



LOS ANGELES, CA — A group of Westwood retirement home residents who were fighting a plan by the facility's owner to convert it to a licensed assisted living community declared victory Tuesday after finding out it has been designated a residential hotel by a city department.

The designation, which was made last week by the Housing and Community Investment Department, could severely limit Westwood Horizon's owner, Watermark Retirement Communities, from moving forward with a plan to force residents to move rooms or to a hotel during renovation of the property.

"No senior in our community should be forced to leave their home, especially longtime residents living in affordable units. That's not right, and in this building at least, it's not legal," said Jessie Kornberg, CEO of Bet Tzedek, the law firm representing some of the residents.

- [Councilman Koretz, 'Disgusted,' Vows to Fight Mass Senior Evictions](https://patch.com/california/centurycity/councilman-koretz-disgusted-vows-fight-mass-senior-evictions-westwood)  
(<https://patch.com/california/centurycity/councilman-koretz-disgusted-vows-fight-mass-senior-evictions-westwood>)
- [Councilman Asks Residents to Pressure 'Heartless' Executives to Stop Evicting Disabled Seniors](https://patch.com/california/centurycity/councilman-asks-residents-pressure-heartless-executives-stop-evicting)  
(<https://patch.com/california/centurycity/councilman-asks-residents-pressure-heartless-executives-stop-evicting>)

The designation comes after months of public pressure from City Councilman Paul Koretz, who publicly accused Watermark of being a "greedy corporation" run by "faceless, heartless wheeler-dealers" after it served eviction notices on the residents.

Koretz said in media interviews that the company gave residents 120 days to move out and later changed the moving date requirement to a year. Watermark spokeswoman Laura Mecoy, however, said most of the residents were given a year to move from the start.

Watermark wants to complete a \$50 million renovation and convert the building into a residential care facility with assisted living. The current facility is unlicensed and does not provide health care options.

As part of the eviction notice it issued, Watermark said residents could move back in at the same rental rate, and residents would also be paid up to \$19,700 per unit for moving costs -- an amount required under the Rent Stabilization Act.

**Get free real-time news alerts from the  
Westwood-Century City Patch.**

email@example.com Subscribe

By clicking "Subscribe", you agree to our [Terms of Use \(https://patch.com/terms\)](https://patch.com/terms) and [Privacy Policy \(https://patch.com/privacy\)](https://patch.com/privacy).

In February, Watermark changed its strategy and said that all the residents could stay during construction, but may have to move rooms or live in a hotel during some of the renovations.

The offer came with the caveat that it would be rescinded if the property was designated a residential hotel.

The residential hotel designation came at the request of Koretz, who introduced a motion in February asking the department to do an analysis of the property to see if it could qualify as a residential hotel.

"My highest priority has always been whatever is in the best interest of the senior residents of Westwood Horizons,"