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2ND+PCH LINING UP SUPPORT FOR TONIGHT'S SCOPING MEETING

[Dave Wielenga](#) Wed. October 07

MEANWHILE, DELONG OPTING OUT OF OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR CONSTITUENTS' VIEWS

The first official scoping meeting—basically, a survey of public opinion—for the proposed 2nd+PCH development will be held by Long Beach city staff this evening, and [lobbyist Carl Kemp](#) has been working his e-tail off to ensure a strong show of support for the massive mixed-use project that could turn [one of the city's most-congested intersections](#) into a parking lot.

Kemp has been sending out e-blasts to a group called “Friends of Second+PCH” reminding them of tonight’s meeting ([Rogers Middle School, 365 Monrovia Ave., 6:30 p.m.](#)). “You can make any supportive comment you would like,” he writes, “and every supportive comment will be recorded.”

Meanwhile, Councilmember Gary DeLong, who in 2007 convened a secret panel to try to rewrite the zoning laws to permit a previous incarnation of the project, apparently won’t attend tonight’s forum. Too public?

“I’d prefer to let the process work,” DeLong tells the *Grunion Gazette*. “I have a role to play, but so do other people.”

It’s a strange position for an elected representative to take—saying on the record that it is not his role to listen to the opinions of his constituents in an official public process designed to gauge their feelings on an issue. How exactly can DeLong—councilmember for the 3rd district, where the project is located—opt out and still be doing his job?

A scoping session is that democratic “outreach” that public officials love to talk about so reverently. And it is one of the few opportunities—there is only one more scheduled, on Oct. 21—for the public to address the Second+PCH project, as opposed to the unlimited and unreported access granted to developers and lobbyists. Thereafter, the plan will be fed into the well-greased machinery of approval, where residents will get three minutes at this commission meeting or that council meeting to flap their gums about an essentially done deal. Of course, they will be periodically reminded, about all the “outreach” that was part of the process.

The Second+PCH project proposes to transform the site of the Seaport Marina Hotel into a complex that would include condominiums, shops, offices and a hotel.

But there are two problems: 1) the design of the development violates all kinds of zoning laws that define limits on the height and density; 2) all that height and density would likely increase automobile traffic in an area that is already oversaturated.

The developer’s solution? Ignore the zoning laws—that is, coax a “development agreement” out of city officials. Such development agreements permit exceptions to the rules if developers can demonstrate that their projects have positives that outweigh the negatives.

The Second+PCH people have been banking on a development agreement from the get-go. David Malmuth, who is heading the project for the firm of Roger Charles Lesser & Co. (RCLCO), acknowledged that in the summer of 2008 during a meeting with the Los Cerritos Wetlands Trust.

“We are aware if our project goes ahead it will probably have to go ahead under a development agreement,” Malmuth said then. “We anticipate going forward with a development agreement with the city in exchange for other benefits to the city from the developer.”

Nobody has specified the nature of those benefits yet.

Since 1977, development in the area has been guided by SEADIP (Southeast Area Development Improvement Plan), which was adopted by the city to maintain a certain quality of life and protect the waterfront environment from the impacts of crowds, noise, traffic and pollution. For example, SEADIP currently does not permit residential units on the property and does not allow buildings higher than 35 feet. However, the Second+PCH project includes 325 residential units and buildings tall as 12 stories.

Revisions of SEADIP —the ones that DeLong tried to ram through with his secret panel were disallowed—are in the early stages of considerations, but the proponents of Second+PCH say they don't want to wait.

“More details to follow,” writes Kemp, the lobbyist, in his mass e-mail to the Friends of Second+PCH, “but for now, please mark your calendar and plan to make your supportive voices heard!”

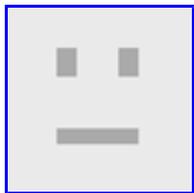
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