



February 16, 2021

Dear concerned constituents and stakeholders,

It is my understanding that some constituents and stakeholders have questions about the recent change of locks by the City of Los Angeles at Fire Station 54, located at 5730-5732 Crenshaw Blvd., and the status of the community-based entity, the African Firefighters in Benevolent Association (AFIBA).

Here are the facts:

For many years, the City allowed AFIBA to use the public property and facilities free of charge and to operate its programming as long as it met its obligations under a license agreement with the City. In 2019, after receiving numerous petitions by community-based organizations to use space in the building, the City sought to make the facility available to other organizations, while still permitting AFIBA to use the facility along with other community organizations. The City discussed its proposal with AFIBA but could not reach an agreement on a new license agreement that would provide a framework the City was confident would allow more access to other community-based organizations. The City concluded that it would be in the best interests of the community to terminate AFIBA's license agreement so that the City could resume management of the Facility.

On July 29, 2019, the City gave AFIBA written notice terminating its license. After the license terminated, AFIBA declined to return possession and submit the keys. Reluctantly, the City filed an unlawful detainer (eviction) in Los Angeles Superior Court requesting that the Court authorize it to regain possession of the Facility. In December 2019, the Los Angeles Superior Court confirmed that the City properly terminated the license agreement and that AFIBA did not have a right to possession of the public, City-owned Facility, located at Crenshaw and Slauson. The Court also issued the City a writ of possession authorizing a lock out of the facility. AFIBA did not return possession to the City despite the Court's judgment. On February 3, 2021, a lock out was safely conducted without incident by the Los Angeles County Sheriff and the City changed the locks to the Facility.



For clarification, the City, not AFIBA, is, and has always been, the owner of the Facility, and the City had the right to terminate the license agreement at its discretion.

I want to emphasize that obtaining a court judgment of eviction and changing the locks was a last resort. It came after more than two years of attempts to work with AFIBA to negotiate the use of the City-owned property.

The City of Los Angeles is now cleaning and renovating the property for use by the public, including many of our beloved local organizations. AFIBA remains welcome to resume its programming once again when it is safe to do so.

And I reiterate: AFIBA will continue to be welcomed to provide programming, once it is safe to do so. I hope that this gives the clarification needed to those concerned, as it is my policy to provide access to city assets for the benefit of City Council District Eight residents, and the greater community.

With Hope,

Marqueece Harris-Dawson  
Councilmember