

San Pedro forum more heat than light

By Donna Littlejohn Staff Writer

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There's an old saying that goes something like this: "Everything's been said - but not everyone's said it."

Case in point: this week's public hearing that drew about 500 people for yet another pro-and-con airing of the proposed Ponte Vista housing development at Western Avenue in San Pedro.

Not much new was said during the five-hour marathon hearing Thursday night - aside from the so-called green acres or giant community gardens idea floated by the Sierra Club, which calls for the 61.5-acre property to be hoed and cultivated into farmland.

Opponents, wearing red R-1 buttons -for the site's current single-family residence zoning - pointed to the specter of more traffic and density. They also criticized the developer for busing supporters in from out of town and plying them with free egg salad sandwiches.

Supporters, sporting yellow "Ponte Vista Supporter" stickers, talked about the need for more diversified housing and jobs.

"Generations to come will be blessed by this project," said Gloria Lockhart, a single mother and social worker who heads up a social service agency in San Pedro.

Lockhart said she's been consistently priced out of Southern California's housing market and sees developments like Ponte Vista as holding out the promise of achieving the American dream.

But attorney Steven Pingel, who lives in a condominium on Western Avenue, said Ponte Vista leaves him with another kind of vision.

"It's not going to be the American dream," he said. "It's going to be the American nightmare."

No decisions were made Thursday. The hearing, hosted by Los Angeles city planners, was part of a public comment process to help officials come up with a staff recommendation on the project.

The project and the recommendation are expected to go before the city's Planning Commission for a vote in October. The Los Angeles City Council would make a final ruling.

First rolled out to the public in October 2005 by developer Bob Bisno, Ponte Vista has been hashed and rehashed at numerous public meetings and workshops over the years.

Bisno has downsized his original plan for 2,300 homes to 1,950.

But both sides appear only to have hardened their positions.

Ponte Vista has spawned petition drives, blogs, glossy full-page ads, cable television spots, grass-roots traffic studies, lawn signs, bumper stickers - and no shortage of rumors and conspiracy theories.

Passion on both sides still runs high and reaches across demographic lines throughout the close-knit port community.

Audience members Thursday included senior citizens, council members, environmentalists and union members.

The director of Playa Vista Job Opportunities, a group that links former prisoners with trade unions for training and apprenticeships, was on hand with some program participants to show support for the development.

Officials in Rancho Palos Verdes, which lies just across the street, came to voice objections, saying density and traffic will diminish the quality of life for that city's residents.

The Rev. Nicholas Tacito delivered a letter of support from Mary Star of the Sea Catholic high school, which will get an access road out of the development deal.

The building trade unions, along with the Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 13 and the AFL-CIO, say the project, which will include a signed labor agreement between the city and Bisno, will provide thousands of construction jobs and housing for workers.

Many San Pedro residents took the microphone to openly scoff at "outdated" city traffic calculations that concluded the impacts from Ponte Vista can be offset by road improvements funded by the developer.

Those who drive Western every day said common sense tells them otherwise; traffic is jammed now and will only get worse if the project is built, they said.

Senior citizens testified that the project - which sets aside about 40 percent of the units for homeowners 55 and older - will provide opportunities to "downsize" and stay in the community where they raised families.

Youth sports supporters argued the park space and ball fields promised by Bisno for Eastview Little League will help turn back a progressive, decades-old loss of youth facilities in town.

And so the debate goes on.

The issue has sometimes divided neighbors and even family members. It also threatens to strain relations between Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn and a significant part of her political base, L.A.'s powerful labor unions.

Hahn so far says she's not persuaded that the current single-family (R-1) zoning on the former Navy housing property should be changed to allow for more homes.

But in remarks Thursday, she appeared also to leave some wiggle room for a plan that lies somewhere in the middle of R-1 - about 700 homes - and the 1,950 Bisno now has on the table.

"I am in favor of a project at Ponte Vista," Hahn said. "I am not in favor of this project. I want the city to ask the developer to rework this project and present something we all can support."

John Greenwood, who chaired Hahn's Ponte Vista community advisory committee that supports a single-family development, expressed the panel's frustration to senior planner and hearing officer John Foreman.

"We wanted to dialog with the developer," Greenwood said. But Bisno's counter offer of 1,950 homes was still way too high, he said.

"No one could believe he was so out of touch with reality," Greenwood said. "I'm not a Ponte Vista opponent. I just think Ponte Vista needs to go on a severe diet."

FIND OUT MORE

The city's public comment period will stay open through July 11.

Written testimony should cite the Case Number (CPC 2006-8043-GPA-ZC- SP-DA) and be mailed to: Los Angeles City Planning Department, Community Planning Bureau West/Coastal Unit, 200 N. Spring St., Room 621, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Contact David Olivo at 213-978-1197 or david.olivo@lacity.org.

donna.littlejohn@dailybreeze.com

Comments

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|
- Brian
[Redondo Beach, CA](#) [#1](#)
Saturday
Good morning everyone, where's all the bashing?
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- Gail
[Long Beach, CA](#) [#2](#)
Saturday
Sounds like a make-work meeting for city bureaucrats. No wonder LA is broke.
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Saturday
Taking the article as written: "signed labor agreement between the city and Bisno will provide thousands of jobs and housing for workers." Well the city or Bisno will not provide labor. The Unions will provide labor, as such, they will need a contract with each Union involved with each contractor involved. Oh, "housing for the workers"; like Boulder City (when the Dam was built) or Park Western and Channel Hieghts for shipyard workers?
Senior Citizen
[West Hollywood, CA](#)
Sorry Gloria, but I don't see the connection of this development with social services(or is that section 8 housing)
Steven, I agree with you; look at Scottsdale (not Arizona). They are held prisoner in thier walled community.
And there's more! Probably bonds/taxes to pay for added inferstructure (water, power, sewers, fire/paramedics (for those seinor citizens), etc.. We can't support what we have.
No, we don' t need this development. There is a lot of urban redevelopment in progress in the heart of San Pedro.
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- Don Diller
[Los Angeles, CA](#) [#4](#)
Saturday
I like the idea of turning it into farm land. Grow local, buy local. Sure beats more low income housing or more human warehouses for the mentally deranged.
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- Wrong Project
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Saturday

All you have to do is drive on Western ave at any given time of the day. You will see that without widening the entire state hwy from PCH to 25th st. The traffic from the new project will be unbearable. It already is without the homes. I'm a big supporter of East View Little LEague, but they do not speak for all of the families. Even though they preached that they would remain neutral regarding this issue, They have obviously publicly came out and supported it as seen on the back page of the San Pedro Paper. I support some type of project their, but it must remain R-1. Just remember as long as we are part of Los Angeles City, the crime from more people here will only get worse. Just look at most of the areas that Harbor Division patrols. Its not the officers fault, but L.A. Cities lack of concern for us far away from the rest of the city. Maybe if this is approved, people will wake up and push to become our own city, The City of San Pedro and gain local control.

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RPV Mom
[Los Angeles, CA](#)

#6

Saturday

Have you ever been on Western Ave driving to Dapplegray School? It STINKS! It will only get worse. I don't want any more low income housing near my home.

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#7

Saturday

aka penny
[Rancho Palos Verdes, CA](#)

One item rarely mentioned is the impact the project will have on police and fire services. The final environmental impact report quotes a police representative from September 2005, who stated that the officer to citizen ratio in the Harbor Area is 1:701. The officer to citizen ratio in the entire city of Los Angeles is 1:426 compare that figure to New York City 1:228, Chicago 1:216, and Philadelphia 1:219. You can find these statistics on the LAPD website. And the report claims that a concentration of seniors, albeit active seniors, will have no impact on paramedic services. The supporters claim that this project will generate millions of dollars in tax revenue for the city, but that's the city of Los Angeles. How much of that money will be funneled back to the Harbor Area?

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#8

Saturday

Patrick San Pedro
[Rancho Palos Verdes, CA](#)

You want "low income" housing?

We already have "low income" housing across the street from this.

We don't need more "low income" people.

Don't we have our fair share?

Why can't this outfit build replacement homes on the existing lot sizes?

I think most would support that.

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Gerry - San Pedro
[Los Angeles, CA](#)

#9

Yesterday

I can't believe that this is even still an issue. In typical LA fashion, our councilperson and all of the city bureaucrats will draw this out for eternity and then wonder why so many business people refuse to do business in LA. The property is zoned R1. The infrastructure will not support more than that.

Tell Bisno to build R1 housing or nothing. He will then know where he stands and be able to move on from there.

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I give up
[San Pedro,](#)
[CA](#)

| [#10](#)

Yesterday

You Peedrns crack me up... Peedro is a trash strewn ghetto with high crime areas and trashy areas, industrial polluted areas, and yet Peedrns think they are too good to have any development whether it ne higher priced housing that will raise prices all over the area to a new high school. sheesh.

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Fed UP
[Los Angeles,](#)
[CA](#)

| [#11](#)

23 hrs ago

We need to become our own city!!! Support a breakaway from Los Angeles.

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| [#15](#)

11 hrs ago

Local yokel
[San Pedro,](#)
[CA](#)

I give up wrote:

You Peedrns crack me up... Peedro is a trash strewn ghetto with high crime areas and trashy areas, industrial polluted areas, and yet Peedrns think they are too good to have any development whether it ne higher priced housing that will raise prices all over the area to a new high school. sheesh.

You keep posting the same thing over and over again. When will you actually just give up and move away. Try Hawthorne, Hawthorne today is the result of the kind of brainless development that you seem to advocate. Please go live there, enjoy.

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| [#16](#)

mellonhead
[Rancho Palos](#)
[Verdes, CA](#)

10 hrs ago

"Officials in Rancho Palos Verdes, which lies just across the street, came to voice objections, saying density and traffic will diminish the quality of life for that city's residents." Ain't this the truth.

"The Rev. Nicholas Tacito delivered a letter of support from Mary Star of the Sea Catholic high school, which will get an access road out of the development deal." I 'm a Mary Star High School graduate. After reading this I'm glad I never gave any money to the building fund.

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| [#17](#)

7 hrs ago

m howard
[Buena Park,](#)
[CA](#)

Here are to some new suggestions and some comments:

1) Let the City through the Harbor Department do a land swap. Give Bisno all the property along 22nd Street across from the Marina area bounded by Harbor Bl on the east, Mesa on the west. The only condition is seniors and other buyers get the same buying prices and arrangements no cost increase with the same proposed housing density on the 62 acre Pointe Vista site. Bisno can charge what the market will bear for his 3 to 4 bedroom townhouses, now with ocean views and walking distance to beach & Marina, to compensate him for his efforts and investment. He can add an extra

lane on Harbor Blvd along with improvements to 22nd street. The project can easily be designed so it does not interfere with views for properties above Crescent Avenue.

2) Future projects should not follow the process of the Ponte Vista project. The route should be for the Planning Commission to begin its work and groups formed like CAC should conduct their after comments and recommendations of the governmental planning commission. If their objections based on facts are sustained or by vote, in this case San Pedro city wide only, so be it.

Each month in delays on building this project results in increased cost to seniors and other workforce housing purchasers. A decrease in the number of units built from 2300 down to 1900 has cost prices increase not to Bisno but to potential Ponte Vista buyers. As Hahn and other opponents request additional reduction in the number of units that will be allowed the costs per home unit increases and the planned number of amenities become less and less.

This is an effective way Hahn and company, all experienced bureaucratic, are using this methodology to kill this project. Many businesses do not locate in California and housing cost is greater because of our bureaucracies and the tactics used by the opponents of many worth while projects.

It is interesting to note that long time generational residents of San Pedro seem to favor the Ponte Vista project. The newly minted, just got mine, who live on the Hill or in homes on Western oppose it. The Traffic has been mitigated. That has been proven using the opponent's figures and consultants.

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| [#18](#)

6 hrs ago

aka penny
[Rancho Palos Verdes, CA](#)

m howard wrote:

It is interesting to note that long time generational residents of San Pedro seem to favor the Ponte Vista project. The newly minted, just got mine, who live on the Hill or in homes on Western oppose it. The Traffic has been mitigated. That has been proven using the opponent's figures and consultants.

That's a tale that's being told around town to try to convince people that "real" San Pedrans support the project. After attending the hearing, I saw quite a few people who I know are native San Pedrans who oppose the project and quite a few people who are newcomers who support Bisno.

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| [#19](#)

2 hrs ago

same old same old
[Rancho Palos Verdes, CA](#)

m howard wrote:

It is interesting to note that long time generational residents of San Pedro seem to favor the Ponte Vista project. The newly minted, just got mine, who live on the Hill or in homes on Western oppose it.

There it is again, the "I have lived here for 100 years" argument. Well, if living here a long time means you know what's best, then answer me this: what happened? Why are we where the ghetto meets the sea, instead of the jewel of the peninsula? I mean it, I want to know. What happened? Why has the port grown unchecked for the last hundred years, putting hazards in our midst? Why do mental patients roam the streets? Why can't our kids be safe? Why does our beach get an F grade no matter the weather? Why do developers get a free pass in downtown and why are the shops so often closed there? Why do I see so much graffiti? Is that the fault of the new people, too? How long do you have to live here before you are no longer the new people, anyway? Because I know of plenty of people who have been in town a long time who don't support Ponte Vista.

really

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[Rancho Palos Verdes, CA](#) | [Report Abuse](#)

| [#20](#)

2 hrs ago

Fed UP wrote:

We need to become our own city!!! Support a breakaway from Los Angeles.

Secession! Let's get it on the ballot! Improve San Pedro for San Pedrans first!

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| [#21](#)

1 hr ago

[Condo Beach Los Angeles, CA](#)

"Fight On" San Pedro! Don't let the "carpetbagger" change the zoning! I've seen firsthand how the developers have changed zoning and RUINED Redondo Beach!! Anyting north of Torrance Blvd. has developers "foaming at the mouth" to demo single family R-1 and put up townhomes. Streets that had two cars per home now have doubled or even tripled the amount of cars since the city permitted the developers to build 12 units on the parcel which used to have one unit!

At one time in the 90's, there were 4 realtors on the RB city council. Development went "wild" in the single-family neighborhoods.

Do you think those Redondo developers or "Carpetbagger Bob" LIVE in those neighborhoods?

They pack 'em in, GET their money and LAUGH all the way to the bank!!

While in the aftermath, you're STUCK with GRIDLOCK traffic, stretched municipal services and a "crappier" and lower quality of life!!

KEEP FIGHTING(Do it for your children, they'll be the most impacted!) and as one post stated by all means, "GET THE HELL OUT OF THE CITY OF LA!!!