

Market closure is suspect

This letter is in response to a recent article about the closing of McCowan's Market in San Pedro ("SP to lose its last McCowan's Market," Dec. 10.) My family has lived in the neighborhood of McCowan's Market for 50 years. Its closing was indeed a sad time for all of us - a passing of one of the landmarks that made San Pedro unique. However, I question the managing of the market and the business intentions of the new owner, Mike Rosenthal. He bought the market and did a nice job fixing it up, but at the same time, he reduced the amount of merchandise by at least 30 percent.

Many grocery items were old and expired, and many staples disappeared, making shopping there inconvenient. It was not a matter of the neighborhood not supporting his enterprise at all. If he was losing money, it was due to his inexperience in the grocery market field.

After some diligent research I have found out that Rosenthal is actually a property developer, from out of the area. He paid \$1.8 million for both the market and the adjacent parking lot. Isn't it ironic that less than six months after opening, he announces the market's closure and at the same time three \$899,000 custom homes are slated to be built and completed by April 2008? It takes eight to 10 months for plans to go through the city for approval.

The big question in everyone's mind is what will he build on the corner where the market stood? The neighborhood is zoned RI for single-family homes. The market footprint is zoned R3, commercial. I have contacted City Councilwoman Janice Hahn's office and met with Gordon Teuber, director of community development. He confirmed that Rosenthal is planning to build 15 units where McCowan's stood.

Please call and write our councilwoman with your thoughts and opinions on this important issue.

- NICK AND BARBARA DRAGICH
San Pedro