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Sunroad structure sized up

Tower height put on record by city, state

By David Hasemyer
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

July 13, 2007

SAN DIEGO – City Attorney Michael Aguirre and California Department of Transportation officials made it clear yesterday that they won't give an inch to Sunroad Enterprises as the company devises a plan to lower its 180-foot-tall building in Kearny Mesa.

Surveyors for the state and city measured the building to determine its precise height – to the inch – so they can be sure Sunroad fully complies with the 160-foot limit imposed by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Structures on the roof that house the building's utilities and perhaps an entire top floor will have to be removed to meet the 160-foot limit, a spokeswoman for Aguirre said.

The office tower is less than a mile from Montgomery Field airport, and the FAA has said it's a hazard to planes landing in bad weather.

The object of yesterday's tour was to allow the state, as well as Aguirre and his team of experts, to determine how the 12-story building is constructed. Aguirre took along a structural engineer, surveyors and an architect.

Sunroad officials did not respond to a request to comment on the tour.

Sunroad's plans for lowering the building are due to the city later this summer, and the demolition work is supposed to be completed by mid-October.

"We have to make sure that the building is brought down to 160 (feet) with no questions," Aguirre said at the end of the tour.

That's going to be tough – and expensive – to accomplish, he said, because the building's interior frame interconnects multiple floors. Aguirre said his experts told him that because of that design feature, the interior frame may have to be adjusted all the way down to the third floor.

After vowing for months that they wouldn't alter the building, company executives agreed Tuesday to lower it.

The FAA notified the company last year that the building would be a hazard if it was constructed as planned to 180 feet. Sunroad nevertheless went ahead and exceeded the FAA safety standards, saying the city had granted permits for a 180-foot structure.

Mayor Jerry Sanders finally halted construction in June, after months of quietly trying to find a solution that would allow the building to remain

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intact. By then, however, the office tower was virtually complete.

After viewing the building yesterday, Aguirre said he better appreciates the danger it poses to aircraft.

“When you are on the roof, the reality is that there are no other buildings this tall anywhere around,” Aguirre said. “I was thinking to myself: There will be people who will be alive because we have enforced the law.”

■ David Hasemyer: (619) 542-4583; david.hasemyer@uniontrib.com

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By Brawler73 on 07/13/2007

I don't really care that they have to lower the building, but Aguirre is still bad for SD.

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By Heavy Machinery on 07/13/2007

He was thinking to himself people will be alive once the building is lowered....WOW. That's deep. How about the buildings around Lindberg Field? Mike claims he will save lives by lowering a building, but he enjoys destroying lives by all of his political antics....go figure..

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By smd on 07/13/2007

Aguirre is the one holding people accountable for their stupid actions..... Aguirre is NOT bad for San Diego, but people who think like "BRAWLER" are.

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By Desertman on 07/13/2007

smd, I completely agree. People who are shady and skirt the law dont like those who hold people accountable.

Heavy Mach - who's lives have been destroyed? Give us some fact not a bunch of hot air.

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By ducraker on 07/13/2007

By smd on 07/13/2007

"Aguirre is NOT bad for San Diego, but people who think like "BRAWLER" are."

Couldn't have said it better myself. Most of the negative comments posted about Aguirre seem to be for the most part, petty and personal in nature, poorly thought out and generally without merit.

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By SnowHawk on 07/13/2007

Aguirre may be obnoxious, brash, and not care about making people mad, but that has been sorely needed here for a long time, since at least the time of Susan "Egg Show" Golding. Someone has to stand up and say NO to people that are skirting or just outright breaking the law. It's about time someone did that here, even if it means a single term political career.

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By FU UT on 07/13/2007

I agree that Aguirre is good for San Diego and most reasonable SD citizens realize that. I was recently at a speech he gave and was very impressed, as was everyone else in the room judging from the applause he received. Afterwards an older gentleman came up to speak and mentioned that he was, of course, a right wing wacko, but that he thought Aguirre was a good man and would always support him despite their opposing political affiliations. That speaks volumes about the good he is doing. He may be an , but he's OUR .

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By Justice4all on 07/13/2007

He is annoying, but he holds people responsible and doesn't let people get away with breaking laws. More than our city council, past city attorneys, retirement boards, mayors, development (CCDC and Community College Development), etc.

We see 1-2 stories a day on uncovered corruption involving government. Imagine if we were able to really investigate most of them, don't even want to think about what's gone on...

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By pmaravil on 07/13/2007

Aguirre is awesome. He is combative, but a perfect counterweight to the corruption in city hall.

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By NOBULL on 07/13/2007

we could use him down here in chulajuana WHEN HE IS DONE IN SAN DIEGO,
WHICH MAYBE WHEN HELL FREEZES OVER

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