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MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2007

Volume 6 Issue 232



TASTY DESTINATION
SEE PAGE 3

Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE PICTURE IMPERFECT ISSUE

Two critically injured in shooting

Pico neighborhood incident takes place outside liquor store

BY KEVIN HERRERA | Daily Press Staff Writer

PICO NEIGHBORHOOD Two men were shot early Sunday morning as they stood outside a liquor store at the corner of 20th Street and Pico Boulevard, police said.

Santa Monica Police officers received a report about shots fired around 12:10 a.m. A few minutes later, officers received a call from St. John's Hospital that two gunshot victims had been brought into the emergency room.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the two victims were in the parking lot of Eddie's Liquor when an unknown suspect or suspects fired several gunshots at the victims, striking them both.

No suspect description was available Sunday afternoon, said SMPD Lt. Alex Padilla.

The victims were described as two black males in their early to mid 30's.

The investigation is ongoing and anyone with information regarding the incident is encouraged to contact the SMPD Robbery/Homicide Division at (310) 458-8451.

kevinh@smdp.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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ENVIRONMENT

BOTTLED WATER BACKLASH

City lawmakers considering a ban on packaged water for employees

STORY BY KEVIN HERRERA PAGE 11



File Photo

Development goes full speed ahead – for now

Residents' concerns may lead to changes to the General Plan

BY KEVIN HERRERA | Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE Applications are pending for more than 2,000 housing units, a result of developers looking for approval before changes to development standards went into effect in January of this year, city planners said in a report to the City Council.

The majority of units, 978, are single room studios between 150 square feet and 375 square feet, followed by 654 condominiums, 207 artist live/work studios and 180 apartment units.

As a result of the proposed residential development, 230 existing units would be demolished, including 102 mobile homes at the Village Trailer Park, city planners said.

The report comes as residents pressure elected officials to pass a moratorium on development until an update to the city's Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) is updated, something which is still years away. City planners have engaged the community at several meetings over the last year in an effort to get suggestions on how land should be used for the next 20 years or more.

The next LUCE workshop is tentatively schedule for October, said Amanda Schachter, planning manager for City Hall.

City planners are working on an interim ordinance for the Aug. 28 council meeting that would freeze development in the manufacturing/industrial area of the city, which is under extreme pressure from developers looking to build artist live/work studios. Three projects are proposed for the industrial areas of the city, including a 91-unit project at 1610 Colorado Ave., a 66-unit project at 1639 11th St. and a 48-unit project at 2834 Colorado Ave.,

SEE DEVELOPMENT PAGE 12



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The face behind booming tourism

FROM CP PAGE 3

hospitality industry, starting in 1981 when fresh out of high school, the Akron, Ohio native moved to Palm Springs with husband Chris and began working as a hotel restaurant hostess. Kerns slowly worked her way up the ladder and through different Palm Springs hotels, positions that included sales and marketing for food and beverages.

After more than seven years in the desert, Kerns was recruited to help launch the opening of Donald Trump's Taj Mahal hotel in Atlantic City. About nine months later, she was in Santa Monica.

Kerns spent the next seven years with the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, one of her successes being that she had a hand in bringing the annual American Film Market conference to Santa Monica. In 1997, the director of sales and marketing position opened at the Convention & Visitors Bureau, which at the time was under the leadership of President Beverly Moore, who now runs the bureau for Marina de Rey.

Part of the reason why Kerns left the hotel industry is because she wanted a job that would allow her to spend more time with her growing family, after giving birth to daughter Kalei in 1994.

"It's still hospitality on a grander scale," said Kerns. "I had been in the community during a time when Santa Monica tourism was starting to grow more and I saw the potential, there was a lot of potential for this community as a (travel) destination."

A few years later, Kerns became the second president in the bureau's history.

As the head of the visitors bureau, Kerns sees her job as the manager of Santa Monica, the tourist destination.

Santa Monica's tourism has slowly grown since 1983 — the year after the visitors bureau was founded — from 2.87 million to approximately 4.9 million in 2004. While growth has been modest, spending by these tourists has dramatically increased during the same time period, from \$207 million in 1983 to \$840.5 million in 2004, Kerns said.

"Our job is very focused on sustaining tourism," Kerns said. "We're not always looking at growing the number of people coming here; we're looking to grow the length of stay and money spent here."

There are several factors that have hurt tourism in Santa Monica, most notably the Sept. 11 attacks and the homeless issue.

Tourism did drop off immediately following Sept. 11 and what was the number one market at the time for Santa Monica — Japanese tourists — is no longer the case. That group has since been replaced by travelers from the United Kingdom.

"Prior to 9/11, Japan was our number one market," Kerns said. "On Sept. 12, it wasn't any longer and it still hasn't gotten up in the top five."

The homeless issue has affected tourism, but Kerns believes the situation has improved over the years.

Whether the homeless will affect a person's vacation will



Melody Hanatani melodyh@smdp.com

BOSS LADY: Misti Kerns stands in front of the Santa Monica Convention & Visitors Bureau on Main Street on Friday.

depend on their mindset, whether they come from an area where the homeless population is prevalent, Kerns said.

"This community is a community that cares and feels a sense of responsibility," she said. "At the same time, it's wearing. It's difficult to look at the situation that is a regional situation that we have at some level been labeled with."

Tourism in Santa Monica has allowed an expansion in services to residents that other communities without a

consistent tourism revenue stream aren't able to offer, helping to keep everything from the school district to city maintenance running strong, Kerns said.

"Santa Monica as a community has grown with its tourism and the awareness as a premier tourist destination," she said. "We're the healthiest now that we've ever been in history in attracting tourism."

melodyh@smdp.com

Developers hurry to gain approval for projects

FROM DEVELOPMENT PAGE 1

according to city planners. A single room occupancy project, or SRO, is proposed with 623 units at 3025 Olympic Blvd., and a 5,760 classroom addition to the New Visions Foundation campus at 3131 Olympic Blvd. has just received planning entitlements and awaits plan check.

Two "modest" media production/post production facilities have been proposed for a total of 10,500 square feet, and the owners of the Village Trailer Park have plans to remove 102 trailers and replace them with a mixed-use project consisting of 102 affordable, rent controlled SROs and 247 1 to 2 bedroom condos. Also proposed is 48,000 square feet of studio and retail commercial floor area over one level of subterranean parking.

Residents are concerned that projects such as that will overwhelm the city's aging infrastructure and would increase traffic congestion as well as change the dynamic

of certain neighborhoods. The Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City (SMCLC) has partnered with all of the major neighborhood groups in the city to call for a city-wide moratorium on developments so that city planners have the time to concentrate on the LUCE process instead of processing development applications.

"Development is steamrolling along in Santa Monica in an interim period between the old General Plan and the new one and this development, we don't believe, would be approved under the new General Plan being developed by residents," Diana Gordon, a spokesperson for SMCLC.

"The issue is how do we halt development until a new plan is adopted in 2009," Gordon added. "Residents and the coalition believe that without their insistence at meetings with the city and before the Planning Commission, that the interim ordinance the council plans to adopt for industrial lands would never have been discussed."

City planners are extremely busy processing applica-

tions for new development, Schachter said, but they aren't overwhelmed as of yet.

"A lot of projects have come through, but we have a very talented staff and we are working hard," Schachter said.

The report on development will be updated every quarter because of the heightened interest in the issue, Schachter said.

"It's a combination of forces," Schachter said of the Planning Department's decision to issue quarterly reports. "It's the amount of development that has been proposed, the interest in the LUCE process and the interest by residents to get a better understanding of what is going on. This will help everyone make better decisions on not just development projects as they come through, but with the growing vision of what we want Santa Monica to look like in the future."

kevinh@smdp.com