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In Millennium Tower Fiasco, City Attorneys in Hot Seat

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SAN FRANCISCO — Just weeks after announcing a lawsuit against the developers of the sinking Millennium Tower, the San Francisco City Attorney's Office is now facing allegations that its own lawyers participated in a conspiracy to cover up problems with the building as far back as 2010.

Gerald "Jerry" Dodson, a prominent Bay Area IP litigator who also lives in the Millennium Tower, alleged in prelitigation claims filed with the city on Tuesday that lawyers in the City Attorney's Office learned about the sinking and tilting of the 58-story tower in a February 2010 meeting but agreed to keep the information secret.

"They are members of the California state bar and had an obligation not to knowingly and intentionally [sic] participate in a fraud," the claim says. "Instead, they became joint tortfeasors along with everyone else at this meeting and defrauded by concealment the homeowners at the Millennium Tower."

Based on a confidentiality agreement leaked to local media in September and his own investigation, Dodson names Sheryl Bregman and George Wong as the two lawyers from the City Attorney's Office who participated at the meeting—where he says the sinking of the building was discussed.

John Coté, a spokesman for City Attorney Dennis Herrera, confirmed that Bregman and Wong worked at the office in 2010. Bregman is still employed there but Wong is deceased, he said. Coté rejected the assertion that the city participated in wrongdoing.

"We share the Dodsons' frustration that the Millennium Tower developer didn't disclose information about the building sinking. But any notion that the city was involved in some kind of conspiracy to defraud homebuyers is completely baseless," he said.

He did not refute the allegation that the attorneys attended the meeting in question. "It appears that they certainly went to the meeting because they're on the sign-in sheet," he said. Coté said he did not have any information about what the attorneys learned there.

In his prelitigation claim, Dodson also levels fraud allegations against the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, the Transbay Joint Powers Authority, building developer

Millennium Partners I Inc., and Mission Street Development, which was in charge of selling the units. Also named is Millennium Partners vice president Sean Jeffries, who Dodson alleges is responsible for the tower's defective design.

Dodson said Tuesday he is representing at least 12 other homeowners with units in the Millennium Tower. He [told reporters](#) earlier this month that he was planning to pursue claims against Millennium Partners, but did not disclose plans to sue the city.

Under the law, the city has 45 days to address Dodson's claim or reject it. After that time has expired, the claim is deemed rejected and Dodson then has the right to file a lawsuit, he said.

Meanwhile, the Millennium Tower's Homeowners Association is being represented by Denis Shanagher of Duane Morris and John Gill of Hughes Gill Cochrane. They filed prelitigation claims in August against Mission Street Development, Transbay and Webcor Builders Inc., the contractor that constructed the building, over damage to common areas of the building that have resulted from the sinking.

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