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Doubletree Resort's future to be discussed

By By: ANDREA MOSS - Staff Writer midnightOct. 11, 2005

RANCHO PENASQUITOS — Starting this week, the Doubletree Hotel and Golf Resort's neighbors will get a chance to weigh in on the future of the 127-acre property.

Cornerstone Real Estate Advisors is considering several options for the resort, which has been a fixture on the west side of Interstate 15 north of Carmel Mountain Road for more than 25 years. Possibilities for the hotel's future include everything from renovating the resort to replacing it with a new development that could include both housing and stores.

Before it makes a decision, Connecticut-based Cornerstone wants to know what those who live near the property want to see there. The company therefore teamed up with San Diego-based Windstar Communities to determine whether the hotel is meeting the community's current needs.

Windstar will hold a series of workshops with the resort's neighbors over the next few weeks. People who live north of the hotel and south of Camino Del Norte are invited to the first session, to be held from 6 to 8 p.m. today in the Riveria Room at the hotel, at 14455 Penasquitos Drive.

Residents in other areas near the resort have been invited to Oct. 19 and Nov. 9 meetings.

Whatever happens with the hotel, Windstar is likely to be involved, company President Darrell Gary said Monday.

"Our name would be on it, which is why I'm extremely sensitive about how their entire (decision) process is rolled out," said Gary, a former member of the Scripps Ranch Community Planning Board, which advises the city on land use and development in that area. "If we're going to be involved, it's going to be properly conducted or I'm not going to be involved in it."

The Doubletree Resort has dominated the northwest corner of Carmel Mountain Ranch and Penasquitos Drive since the 174-room hotel was built in the late 1970s. The property includes an 18-hole golf course laid out over rolling hills that overlook the freeway.

At one point, the hotel's stucco buildings were painted a distinctive pink that made the resort hard for passersby to miss. The color eventually was changed to white.

The Doubletree was renovated and redecorated in 1999.

These days, said Gary and Windstar consultant Diane Gaynor, the resort is popular with business people, tourists and nearby residents who book rooms for their out-of-town relatives or dine in the hotel's restaurants. The golf course draws fewer people, though, prompting the property's owners to question whether it is meeting the community's needs, Gary said.

Focus groups held over the summer that the hotel's replacement with a community recreation center is a popular idea, Gaynor said. Whatever lies ahead for the resort, finding a project that has community support is important to the companies involved, she and Gary said.

"We've opened the door wide open (to the community)," Gaynor said. "I know that may be a different way to do it. But at the end of the day, what goes on that property should be something that residents want, endorse and desire."

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The owners of the Doubletree Golf Resort in Rancho Penasquitos will hold a series of neighborhood meetings to determine what to do with the business, which opened in the late 1970s.

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