



Scenic Pacifica  
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## CITY OF PACIFICA

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# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## City of Pacifica to Demolish Hazardous Coastal Apartments at 320 Esplanade

*Demolition Scheduled to Begin Early Next Week, Pending Weather Conditions*

**Pacifica, Calif. (6 March 2016)** — The City of Pacifica today announced the demolition of the “red-tagged” coastal apartments at 320 Esplanade due to the building’s imminent threat to public safety.

A construction fence will go up around the property on Monday, March 7 and demolition will begin on Tuesday, March 8 at 8 a.m.

“The vacant building at 320 Esplanade poses a significant risk to public health and safety and the City is taking immediate action to tear it down,” said Lorie Tinfow, Pacifica City Manager and Director of Emergency Management. “Deteriorating conditions on the adjacent bluffs present a clear danger to residents, and demolishing this structure is the only way to prevent it from crumbling to the beach below.”

Built in the 1960s, the building contains hazardous materials that city officials say would present a significant threat to public health should another major storm, earthquake or other destabilizing event force portions of the building to fall.

“If portions of the structure were to crumble, the public and environment would be exposed to lead, asbestos and other hazardous materials from the neglected building,” Tinfow said. “Furthermore, cleanup would be a much larger operation, involving cranes to haul materials from the beach below and exposing the public to many more potential dangers.”

In 2010, the City of Pacifica evacuated and “red-tagged” the 20-unit apartment building at 320 Esplanade and the 12-unit building at 330 Esplanade after storm-driven coastal erosion rendered both uninhabitable. Since then, both buildings have been left vacant, teetering on the edge of a quickly eroding coastal bluff.

Distribution: City Council, City staff, *Pacifica Tribune*, media outlets

Meanwhile, El Nino-related storms in January led the City to “yellow-tag” the neighboring apartments at 310 Esplanade Ave, and declare those similarly unsafe. Residents were evacuated and the City has worked to provide assistance to residents as they transition to other housing.

On Feb. 18, the building at 330 Esplanade was demolished by the owner. However, officials said the City could not afford to wait for the owner of 320 Esplanade, Millard Tong, to take action. Tong is also the owner of 310 Esplanade.

“We cannot delay the demolition any longer as unpredictable weather patterns and high surf continue to threaten the building’s structure,” Tinfo said. “At this point, allowing the building to remain in its current state is too much of a risk. Since Mr. Tong has refused to take responsibility for his property to date, the City has no choice but to step in to make sure the building is removed in an organized and safe manner.”

City officials say Tong has been given ample warning about the crumbling conditions and could have paid to shore up the cliffs beneath his property– as owners of the nearby Land’s End Apartment Homes and the Bluffs at Pacifica Apartments had done successfully – yet he chose not to.

In fact, Tong has long neglected to take responsibility for the building. In July 2015, the City was forced to initiate code enforcement action against Tong related to the building’s poor condition. A few months later, in October 2015, the City filed a criminal misdemeanor complaint for violations of the Pacifica Municipal Code related to the condition of 320 Esplanade.

On February 23, Tong pleaded no contest to two charges and was sentenced to three years’ probation and ordered to cooperate with the City’s efforts to abate the dangerous conditions at 320 Esplanade and pay full restitution for the costs of that abatement.

Meanwhile, Tong filed for bankruptcy in March 2015. The City is participating in the case in an effort to monitor available assets and recover any costs incurred at 320 Esplanade, including the cost of the upcoming demolition.

Tinfo said while safety is the largest factor driving the tear down, finances have also been considered. The cost of clean-up would skyrocket if the building were to crumble off the cliff. In this case, cranes would be required to haul materials off the beach more than 80 feet below, adding to the burden.

“The scheduled demolition will prevent further complications and expense associated with the clean-up,” she said.

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