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McCowans site plan is scaled back again

By Donna Littlejohn Staff Writer

An ongoing debate over what to build at the former McCowans Market site in San Pedro has taken yet another turn, with the developer floating a third alternative that further decreases the number of homes he wants to build.

A closed-door meeting is scheduled Monday to discuss the details with the developer and neighborhood representatives at the office of Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

Instead of building 12 detached, single-family homes - two each on six lots - Michael Rosenthal is proposing 10 homes - two homes each on four parcels, and the remaining two parcels would have one home each. One of the lots would require a zoning change to allow for two homes.

"It sounds like the developer is listening to the community and wants to build a project that is compatible with the neighborhood," Hahn said in a written statement.

But neighbors are withholding judgment for now, saying they need more information.

"Now the question is whether to allow that one (parcel) to be rezoned," said Barbara Dragich, one of the neighbors fighting Rosenthal's original plan to build as many as 18 condominiums along with three single family homes on the two corner properties at 20th and Walker streets.

Rosenthal's compromise proposal from last week would have required all three R1 (single-family home) parcels to be rezoned to accommodate two homes each.

"That's just not going to fly with the neighborhood," Dragich said. "Those are R1 lots, and they need to remain R1."

The original condo plan drew widespread opposition in the quiet, hillside neighborhood that overlooks the Port of Los Angeles.

Residents mobilized two weeks ago to form a group called Vista del Oro Neighbors Against Condos and set the wheels in motion to begin producing yard signs to fight the development.

Rosenthal's first compromise proposal to build 12 homes altogether appeared to be a more attractive option, but residents still objected to increasing the zoning for three of the six parcels to build detached duplexes.

Dragich said Rosenthal called her last week to discuss the newer proposal that would change only one of those parcels. Rosenthal, who could not be reached for comment for this article, indicated that he'd produce renderings at Monday's meeting at the council office, according to Dragich.

"I wish he would have done this a long time ago," she said. "But it was nice that he finally talked to me. We'll see what happens Monday. He's invited the neighbors to be involved in the process."

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