

Workshops will outline plans in PQ

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Residents living near Penasquitos Drive won't have to play the guessing game concerning two proposed developments much longer.

Community workshops will be held in coming months to test local reactions to the developments, located at near the corner of Carmel Mountain Road and Penasquitos Drive.

At a Planning Board meeting Sept. 7, residents listened to presentations by representatives from the Doubletree Golf Resort and Atlantic & Pacific, both of whom hope to build developments on their existing properties.

The proposals have drawn opposition from residents concerned about overcrowding in local schools and traffic. Penasquitos Drive is currently the only path in and out of the neighborhood surrounding Rolling Hills Elementary.

Atlantic & Pacific's plan has been especially controversial, as it would also require changes to the community plan to allow more units per acre than what currently is accepted.

The concept involves replacing Leisure Life Village, 248 low-to-moderate income housing units behind Penasquitos Lutheran Church, with a 672-unit development called Cresta Bella.

Ken Lounsbery, the company's attorney, described the Leisure Life units as being in need of renovation, having been built in the mid-to-late 1960s.

"I mean they're literally Campbell cans," Lounsbery said referring to the development's metal roofs.

All of Cresta Bella's units would be apartments for rent, and would include 180 units of low-income housing. The sizes of those units would be bigger than they are now, ranging from 750 square feet to 1,347 square feet. They would be organized into a series of "big houses," which would look like stand-alone homes, but actually be three separate apartments.

The remaining 492 units would be moderately priced, and 24,000 square feet of the current property would be rezoned as commercial/retail space for small shops. According to Felix Tinkov, who also represents Atlantic & Pacific, artist renderings of the development will be posted on a Web site next month. Doubletree's plans are tentative, but the company has made similar efforts to reach out to residents.

Ken Ryan of EDAW, the urban design firm hired to explore the development's alternatives, will hold three workshops to determine what type of developments the community desires.

Ryan said in focus groups this summer, suggestions like restaurants or public gathering places seemed to appeal to residents.

According to Joost Bende, chairman of the planning board, both developments hold the potential to improve the community.

He said Doubletree's openness suggests a "win-win" situation, and that the renovation of Leisure Life Apartments should be considered.

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