

# March 8- Land Use

## Sober Living Facilities

**Todd Leishman** assists public and private clients in transactional and litigation issues in land use, environmental, and municipal government law. As of counsel in Best Best & Krieger LLP's Municipal Law practice group, Todd represents cities, water districts, and other public agencies, as well as developers and other private clients.

He helps ensure compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the Planning and Zoning Law, the Subdivision Map Act and other laws and regulations affecting development and municipalities, including those surrounding short-term rentals. He brings a litigator's experience to transactions to help minimize disputes and achieve successful outcomes for his clients. Todd is admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and all the California districts of the U.S. District Court. He is licensed to practice law in the states of California and Colorado.

He received an Amicus Service Award from the International Municipal Lawyers Association for his amicus brief to the California Appellate Court in Lamar Central Outdoor v. City of Los Angeles. On behalf of IMLA and the American Planning Association, Leishman's brief supported the City's position that its ban on offsite billboards, including alterations of existing signs or any with digital displays, was lawful. The Second District Court of Appeal reversed a lower court ruling and sided with the City.

Todd lives in Claremont with his wife and three children where they enjoy swimming, handball and hiking as a family. He also enjoys literature, architecture and woodworking.

**Jeff Ballinger** is a partner with Best Best & Krieger LLP and leader of the firm's Municipal Law practice group. His practice emphasizes all aspects of governmental law, including the Brown Act, Public Records Act, and the Political Reform Act, planning/zoning and environmental/natural resources law. Jeff also has experience representing cities and special districts on issues involving the California Coastal Act of 1976.

### Municipal Law

Jeff serves as city attorney for the cities of San Juan Capistrano and Fontana, and is the former city attorney for the City of San Jacinto. In addition to his city attorney work, Jeff also serves as general counsel to the Chino Valley Independent Fire Protection District, the June Lake Public Utilities District, as well as the Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District. Jeff frequently advises cities and other local governmental agencies on the Brown Act, the Political Reform Act and the Public Records Act. He works hard to ensure that the governing boards and councils he advises operate legally and smoothly to best serve their constituents. In often politically charged

atmospheres, Jeff's calm influence helps keep intra-council relations positive as he helps them find common ground.

Jeff currently serves as chair of the League of California Cities Legal Advocacy Committee. Jeff has also served on the League of California Cities Environmental Policy Committee. Jeff also serves on the Board of Advisors to the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy, Executive Education Forum.

Recent projects include:

Helped the City of Big Bear Lake form a tourism improvement business district, which serves as a funding mechanism to collect assessments from the lodging businesses and two large ski resorts in the City. The revenues raised help market the City as a destination resort to boost tourism during the off-season.

Jeff was on the legal team that helped the City of San Jacinto overcome challenges to bringing a Wal-Mart into the City. He is putting that experience to use again in assisting the City of Fontana do the same. It is typically controversial when Wal-Mart wants to open a new location, and challenges often lead to litigation. Jeff is assisting the City with labor and employment and environmental legal hurdles.

As local governments and other public agencies struggle to convert from paper to digital, Jeff is assisting the City of Fontana in its effort to create a paperless city hall. He is overseeing the drafting of ordinances, contracts and resolutions so that the City can format and store documents electronically in a way that is legal, yet promotes transparency.

Over the past decade, Jeff has assisted the City of Ontario with the design, funding and build-out of the New Model Colony, consisting of 13 acres, 7,396 single family dwelling units, nearly 1.4 million square feet of commercial/industrial development, and \$150 million of public improvement financing. This build-out has included negotiating and drafting of a design and construction financing agreement as well as dozens of statutory development agreements, subdivision improvements agreements and development impact fee credit agreements with the developers of this land.

Jeff is putting his municipal law experience and knowledge on such issues as the Political Reform Act and the Public Records Act to use while providing as special counsel to LA24. The nonprofit, which he has served since 2015, was formed to help bring the Olympics to Los Angeles in 2024.

#### Land Use, Planning & Zoning

Jeff represents both cities and special districts in court, at public meetings and in the course of complex land use transactions. He advises both public and private clients on matters including the Planning and Zoning law, the Subdivision Map Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. In addition, he has successfully defended land use and CEQA challenges both at the trial and appellate levels. Jeff's experience includes serving as legal counsel to the planning commissions of three cities, one of whom – Fontana – was listed as one of the top three fastest

growing cities in California. He has also assisted private parties in obtaining development approvals before cities and counties throughout California.

Originally, Jeff aimed to become a prosecutor, as he wanted to serve the community by keeping it safe. Prior to joining BB&K, Jeff worked at the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office in the Writs and Appeals Department. He also worked at the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, gaining daily courtroom experience. He is glad that the work he does serving public agencies has a positive impact on the community.

While attending law school, Jeff served as a judicial intern for Judge Mitchell Goldberg in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. He was also editor of the USC Law Review. Jeff teaches courses at the University of California, Riverside. His interests outside his practice take him to the area's snowy slopes for skiing and the high seas for sailing. He also enjoys participating in physical endurance competitions to benefit charitable causes, including the AIDS LifeCycle and Tough Mudder. Jeff is admitted to practice in the State of California.