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Showdown Involving Aguirre Erupts In Courts, City Hall

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SAN DIEGO -- A dispute over a search warrant involving a controversial Kearny Mesa office tower erupts into a major showdown in the courts and at City Hall.

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A dispute over a search warrant involving a controversial Kearny Mesa office tower has erupted into a major showdown in the courts and at City Hall.

City Attorney Mike Aguirre is accusing Mayor Jerry Sanders of poor judgment and San Diego Police Chief Bill Lansdowne of illegally leaking the warrant.

Aguirre said on Thursday that his office will file charges related to Sunroad Enterprises' Centra One office tower, which is under construction near Montgomery Field.

Aguirre said Sunroad Vice President Tom Story broke the law to get permits allowing extra floors on the tower.

"He attempted to lobby the city," Aguirre told NBC 7/39. "Not only did he lobby the city, but it resulted in a building going up that's created a potential multimillion-dollar liability for the city."

Aguirre is suing Sunroad to remove the top two floors of the tower, which the Federal Aviation Administration says would be a safety hazard to aircraft landing in bad weather at the nearby airport.

Aguirre said that Story, who is an ex-chief of staff of former Mayor Dick Murphy, violated a law barring former city employees from lobbying city officials for a year after leaving their jobs.

Story's attorney denies the allegation.

Lansdowne refused to have San Diego police officers serve a search warrant Aguirre obtained from a superior court judge. The city attorney claims that Lansdowne leaked the warrant to the San Diego Union-Tribune to frustrate Aguirre's investigation and has, in Aguirre's words, "policitized" and "discredited" the department.

As for Sanders, Aguirre faults the mayor sanders for "a temporary lapse in judgment" by backing Lansdowne's position.

Sandersm, however, dismisses that assessment, calling Aguirre's actions "improper."

"People are being tarred in this who have no ability to defend themselves -- because, all of a sudden the city attorney's making all these accusations," said Sanders.

As a result of all these developments, San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis -- who refused to have her investigators serve the warrant -- wrote Aguirre to revoke the authority she gave him to file so-called "wobbler" cases (violations that could be either felonies or misdemeanors) as misdemeanors.

Aguirre told NBC 7/39 that he hopes a federal grand jury takes up the case

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City Attorney Mike Aguirre

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