

# Little League inks field deal

SAN PEDRO: Eastview agreement with Ponte Vista developer calls for 6-acre site.

By Donna Littlejohn, Staff Writer

Article Launched: 06/18/2008 11:18:37 PM PDT

In the end, it was an offer they couldn't refuse.

Eastview Little League officials announced Wednesday that they have signed an agreement with developer Bob Bisno to construct "state-of-the-art" permanent ballfields on the proposed Ponte Vista site in San Pedro.

And that's not all.

The 6-acre parcel will be formally deeded over to the city's Recreation and Parks for Eastview's use, a gift of about \$20 million. Construction of the fields will be paid for by the developer.

There is no requirement for the league or its members to officially support Ponte Vista plans to construct 1,950 homes on Western Avenue across from Green Hills Memorial Park.

The 6 acres originally had been discussed for baseball fields or some other community park use by the Bisno development team.

The agreement stands to solve Eastview's long-standing dilemma of finding a new permanent home after the league's previous fields of 43 years were lost to make way for a Target store, still under construction and set to open Oct. 10 at Gaffey Street and Capitol Drive.

"This plan is simple," Eastview President Ron Galosic said of the signed agreement. "It doesn't tie us to (support) anything. It's an agreement that, simply put, if Bob builds, we get fields. It's a very good gesture."

The 600-member league now plays on temporary fields after displacing a community dog park at the top of Knoll Hill. But the league is under the gun to vacate that space owned by the Port of Los Angeles in a little more than two years.

Long-range plans to build a permanent sports complex on city sanitation land that would include a permanent Eastview home seem to be stalled.

"They're getting a lot of pressure from the Port of Los Angeles to be gone (from Knoll Hill) in three years," said Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn. "We're moving forward with the potential sports complex on sanitation property, but that obviously will take time and has some issues. **I just hope Bob Bisno will uphold his end of the deal regardless of the number of units approved.**"

City planners, who are holding a public hearing on Ponte Vista on June 26, could recommend that Bisno downsize his housing plans. The development ultimately must be approved by the Los Angeles City Council.

**Eastview balked at an earlier deal with Bisno several years ago that required the league to endorse the Ponte Vista housing development, originally planned for 2,300 homes.**

**Ponte Vista sparked strong community opposition early on, with some critics accusing**

**Eastview of "selling out" if they accepted the deal. As debate over the housing project escalated, Eastview withdrew from the talks with Bisno.**

But in recent weeks, the two sides have renewed discussions.

Bisno this time proposed a "no strings attached" agreement in which he would deed the land and pay construction costs for three regulation Little League fields, batting cages, spectator stands, a snack bar, restroom facilities, bleachers and on-site parking on the southern portion of the Ponte Vista property near Avenida Aprenda.

**The only contingency: the city of Los Angeles and Bisno must agree on what to build.**

**While Eastview isn't being asked to publicly endorse Ponte Vista, league members will likely be inclined to support city approval - the league's future home is now directly tied to the success of Bisno's housing development.**

Eastview board member Dave Stanovich said he's encouraging league families to attend the planning hearing on June 26 at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium Auditorium in San Pedro.

"The more that show up, the better chance our kids have of getting a permanent home," he said.

"Many people have asked us if we could help Eastview," Bisno said in a prepared statement. "I am happy we can provide these 600 kids a permanent place to play. This ballpark will be something that all of San Pedro can take pride in."

Time was running out, Galosic said, for the league to secure a new location allowing the kids to continue to play ball.

"With nearly one year gone and two remaining (on Knoll Hill), the Bisno people approached us and said, 'We've got something we want you to look at that has no strings attached,'" Galosic said. "The way I see it is, I don't know what else we can do. The port told us point-blank that in two years you're gone and it's up to us to find something.

"If we were to say 'No, we don't want it,' how would that be perceived? I don't think there's any way to say no."

**A deal in which Bisno would provide Eastview with permanent fields is "a good thing for the community," said John Greenwood, chairman of a citizens panel that studied Ponte Vista last year.**

**"I'm fine with it," Greenwood said. He doubts, however, that the city will approve the 1,950 homes now being proposed by Bisno.**

Drawings for the new permanent fields are still in place from earlier discussions with Bisno, Galosic said. The fields will be the first things built once the developer and city sign an agreement, which supporters hope happens sometime in early 2009. That should ensure plenty of time to finish the facility before Eastview's move off Knoll Hill in 2011, supporters said.

"We've been discussing this for three or four years now," said Galosic, who added that another parcel under discussion for fields, owned by the Navy, proved to be cost prohibitive. "Quite honestly, we have to do something."

[donna.littlejohn@dailybreeze.com](mailto:donna.littlejohn@dailybreeze.com)