

Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council Meeting
By Pete Lacombe

Place: Auditorium, Peck Park

Time: January 12, 2009, 6:30pm

Guest Speaker: Councilwoman Janice Hahn

Ms. Hahn answered questions submitted by the audience. She stated that it appears the genesis of many questions was Ponte Vista.

The first question was a critique of the EIR process. The fact that the developer pays for and processes the report leads to self-serving results. Ms. Hahn was asked if it would be more appropriate for a third party to be contracted to provide the EIR. As a result of her desire for more accountability and transparency, the City Attorney, along with Planning Dept, will be asked to draft a new ordinance to enforce ethical and professional standards by developers. She said that the City needs to formalize a relationship between Neighborhood Councils and the Planning Department to allow for Neighborhood Council input at the beginning of the process.

She was asked if traffic formulas used in EIRs should reflect local driving patterns rather than national averages. She said she would present a motion to instruct the City Dept of Transportation to look into formulating and adopting a City average unique to Los Angeles.

She stated, in response to a question regarding SB1818, that it was a terrible law that forces density bonuses when contractors add special features like affordable and senior housing. The incentives include a reduction in parking allotments, which is contradictory to the increased density proposed by the developer. Ms Hahn stated that Bonnie Lowenthal is considering taking on SB1818 at the State level.

Regarding Ponte Vista, she said she met with Ted Fentin of DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners, a subsidiary of Credit Suisse, the manager that replaced Bisno, who asked for an extension of the next Planning Commission meeting until April 9. She would like to see a scaled down plan that would not overload Western Ave. The developer stated that he intends to hold meetings with the community to help determine the size and character of the development. No schedule for these had been set.

In response to a question concerning efforts to get the area encompassing Ponte Vista into the San Pedro General Plan, a representative from the Planning Dept. stated they were looking into it due to much community input, but that "changing the Community Plan boundary is not an easy task".