Denver agents take down promotional video called an 'ad for gentrification'

Kentwood Real Estate's Team Denver Homes has deleted a promotional video in which its agents rap about luxury homes they've sold in a parody of the "Fresh Prince of Bel Air" theme song — amid strong criticism about it being pro-gentrification.

The video, which the team posted on YouTube and its website, features several of its agents dancing and rapping the famous theme song. They wear neon 1980s-style clothes while rapping about selling high-end properties.

"Now this is a story all about how we've turned the real estate market upside down," two female agents sing in the video.

"We pulled up to the office 'bout seven or eight," another agent sings. "And I yelled to the city, Yo homes! Sell ya later!"

As first reported by local outlet 9News.com, the video started garnering criticism almost immediately after it was posted on YouTube on Wednesday. One of the commenters called it "an ad for gentrification" while local podcaster and anti-gentrification activist Bree Davies called the agents "real estate colonialists in neon ski attire" on Twitter.

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Others pointed out that agents sometimes forget that rising home prices and “hot” neighborhoods can be a painful subject for the people currently living there. Denver has been at the forefront of skyrocketing home prices and certain locals being priced out.

According to Zillow, a median home in the city is currently worth $422,400 — a steep increase from $210,000 in 2011.

“As a real estate agent, I think a lot about the general cluelessness of the industry in understanding these matters,” wrote Denver Bluebird agent Thomas Spahr on Twitter. “The vid strikes me an example of this cluelessness—I still find agents talking and discussing gentrification as if it is a positive thing.”

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> — Thomas Spahr (@Thomas_Spahr) July 18, 2019

> Historians of the future,
>
> This is moment we knew Denver had changed into a playground for trust fund kids in unfortunate flare. Be warned. It isn't pretty. https://t.co/GKpBOXQmRu
>
> — Sam Brasch (@samuelbrasch) July 17, 2019

The criticism must have hit a nerve because the agency took the video down from YouTube by Thursday. That said, Team Denver Homes partner Mor Zucker told 9News.com that she didn’t see

anything wrong with what they put up and that, even though their team has no staff members who are people of color, she has friends who are.

“What’s it that’s causing people so much anger?” she said. “We didn’t make fun of any minority.”

Zucker did apologize to anyone who took offense but added that she is also a minority “as a Jewish person.”

In an emailed statement to Inman, Zucker and team co-partner Michele Ciardullo said, “Our video was intended to be whimsical and fun incorporating an iconic childhood show — we truly meant no harm to anyone and we sincerely apologize for those who were offended by it. We respect that some individuals interpreted the video in a way that was not intended and we are genuinely sorry for that. We have removed the video from all platforms and we will be more mindful of the marketing we create in the future.”

In an emailed statement, Kentwood Real Estate President and CEO Gretchen Rosenberg told Inman “Kentwood management was not involved and had no knowledge of” the video at the time it was made and posted.

“While we recognize they did not intend the video to be hurtful, we respect sensitivities surrounding it,” she said.

“As a brokerage, we have a 38-year record of being an inclusive, equitable, professional, and empathetic culture. We respect the rights of all people and employees, we advocate for, sell and lease properties in every corner of the Metropolitan area, and we’re always mindful of our responsibility as an equal opportunity employer. At no time would we ever condone behavior that could be viewed as being insensitive or inappropriate.”

Editor’s note: This story has been updated with statements from Team Denver Homes and Kentwood Real Estate.

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Source: click here