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Board considers plans for hotel site

Houses, new hotel and shops proposed

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June 7, 2007

RANCHO PENASQUITOS – The owner of the Doubletree Hotel and Golf Resort, a focal point of Rancho Peñasquitos activities, presented the resort's latest redevelopment plan for the 127-acre property. It includes homes, a hotel, retail space and a community center.

About 250 residents turned out for the presentation by Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers of Hartford, Conn., to the community's planning board in a Doubletree meeting room. The planning board advises the San Diego City Council.

The board and the city's Planning Commission would have to vote on a final proposal. No vote was scheduled at last night's informational meeting.

The Doubletree sits west of Interstate 15 and north of Carmel Mountain Road.

The redevelopment proposal includes 200 houses, a 150-room hotel, a retail center with restaurants and a community center with a swimming pool and tennis courts. The hotel would be reached by a new access road off Carmel Mountain Road. The project's perimeter would have a buffer of trees and landscaping.

“Is this worth moving forward . . . or do we just sell it to a land speculator?” said Ken Ryan, an architect with KTG Group who developed the proposal and presented it last night.

Many residents are worried about traffic and open space and how the project would affect their quality of life.

In addition to having a golf course, the resort is a popular spot for community meetings, parties and fundraisers.

Mark Higgins, Cornerstone's western regional director, said the Doubletree site has reached its maximum economic value. He said the 174-room hotel runs at about a 70 percent occupancy rate, but the golf course is small and obsolete.

Cornerstone bought the property in 1999 and put \$8 million into improving the hotel, Higgins said.

In 2005, the owner discussed with community members redevelopment possibilities that could include housing and retail shops.

Residents have complained that new homes could strain services and aggravate traffic congestion.

“The traffic is the most outlandish thing,” said Daryl Stock, who walked from his home to the meeting.

Joost Bende, vice chairman of the planning board, said, “To me, it becomes personally a balancing act” in keeping with the community plan. He said the proposal has 50 acres of open space, but the board will have to weigh how the project fits with the community plan.