



MEDIA RELEASE
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'Ugliest' Liquor Store's Lawsuit Put to Rest *Superior Court Judge Finds No Merit for Case*

(Oakland, CA) –Superior Court Judge Ford ruled that Al's Liquors store owner, Ali Alaoudi's lawsuit against the City of Oakland has no basis. The city revoked his conditional use permit for his North Oakland liquor store in August 2004 due to chronic nuisance and complaints by neighboring residents. He filed a lawsuit against the City of Oakland seeking damages in lost revenues after losing his administrative appeals.

Al's Liquors had been the site of numerous police calls, drug dealing, and nuisance behavior in addition to citations for blight and litter for more than four years. Neighbors complained to the City Council about the crime-riddled corner the business occupied. Residents even provided videotape to city officials of the drug dealing in the doorway of the store.

The Office of the City Attorney's Neighborhood Law Corps (NLC), the Oakland Police Department and the City Administrator's Nuisance Enforcement Unit met with community members about addressing problem liquor outlets like Al's Liquors. NLC evaluated Al's Liquors along with 300 other Oakland liquor stores in a report called "The Good, the Bad & the Ugly" identifying businesses that met or failed 'good neighbor standards.' Al's Liquors was dubbed as the city's "ugliest" store in 2004.

City agencies worked with Alaoudi for years to fix the problems at his business. After Alaoudi repeatedly failed to meet basic compliance conditions, a hearing officer revoked his conditional use permit to operate the business. While cities do not have the authority to revoke state-issued liquor licenses, they can impose restrictions on land use.

Alaoudi appealed to the Oakland Planning Commission. In December 2004, the Planning Commission rejected his appeal and upheld the hearing officer's original decision to revoke the permit. Alaoudi then missed the ten-day timeline in which to appeal to the City Council and filed a lawsuit for over \$1 million against the City of Oakland in June 2005.

"They have a right to operate a store in the community, but that right comes with a responsibility," said Oakland City Attorney and NLC founder John Russo. "When they become a destructive element, we intend to turn them around or shut them down."

Currently 100 other liquor stores are working with the community and city officials to meet the 'good neighbor standards' of, among other aspects, not selling fortified alcohol beverages or drug paraphernalia and only operating till midnight.