\$3,404,000) after the permit was issued on Oct. 19, 1964.

Griffin Jr., along with his father, Paul E. Griffin Sr., was Gibson's partner in ABC Investment Co., owner of the land and applicant for the permit.

Under questioning by Dep. Dist. Atty. D. Sterry Fagan, the younger Griffin said he, his father and Gibson put up \$30,000 (\$10,000 each) to get the matter through the City Council.

He said, however, he did not know

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# Rezoning Raised Land Value 150%, Court Told

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to whom the money went.

After the Planning Commission turned down the application for their conditional use permit, Griffin Jr. said Gibson told him the matter would have to be taken (appealed) to the City Council.

"He (Gibson) said he would have to have \$30,000 made available to him to handle the situation—and he would have to have the money in cash," Griffin Jr. testified.

The witness said a total of \$20,000 was given Gibson by his father and himself (Gibson contributed another \$10,000) on Oct. 1 and Oct. 15, 1964, just before the council granted the permit.

Griffin Jr. said Gibson was under no instructions as to how the money was to be used but that he was to spend it only in connection with the Chatsworth zoning matter.

## Another \$7,000 Apiece

The younger Griffin also said he and his father put up an additional \$7,000 each on Oct. 29, 1965, just before the City Council granted on Dec. 14, 1965, an extension in the time condition of the permit.

Fagan asked about a meeting the ABC partners attended in City Councilman John S. Gibson Jr.'s office at City Hall on Dec. 2, 1965, 12 days before the time extension was approved and just after allegations of bribery in connection with the original issuance of the permit had been made.

(The councilman is no relation to the defendant.)

Also present at the meeting, according to the witness, were two or three other councilmen and Robert Goe, an assistant to Mayor Sam Yorty.

Griffin Jr. said the councilmen were told by the ABC partners that no money had been paid to any city councilmen.

## Denies Intention

"Did you intend to relate to the city councilmen or anyone else who asked at that meeting that money had been made available to Bryan Gibson in connection with the zoning?" Fagan inquired.

The witness said he did not.

He also testified that although the meeting was called by the councilmen because there had been allegations of bribery, he could not remember any one of them asking who got the money, represented by photostats of the checks turned over to authorities by a disgruntled former employe of ABC.

The photostats were given to Councilman Gibson by Mayor Yorty, who had received them from the ex-employe, according to Grand Jury testimony.

## Tells of Refusal

The younger Griffin testified—as his father had previously—that he had refused to sign a \$5,000 check which Gibson gave Eugene Wyman, Democratic Party official.

Griffin Jr. said he told Gibson he felt there was no reason for the state to be interested in the Chatsworth matter because it was strictly a city zoning problem.

The prosecution contends Gibson misrepresented to the Griffins the use of the money given Wyman, who testified be-

fore the grand jury that the money went for a political advertisement on Gibson's behalf.

According to testimony, Gibson told the Griffins that the money was to be used to retain Wyman as an attorney because the state was investigating the Chatsworth zoning matter.

Grant B. Cooper, Gibson's attorney, asked Griffin Jr. if he recalled that when he asked Gibson to appeal the Planning Commission's denial of the conditional use permit, Gibson told him that the only city councilmen he knew to talk to was Thomas Shepard.

## Admits Statement

Griffin Jr. said he was told that by Gibson and admitted telling Gibson, "It's important we get this through the City Council. Do whatever you have to do."

When Gibson told the witness that it would cost some money, Griffin Jr. said he replied, "Whatever it costs, let's get it done."

At that time, according to testimony, the Chatsworth land was costing ABC about \$10,000 a month in interest and taxes.

"Did he (Gibson) ever say the money was needed to pay a bribe?" Cooper asked.

"Bribery was never mentioned," Griffin Jr. answered.

The prosecution called City Councilman Edmund Edelman to testify. He said he had never been offered any money or anything of value to vote favorably on the ABC matter and if he had been, the witness added, he would have notified the proper authorities.

## Asked About Change

Dep. Atty. Gen. Jack Goertzen asked Edelman why he first abstained from voting for the time extension clarification (when its approval fell one vote short) and a month later voted for it (when it passed the council).

Edelman, who was not on the City Council when the conditional use permit was first granted in October, 1964, said he wanted to satisfy himself that it was a proper matter to vote for.

Two of the persons who spoke to him about the ABC matter, according to Edelman, were Carmen Warschaw and Manning Post, both active in Democratic Party circles.

He said they only asked that he consider ABC's application on its merits and not oppose it simply because his predecessor on the council, Rosalind Wyman, had favored it.