

# Desert Sun Editors Whine About Desert Fashion Plaza Petition

## Content:

Desert Sun editors oppose the democratic citizen petition process and label a current petition "sour grapes". Editors continue to whine about the potential for delays in the rushed Desert Fashion Plaza "Build something, anything, And ASAP" renovation plans of the project.

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### Desert Sun Editors Whine About Desert Fashion Plaza Petition

**Palm Springs, California.** In their "[Thumbs down: A Sour grapes backlash](#)" opinion piece The Desert Sun editorial board complains about concerned citizens filing a petition requesting City Council reconsideration of a hotel as part of the Desert Fashion Plaza renovation project. It should be noted many in the community view the proposed hotel's design as an architecturally ugly structure inconsistent with community standards. Editors claim "*voters had their say when they approved Measure J*" and assert the petition "*reeks of sour grapes*".

Citizen rights to petition the government for redress are part of the democratic process. While Desert Sun editors acknowledged "*At first blush, it seems like democracy in action*" it appears clear the newspaper's support for democracy doesn't extend much further than their front door. When ordinary citizens seek their democratic petition rights the editors view such action as "*sour grapes*". Editors would be wise to consider that some of the alternatives to petitions are riots, street marches, advertiser boycotts and newspaper subscription cancellations. Such reflection on their part may help them view citizen petitions in a more positive light.

The \$300,000+ campaign that persuaded voters to pass the Measure J 1% Sales Tax Hike included many photos, project designs and promises about Desert Fashion Plaza renovation plans. Some of these are incorporated in a financing agreement between developer John Wessman and the City of Palm Springs. That agreement is the only document detailing plaza renovation costs, designs and plans - and it was never approved by the voters! The agreement - now a city ordinance - has since been amended several times. One amendment released the developer from an expensive requirement to include an entertainment complex in the design. Another amendment adds a previously unplanned large hotel structure. It's the alleged ugly hotel structure that has led to the citizen petition.

The editorial claim "*voters had their say when they approved Measure J*" is simply mistaken! That vote was a simple Yes or No whether to approve a one percent sales tax hike. Nothing in the vote included specific requirements of how the money should be used or the actual Desert Fashion Plaza renovation plans. The voters have had absolutely no say in whether a hotel, bowling alley, theatre, market or other business are part of the renovated plaza property. Those decisions are being made by the developer and Palm Springs city officials. The only way for citizens to play a definitive role is via the ballot box. A citizen petition asking reconsideration or repeal of the ordinance - is the democratic way to proceed and a normal part of the process. It's the right thing for them to do!

Desert Sun newspaper management has now produced at least five editorials in support of the current taxpayer-funded Desert Fashion Plaza renovation project. Their position is akin to a horse with blinders to prevent seeing either side. It's probably fair to assume none are conversant with the actual financing agreement covering plaza renovation. That's probably because they really don't care! Their view appears to more closely approximate "**Build something, anything, And ASAP!**" It's that type of thinking that results in a "*sour grapes*" denunciation of their opposition. And the term "their opposition" probably best describes how they view those who disagree with their editorial opinions on the subject.

Desert Sun editors are mistaken to categorize democracy in action as "*sour grapes*". Their views are undemocratic and they speak for the economic interests of their advertisers. Palm Springs residents are not well-served by Desert Sun management and their editorial board. The newspaper does not deserve community support.

Bond Shands  
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