

Developer Interested In Bringing Eatery To Ninth District

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By Leslie A.M. Smith
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At a North PAC meeting last Thursday, Oct. 28, North Long Beach residents were receptive to a developer who is interested in bringing a restaurant to the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Artesia Boulevard, according to North Long Beach Development Officer Tony Foster.

“Primestor presented on Thursday and the residents were very positive that we should continue conversations and eventually enter into an exclusive negotiation,” Foster said. “The original RFP was opened in 2007 and Primestor was on a short list at that time. We did go with another developer but that exclusive agreement ended in August of 2009 after they were not able to secure a tenant for that site. Primestor was still interested in the site when we saw them in September at an ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) convention in San Diego.”

Foster clarified that redevelopment law does not call for a request for proposals (RFP) to be opened for every site, or again when a chosen developer does not perform.

“Primestor shared that they have relationships with family restaurants. It’s no secret that the residents have been asking for a Chili’s or an Applebee’s,” Foster said. “The presentation included a ‘who’s who’ of tenants that they have secured in similar communities.”

Primestor has completed projects in Bell Gardens, Carson, Huntington Park, Downey and others. The company’s website includes the statement: “Driven by a passion to revitalize urban areas, Primestor was founded to build community centers in areas overlooked by other retail developers.”

“After the conference, Primestor has had meetings with various people including Amy Bodek,” Foster said. Bodek is the director of Long Beach’s Developmental Services Department, which includes the Redevelopment Agency.

Ninth District City Councilman Steve Neal published in his weekly e-newsletter that Primestor “has an abundance of experience with development in urban communities and will be working with Ninth District residents to identify a sit-down restaurant and other community benefits for this site. In the months to come, we are planning numerous opportunities to gather community input on this very important project.”

“It’s really up to the RDA to take the next steps. Then we can give input,” said Rex Richardson, Neal’s chief of staff. “We (Neal’s office) submitted some general questions and concerns to the RDA regarding the developer — concerns that we would have of any developer. The Ninth District residents really want a sit-down, family restaurant that is a national name.”

Foster said residents have also requested other tenants be invited to the area such as Jamba Juice and GameStop.

Primestor representatives were unavailable for comment.

“We’ll keep running until we find something,” Foster said.