



Two Formal Complaints Against Alliance Filed by Karagozian, Lewis

Ari L. Noonan / March 4, 2014 / News

Attorney Nadine Lewis, on behalf of Culver City Ice Arena landowner Michael Karagozian, has filed separate formal complaints with the state Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists against the San Gabriel Valley company whose error-ridden report provided City Hall's basis for locking up the rink and charging it with being a public health hazard.

The complaints, against Alliance Industrial Refrigeration Services, Inc., Walnut, and owner Grant Golding, contain a barrage of charges that may result in resounding damages, potentially including loss of license. The papers also cite allegedly inappropriate interference by the Culver City Fire Dept., and especially question the conduct of Fire Marshal Mike Bowden, who has not spoken publicly since the fast-deteriorating public drama was ignited precisely a month ago by a suddenly secretive City Hall.

If the Lewis-Karagozian document is accurate, the door-closing report that City Hall heavily touted and doomed the Ice Arena was shamblingly amateurish, mawkishly schoolboyish in composition.

“The Alliance report was written by a salesperson who never has been to the property,” according to the complaint.

“This salesperson relied upon Jim Wright, who is not an employee of Alliance (his employer), to help him cite codes and draft the report. He knew so little about the codes and processes, he called Jim Wright several times and went to his office to pick up information he needed to complete the Alliance Report.”

Further, the condemnatory report allegedly was written by one David Smith, who never has been to the rink.

Long Distance or Wrong Distance?

Mr. Smith admitted that he did not “review the report prior to its delivery to the Fire Marshal, according to Ms. Lewis. It was not signed and stamped, as required by the code of ethics which governs the engineering industry. As we understand, the engineer stamp is akin to a notary stamp, and combined with the actual wet signature of the engineer, it gives not only authenticity to the document but credibility as to its content.”

Ms. Lewis's complaint calls the Alliance report to City Hall “both inflammatory and overreaching because, according to Alliance, the Fire Marshal placed undue influence during the process of making the report. If the report were signed, it would be in direct violation of their code of ethics because every report must be made under direct supervision and observation.”

Ms. Lewis says that Mr. Golding, Alliance's owner, “repeatedly stated to Jim Wright that the, ‘the fire department was hounding us to include certain information.’ Alliance stated that they felt so uncomfortable with the pressure from the fire department; they had their lawyer review the document prior to its release. (Mr. Golding) also stated that the fire marshal placed undue influence on Alliance by demanding that they include items that are beyond the scope of their expertise. They made recommendations that they would have never suggested to one of their current customers.

Ms. Lewis said that the review board should keep in mind that “Alliance is in a position to make a large amount of profit if retained by either party to repair/remediate or decommission the rink.”