

Developer ready to rework San Pedro housing project

By Donna Littlejohn Staff Writer

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With Bob Bisno out of the picture, developers of the proposed Ponte Vista housing project in San Pedro say they are ready to launch a new push to find community consensus on a revised plan.

The 1,950-home development has been in limbo since late last year when Bisno, the head of the development team, was asked to step down.

Ted Fentin of Credit Suisse, Bisno's largest investor, is taking the lead in a move to find a compromise the community will accept.

"(He) is committed to working with you in developing a revised plan," development spokeswoman Elise Swanson told members of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council on Monday night. "There is a spirit of cooperation. We are moving forward with community outreach."

The project, likely in a revised form, is tentatively scheduled to go before the Los Angeles Planning Commission on April 9.

In a related action Monday, the neighborhood council approved a letter to the city's Planning Department criticizing the Ponte Vista process and the most recent plan still in place. Criticism centers around the project's density and traffic impacts on Western Avenue.

Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn said she has met with Fentin and believes the developer is willing to take a second look at the housing plans.

"He told me that they're now willing to come back and work with the community," said Hahn, who addressed the neighborhood council this week. "He has agreed to focus groups as a way to hear more about what the community wants and to get more input."

Swanson said the meetings will be with "key stakeholders" in the community. The format of the sessions - which could be with individuals and groups on some occasions - is being worked out this week, she said.

Ponte Vista began with a proposal for 2,300 homes and was scaled back to 1,950 to be built on former Navy housing land along Western Avenue. City planners gave the plan a thumbs down, however, setting the stage for a showdown before the Planning Commission.

That now has been pushed back until April, giving developers an opportunity to revise the proposal.

"It's got to be a way scaled-down project," Hahn said in remarks to the neighborhood council. "I'd like to see something built there, but it has to be a project that will not devastate Western Avenue. I'm encouraged by what I've heard so far."

Swanson called the upcoming period one that will offer a "fresh, new approach."

"We're going out in a good-faith effort to re-engage the community to find a compromise," she said. "And we hope that the community will engage with us in a good-faith effort."

Not everyone is optimistic, however.

"This is not new management or a different outlook," said Pat Nave, a staunch opponent of Ponte Vista.

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Caution. Right now that is about the only feeling I can muster.

It would be nice to try and believe that good things might start soon, but the legacy of Bob and the continuing misinformation on the project's blog suggests that I haven't seen any real change from the Outreach Team.

They provide figures based on a total number of units that the leader of the Outreach Team stated would not be built.

I hope that the Outreach Team begins working on creating more trust with a good faith effort to post only factual writing on their sites.

Every time we read what "will" be at Ponte Vista at San Pedro, that tells us not only can that not be supported by current facts, but it continues to demonstrate the overly used marketing tactic of; tell them enough times what is true and they will believe it whether it is factual or not.

So first Outreach Team, provide only truthful facts based on what can be supported as factual.

Then please provide a greater good faith gesture by being open and honest that you do not know what "will" be at Ponte Vista, and that nobody else does either.

The development team at Ponte Vista has quite a bit of shoring up to do, in my opinion, if they truly wish to be considered as a group that provides honesty and can be trusted.

They also need to provide evidence that the wrongdoings in the past are now and forever in the past and that there will be no influence from Bob. This is something they haven't done yet because some of their sites still have "Bisno LLC" provided.

Yes I want some senior housing at Ponte Vista. I know I am in the minority, but I have my reasons. Even though I have written literally thousands of pages about Ponte Vista at San Pedro and many of them in opposition to the former plans, I think if it can be demonstrated very quickly that things have finally changed, and for the better, we just all may be able to come together and work out something that benefits OUR community.

So I have been and continue to be willing to work together with anyone and everyone, but I will not have my head in the clouds and I will consider when I can move from a cautious state to a less cautious state and finally to hope and optimism.

www.pontevista.blogspot.com . "The Other" site dealing with Ponte Vista.

Judge Roy Bean
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Mr. Nave is correct.

The developer wants to put some lipstick on this pig.

Look for more Hahn staffers to join the developers team.