

Residents Charge Urban Renewal 'Squeeze'

By JERRY REYNOLDS
Press-Herald Staff Writer

Are property owners in the city's urban renewal area being squeezed?

What are the reasons for a seven-month delay in the preparation of plans for the project?

Those are but two of the questions now being raised about the Meadow Park Redevelopment Project, an urban renewal project which includes some 50 acres at the west end of the Torrance Municipal Airport.

The city hopes to submit its plans to the federal government about July 1, some seven months later than first announced. Some property owners openly doubt that the July 1 deadline will be met.

In the meantime, a ban on construction or home improvements in the area remains in force, prohibiting homeowners from making

any improvement which, according to City Manager Edward J. Ferraro, would "substantially improve the value of the property."

The ban, first enacted in December, 1954, because of drainage problems in the area, has been in force continuously for nearly 12 years. The latest ban, enacted May 3, places a moratorium on "the erection, construction, enlargement, alteration, repair, moving, improvement, conversion, removal or demolition of any building or structure" in the area.

Much of the area is overgrown with weeds and has become a tinder box dotted with vacant, boarded up homes. Homeowners and residents in the area have steadfastly maintained that police problems have increased—an allegation denied by city officials.

The city currently owns

about 50 per cent of the land in the urban renewal area. Purchased at a cost of nearly \$250,000, the city-owned properties will be sold to the Redevelopment Agency once the federal government approves plans for the area and appropriates the funds. The remaining property will be purchased at that time.

The moratorium on improvements has been a major source of dissatisfaction among property owners. They claim that it is "creating a slum instead of clearing one." Sales of property in the area are impossible, they claim, because banks and other lending institutions will not make loan commitments as long as the moratorium remains in force.

Ferraro, who serves as executive director of the Redevelopment Agency, believes the difficulty of getting loans in the area is "just coinci-

dence with the (real estate) market." Lawrence Irwin, deputy director of the agency disagrees. Irwin agrees that loan institutions in practice are reluctant to make commitments in the area.

And the escrow officer at a leading Torrance bank supports Irwin's belief. The moratorium, the bank officer told the Press-Herald, "is definitely detrimental to borrowing."

Much of the property now owned by the city was acquired before the urban renewal project was initiated. At that time, the city was buying property adjacent to the airport to create a "clear zone" around the airport. Eight parcels have been acquired under hardship terms of the early acquisition program — one of those through a foreclosure sale.

Foreclosures are another fear of property owners in the area. Ownership of land

in the area is, admittedly, about 80 per cent absentee.

The general appearance makes it difficult to find "good tenants," explains one owner. Continued delays, he said, will mean increasing foreclosures, thus permitting the city to acquire property quickly and cheaply.

Irwin blames the seven-month delay on three factors. First, he said, it was necessary to establish permanent street patterns in the area—resulting in public hearings before the planning commission. Second, a proposal to build a golf course in the area required extensive and prolonged study. Third, a policy decision to permit the Airport Commission, the Planning Commission, and a Citizen's Advisory Committee for Community Improvement to review the tentative plans for the project required additional time.

Others claim the delay was "built into the plan." One member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee described the original timetable as "optimistic," and Irwin notes that the normal time for the initial phase of most urban renewal projects is 18 months.

Yet, city officials told property owners in the area they could complete the initial phase in three to six months.

There are other problems connected with the project. Councilmen, wishing to maintain close supervision and control of the project in its early phases, appointed themselves to the agency's board of directors (at a salary of \$60 each monthly). Few, if any, of the councilmen know the status of the project and all but two failed to show up for a briefing session early last month.

One councilman, in fact, admitted he was completely

surprised when Ferraro announced that the project application had been delayed until July 1.

Amid this confusion, the Redevelopment Agency is paying expenses of about \$5,000 each month — mostly in salaries to four permanent employees — and has spent nearly \$122,000 in federal funds. Another \$250,000 in city funds has been expended in acquiring property in the area.

One property owner told the Press-Herald he has filed a law suit against the city for \$100,000 as a result of the project. Other law suits also have been filed, he reported.

"I don't care what they do," the same property owner said, "as long as they do something. I would hate to see them back out after they've done this much damage, they should go ahead instead of stalling. I say the whole thing is a stall."

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29 Youths Arrested By Police at Party

New Home Building In Slump

Building permits worth slightly more than \$12 million were issued in Torrance during May, according to a report just released by the city's Building and Safety Department.

The May figure raised to \$11.8 million the value of new construction begun here since the first of the year.

Commercial construction accounted for about a fourth of the May totals, while home construction fell. Eight new single-family homes valued at \$217,565, and a single four-unit apartment building, valued at \$50,000, were included in the May report.

More than 100 new homes and 96 new apartment units were reported in the first four months of the year.

Among permits issued in May was one valued at \$150,000 for foundation work at the new Del Amo Financial Center.

The Columbia Broadcasting Co. picked up a permit, valued at \$40,000, for the construction of a transmitting tower at 4301 W. 190th St. The original tower, a landmark in Torrance for a quarter of a century, was tumbled by unknown persons late last year.

Douglas Occupies Former Doak Plant

Expansion of the Douglas Aircraft Co. facilities in Torrance for production of components for DC-8 and DC-9 jetliners was announced here Monday.

The firm has leased a 62,000-square-foot facility formerly occupied by the Doak Aircraft Co. The plant is located at 22309 S. Western Ave.

Between 200 and 300 employees have been assigned to



HOME AGAIN . . . Press-Herald newsman Jerry Reynolds enters the Royal Viking Lounge at Los Angeles International Airport after a flight Sunday aboard an SAS jetliner from Copenhagen. He was brought to the lounge by SAS representative Gunar Nilsson (rear) to be met by members of his family, friends, and city civic leaders. Reynolds had just completed a 30-day tour of European capitals which took him to many of Europe's major cities including Berlin. One of the high points of Reynolds' trip, he reported, was a visit to East Berlin.

(Press-Herald Photo)

Four Juveniles Among Suspects In Party Raid

Twenty-nine persons, four of them under 18, were arrested by police here over the weekend after officers raided what they called a "pre-graduation marijuana party" at the apartment of an 18-year-old man.

The raids came after a plain-clothed officer had visited the party and heard conversations which led him to suspect that marijuana was present.

A raiding party of several officers moved in on the apartment of William Robert Everett at 20704 Osage St. and arrested the crowd of young people whose ages ran from 18 to 20.

Several partially burned cigarettes which may have contained marijuana as well as other bits and pieces of material were confiscated by officers at the scene.

Everett was booked on suspicion of possession of marijuana and of maintaining a place for the use of marijuana.

Booked on suspicion of being in the presence of marijuana were:

Patrick Maher, 19, of 1414 Cravens Ave., apartment 103; Bryan Olsen, 18, of 604 Fay-smith Ave.; Sylma Sagahon, 18, Rolling Hills Estates; Randall Wark, 18, of 1122 Teri Ave.; Joseph Vislmepte Jr., 19, of 23327 Cabrillo Ave.

Daniel Kling, 18, of 2836 Martha St.; Raymond Cushman, 18, of Manhattan Beach; Gene Hooser, 18, of Huntington Beach; Ken Ishioashi, 18, of 2277 237th St.; James Kroptavich, 18, of 20520 Avis Ave.

John McClure, 18, of 3725 Emerald St.; Grant Matthews, (Continued on Page Two)

Rotarians Visit Denver For Annual Convention

A large delegation of Torrance Rotary Club members is in Denver this week to attend the 1966 convention of Rotary International which will be concluded Thursday.

Heading the delegation from the Torrance club were President-elect and Mrs. Larry Bowman and President Don H. Hyde.

Other club representatives included Dan E. Butcher, Leonard Ensminger, Dr. Robert

Fleming, Donald L. Meyer, Walker Owens, Robert Rojo, William E. Shawger, Chris Sorenson, John Tweedy, Robert Vroman, and Dr. and Mrs. Jack Warkentin.

Representing the Riviera Village Rotary Club were President-elect and Mrs. Morry Moore.

More than 16,000 Rotarians and members of their families from more than 100 countries in all parts of the world

are attending the convention. Bowman reported to the Press-Herald.

Featured speakers during the convention include Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Astronaut Gordon Cooper.

Wins Trustee Honor at SC

Lawrence S. Day of 2070 W. 250th St., Lomita, a straight-A senior student in Narbonne High School, has been designated one of only 500 Trustee Scholars among 5,000 freshmen who will enter the University of Southern California in September.

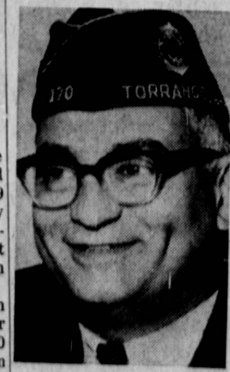
The son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence C. Day has been admitted to USC's College of

Letters, Arts and Sciences as a pre-dentistry student.

The Lomitan, whose interests range from laboratory work and applied science to playing the piano, has been a member of the Boy Scouts and has attended California Boys State.

He has been a member of the California Scholarship (Continued on Page Two)

Dean Cole Heads Torrance Legion



DEAN COLE To Lead Legion

Dean Cole, a Torrance resident since 1963, will be installed as commander of the Bert S. Crossland Post of the American Legion in ceremonies at the Legion Hall, 1109 Van Ness Ave., on Saturday.

Cole heads a slate of officers which include Leonard G. Wiley, first vice commander; Victor R. Brooks, second vice commander; Edward A. Vincent, finance officer; Douglas B. Price, chaplain; Melford Gage, service officer; Robert E. Garry, historian; and Herbert F. Robinson, sergeant at arms.

Louis H. Deininger has been appointed adjutant and (Continued on Page Two)

Haslam Re-elected Mayor

Joe A. Haslam, Lomita's first mayor, was elected to his second term by fellow Council members Monday evening to succeed Clyde S. Bernhardt. Haslam's election came after Mead Gardiner declined the nomination. Bernhardt later was named mayor pro-tem. Other members of the Lomita City Council are Ray Ferrin and Jim Cole.

Vehicle Hits Wall

Eighteen-year-old Dennis Lehman, 21029 Ladeene Ave., received leg injuries, a cut hand, and contusions when his auto struck a cement wall at a construction site in the 3800 block of Spencer Street Monday evening. He was admitted to Kaiser Memorial Hospital in Harbor City for treatment.

Election Errors Listed

Approximately 9,000 votes that went astray during tabulation of ballots in the 32nd Senate District last week have been returned to their proper place—but it didn't change the outcome of the voting, according to the county registrar of voters. A recheck of tabulations showed that Municipal Court Judge Ralph C. Dills was the nominee. The recheck also showed that candidate Stanley Brummel had more than 5,200 additional votes due him, and that Lionel Cade had another 4,000 due him. Brummel's votes had been credited to Joseph Bruno and the Cade vote had been credited to Victor DiBiasi, it was explained.