

New owners of Vault 350 get financial boost

LONG BEACH:

Music venue gets \$250,000 grant from city agency.

By Karen Robes Meeks
Staff Writer

LONG BEACH — A pair of businessmen just received a financial boost from redevelopment leaders that will help them make a downtown music venue sing.

The Long Beach Redevelopment Agency Board on Monday voted unanimously to raise the maximum dollar amount of its Commercial Facade Improvement Program to \$250,000 to assist Rudy Medina and Luis Armen Kaloyan, the new owners of Vault 350, with their

On the Web

- **Video:** Take a look inside the redesigned Vault 350 at presstelegram.com.
- For more information go to www.newvault350.com.

\$600,000 facade project.

The maximum grant amount of the program is \$180,000, with the participant matching at least 15 percent. The additional \$70,000 for the grant will come from the Downtown Project Area's budget.

Medina and Kaloyan

RDA A5

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FROM PAGE A1

plan to renovate the front of the building with a cinematic marquee, box office and presentation case to announce programming and merchandising opportunities and incorporate some of the 1920s Greek Revival architecture recently uncovered from inside the building, built in 1921 by Parkinson & Parkinson, the architects of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

"The goal is to create an iconic entertainment venue both visually on Pine Avenue and Fourth," Medina said, adding that "San Francisco has Fillmore, L.A. has the Roxy, Oakland has the Fox Theater. We hope Long Beach has the new Vault 350."

A couple of architects did express concerns about trying to re-create a 1920s facade, fearing a "faux historicism" that could look "kitschy," like a number of structures down-

town, including City Place and the Pike of Rainbow Harbor.

"I'm not really speaking against the project, because I fully support putting the business in the downtown," said Jonathan Glasgow, a member of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

"I think we have to be very careful how we approach that. The design really does matter."

Medina said he promises to explore some minor modifications to the facade and continue the dialogue with architects and the overall community.

Several people came out to support the project, including a couple of residents who often travel to Los Angeles and Orange County to watch music performances.

"I think it would be a valuable asset to have in Long Beach, to be able to bring my friends to my city," said Nicole Davis.

Several in the downtown business community also spoke in favor of the project, saying it will help create

energy on northern Pine Avenue.

"The level of commitment and investment Mr. Medina and his partners have pledged is extraordinary, particularly in this economic climate," said business owner John Sangmeis-

ter. "I really hope Long Beach embraces this project. Pine Avenue needs a great shot in the arm and this is a great opportunity."

The venue is expected to open in early 2010.

karen.robmes@presstelegram.com,
562-499-1303