



Hilda Solis ✓

September 9 at 4:26 PM · 🌐



My statement on Paradise Hill in Lincoln Heights:

"As the author of Measure A, the parks and open space measure, I wholeheartedly share the community's interest in the Paradise Hill property, a 30 acre privately held property, as an opportunity for public open space. I understand the public health benefits of open space, especially in our most dense and impacted communities.

The property is located within Councilmember Cedillo's district in the City of Los Angeles. My office has confirmed that the property underwent an auction process that is not a County tax default auction; it is in a private foreclosure auction proceeding. The owner is in default for approximately \$8 million and had filed for bankruptcy. In fact, the foreclosure auction scheduled for today is likely to be postponed to the end of September with a possibility of a further stay.

I am committed to working with the nearby residents as well as the City of Los Angeles, our partners at the State and federal level and land conservation authorities to collaborate and jointly identify potential funding sources. With these stakeholders at the table, I am hopeful that we can find solutions to preserve the land. I stand with the Northeast community, share their interests, and will explore all viable options at the County to assist in preserving Paradise Hill as an open space."



GILBERT A. CEDILLO

COUNCILMEMBER
FIRST DISTRICT

September 9, 2021

Dear Council District 1 Resident:

First and foremost, I want to thank you for your fierce advocacy on behalf of your community by voicing your concerns in regards to the pending foreclosure auction sale of the 30-acres of land, known as Paradise Hill in Council District 1.

I am pleased to inform you that with your help and our offices' swift contact with the company holding the auction, Supervisor Solis's office, the County's Treasurer and Tax Collector's office and all other respective entities involved, it seems as if this sale will not commence and we are awaiting to confirm further details to share with you all soon.

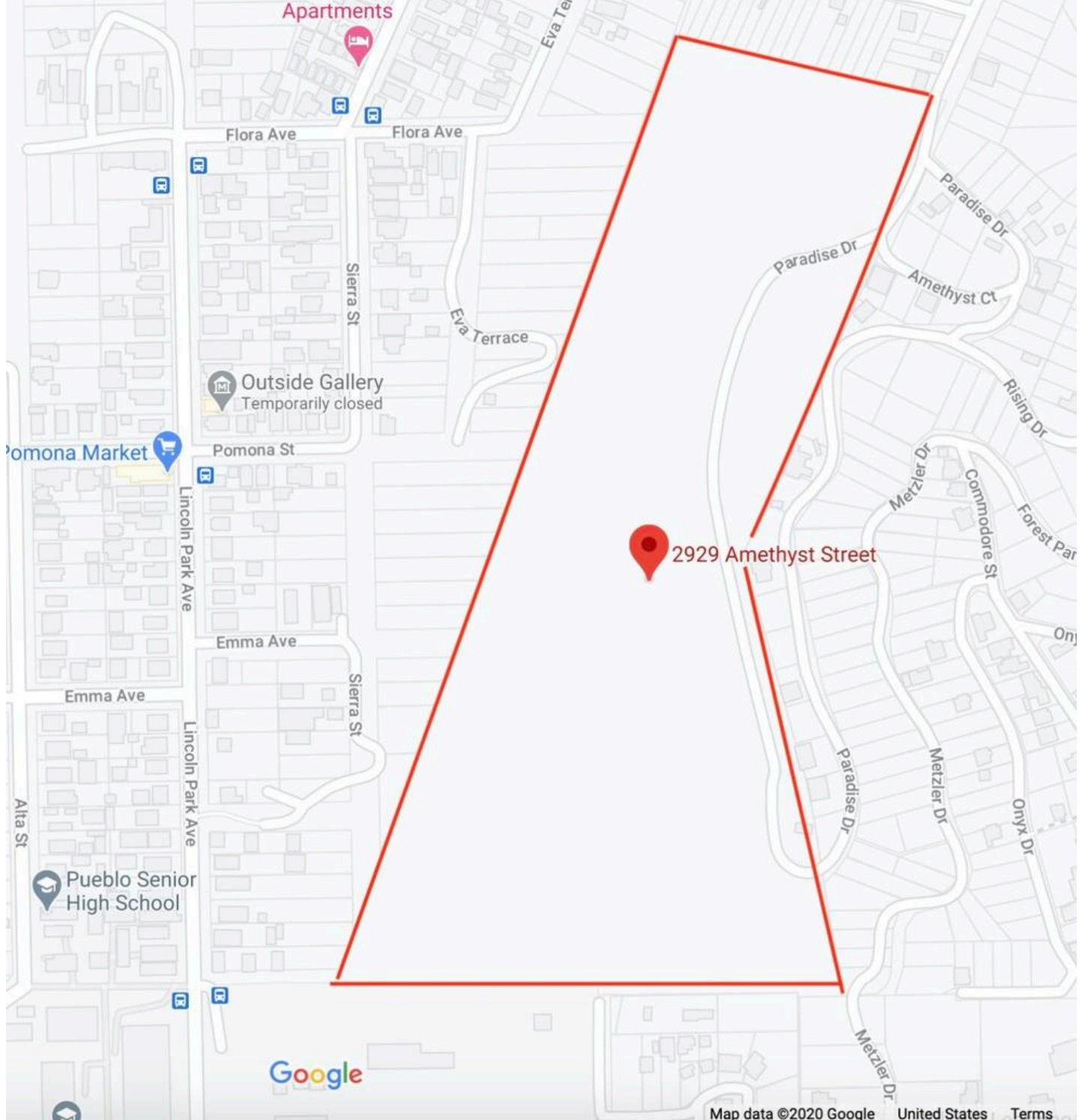
At this time, we have learned that the current owner has filed for bankruptcy, and my office will continue to closely monitor bankruptcy proceedings. It is most likely that the auction sale scheduled for this morning will be postponed to allow the bankruptcy court to hold a hearing at a later date.

Our office shares the vision of preserving Paradise Hill as open space, should there be an opportunity to secure site control with resources for acquisition and ongoing preservation. We will investigate further and explore strategies.

To keep informed of Paradise Hill or should you have any further questions or concerns related to this matter, please feel free to contact our office at (213) 473-7001 or Gilbert.Cedillo@lacity.org. Thank you again and wishing you good health and safety during these times.

Sincerely,

Gilbert A. Cedillo
Councilmember, First District



Outline of the proposed Sal Castro Park.

Google Maps

Lincoln Heights – Just north of the Lincoln High School athletic field, about 30 acres dotted with walnut trees remain undeveloped on Paradise Hill. This open space has all the makings of a park, say some residents.

A group called Northeast Los Angeles Save Our Undeveloped Lands [has been trying to do just that](#). But time is running out.

The property along Paradise Drive is due to go up for sale at the end of this week, with the possible sale price estimated to be around \$9 million, according to research by Dylan Gasperik of NELA SOUL. A bid has apparently been submitted, Gasperik said.

"Lincoln Heights has some of the worst air quality in Los Angeles, and also the lowest park access for the density of population," said Roy Payan, in a series of talking points that he has distributed to NELA SOUL organizers. Payan - an activist who helped conserve the neighboring Flat Top hill - has been leading the effort, along with Sylvia Cruz, a municipal Judge and president of the LA32 Neighborhood Council.

The plan is to name the park after Sal Castro, a former teacher at Lincoln High School who became involved with student walkouts at Lincoln High and in East Los Angeles in 1968, over system inequities for Chicano students.

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The land, officially listed at 2929 Amethyst St., is currently zoned for light agriculture. The previous owners had said

they were planning to rezone it as dense residential and construct 250 luxury residential units, and build a wall around it, Payan said. This could not be confirmed with the owners.

But before any such plan could be moved forward, the owners went into default on the property to the tune of \$8 million. A foreclosure auction has been postponed several times, with the latest now scheduled for Friday, Sept. 3, Gasperik said.

In his latest statement, Payan is urging city and county officials to remove the property from the auction list and place it into protective open space status.

"Permitting this property to be acquired by a future developer will do nothing to attenuate the homeless crisis or housing shortage in Los Angeles," Payan stated, "because hillside housing is considered luxury housing that only spurs gentrification and displacement."



View of paradise hill from Thomas Street.

Google Maps

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Lincoln Heights Land Sale Gets Tentative OK

**Council Orders Ordinance
Drawn After Uproar Over
Zoning Change Charges**

BY ERWIN BAKER
Times Staff Writer

Controversial sale of 30 acres of public land in Lincoln Heights for \$75,000 was tentatively approved by the City Council Monday after it was intimated that a zoning change "commitment" had been made to enhance the property's value.

By an 11-1 vote, the council instructed the city attorney to draft an ordinance approving the sale to the lone bidder, developer Roland Arnall. Councilman Marvin Braude dissented.

The property, directly north of the Lincoln High School athletic field, was sold at public auction last Sept. 5. It is currently zoned R-1 (one-family dwelling).

Housing Project Planned

Councilman Arthur K. Snyder told the council that negotiations are under way between Arnall and the Prudential Insurance Co. for a \$6 million low-cost housing project in the area for approximately 500 units.

Anthony Rios, of the Community Service Organization, stirred an uproar when he declared that the insurance company wouldn't consider a loan "unless the zoning is changed."

Insurance firm representatives told him last Friday, Rios said, that "R-1 was worthless" and "they admitted that the loan was conditioned on a zone change."

Rios did not say what the change was, but after the council session he said it was R-2 (two-family dwelling).

Hits Low-Income Squeeze

Rios said he would "hate to see low-income people squeezed out of the area by high rents."

Councilman Robert M. Wilkinson demanded to know "who made the commitments on zoning?"

He was ruled out of order by the acting president, Councilman James B. Potter, Jr.

But Wilkinson demanded that Rios be placed under oath to answer the question. He failed to gain a second and the motion died.

"Then you don't want the truth," Wilkinson shouted at his colleagues.

Snyder, who came under fire at Finance Committee hearings on the issue for accepting a \$1,000 campaign contribution from Arnall, assured the council that he would "in no way support a zone change."

He declared he would oppose any building plan not conforming to the R-1 zoning.

Snyder noted that the Rosehill and Happy Valley communities—where the project is planned—is the lowest income area in the city, with 50% of the families earning less than \$3,000 a year.

Thinks Little of Scheme

"So anyone who comes in with a high-rent scheme would have to be touched in the head," he said.

Snyder asserted that no one was willing to invest "one nickel" in the property until Prudential became interested.

Snyder said the project would be carried out with private financing and no federal assistance.

Taking note of criticism that Arnall was the only bidder at the auction, Snyder emotionally defended the sale as "totally above board and legal, meeting every test of legitimacy and propriety."

Finance Committee Chairman Paul H. Lamport supported Snyder, stating that the committee found no evidence of impropriety in the bidding and sale of the property.

Councilman Gilbert W. Lindsay commended Snyder for "getting involved" in the project.

"Every time I see a good deal for

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**PARADISE HILL controversial
1968 sale of 30 acres City Land
for \$75k . Art Snyder pushed to
sell to Roland Arnall who wanted
to build 500 homes. They were
caught swinging a deal w/ Planning
to upzone it. Turns out arnall paid
snyder \$1k. When caught, snyder
tried to get city to cancel sale
and get land back. city said no.**

LINCOLN HEIGHTS

Continued from First Page
the 9th District I approve it. What's wrong with that?" he asked.

Braude said he saw nothing wrong with the transaction, but expressed concern over failure of the matter to be submitted to the Recreation and Park Commission and his Recreation and Parks Committee.

City Administrative Officer C. Irwin Piper testified, however, that department general manager William Frederickson Jr., was opposed to use of the property as a park primarily because of a deep ravine.

Bureau of Right-of-Way and Land Director A. M. Hill told the council the property was originally bought for \$2 as a tax deed

with the intention of turning it into a cut-and-fill dump site. But citizens groups protested and the plan was abandoned, he said.

Snyder Cleared by Council Unit in Sale of Land

Finance Group Reports Finding No Irregularities in Lincoln Heights Deal

BY ERWIN BAKER
Times Staff Writer

Councilman Arthur K. Snyder and the city Bureau of Right of Way and Land were cleared by a City Council committee Tuesday of any "irregularities" in the sale of Lincoln Heights property to a private developer.

The Finance Committee acted unanimously sending its conclusion to the full council, after three public hearings during which it was charged that:

1—The sale price of \$75,000 for 30 acres directly north of the Lincoln High School athletic field was too low.

2—The bidding procedure for the land was irregular.

3—Snyder and developer Roland Arnall, of 1551 N. La Brea Ave., worked in collusion to sell the property below market value.

One of the protestants, Alexander Mann, of 2337 Bancroft Ave., charged that the sale, if approved by the council, would result in a loss of \$2.75 million to the city.

Mann said he has asked the District Attorney's office for an investigation of the sale.

Campaign Contribution

He noted in a letter to the council that Arnall contributed \$1,000 to Snyder's 1967 council campaign, when he was elected to represent the 14th District in which the property is located.

Snyder acknowledged the contribution, but vigorously denied that it had any bearing on the transaction.

"I had — and have — nothing to hide," he said.

Snyder told the committee his primary purpose in supporting the transaction was to bring low-cost housing to the Rosehill and Happy Valley communities, which, he said, have the "highest percentage of dilapidated housing in Los Angeles."

The area, Snyder said, is one of "extremely low income and extremely high crime."

Arnall's plans, Snyder said, call for construction of multiple apartments with large recreation areas, a child care center and adult school facilities.

Snyder said he has been assured that a large insurance company would be willing to lend \$6 million for such a project, which would not involve federal financing.

Charges on Prices

Mann charged that the property, which was sold at public auction last Sept. 5, went for 5.5 cents per square foot, with Arnall the only bidder.

Adjoining property is valued at \$2.25 a square foot, he claimed.

Committee chairman Paul H. Lamport, however, said the committee was informed that four comparable plots of land have sold for 37 cents a square foot.

His statement was disputed by Anthony Rios, a member of the Community Service Organization, who contended that the other acreage was "not comparable" to the property in question.

Mann also asserted that the \$2,750 fee paid by the city to independent appraiser Robert D. Jackson was "high."

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SNYDER RULING

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A. M. Hill, director of the Bureau of Right of Way and Land, countered that he and his staff had checked the fee and that it was "reasonable."

Under questioning by Lamport and committee-man Robert M. Wilkinson and Thomas D. Shepard, Jackson said he had no previous knowledge of the property before he was employed to appraise it.

And Asst. City Administrative Officer Robert E. O'Brien and Asst. City Atty. Peyton Moore Jr. testified they believed the city followed proper procedures in selling the acreage.

Charges that other prospective bidders were denied adequate notice were disputed by Hill.

He noted that the notices were mailed out Aug. 1 and the bidding took place Sept. 5.

Fifteen persons appeared at the auction but there was only one bid.

Snyder charged that "real opposition" to the sale was coming from three sources:

1—"Slumlords" — those who own substandard

homes in the area and rent at "prohibitive" costs.

2—Those with a "Marxist bent" who are attempting to promote revolution by blocking the program."

3—Those who have a "monetary interest" in blocking the sale.

The property was originally purchased by the city for \$2 on a tax deed as a prospective dump site.

Strong protests from neighborhood residents, however, caused abandonment of the refuse project, Hill said.

Subsequently, he said, the site was offered to Recreation and Parks twice, but the offer was turned down.

Mann, however, asserted that Recreation and Parks at one time had an interest in converting the area into a park.

He said that it is the only large area left in the city for a park and would become particularly valuable in the event Hazard Park in East Los Angeles was lost to the federal government for a Veterans Administration hospital.

The Hazard Park controversy is currently in the courts.

L.A. OKs Land Sale After Zoning Uproar

BY ERWIN BAKER

Times Staff Writer

Sale of a controversial 30 acres of public land in Lincoln Heights for \$75,000 was tentatively approved by the Los Angeles City Council Monday after it was intimated that a zoning change "commitment" had been made to enhance the property's value.

By an 11-1 vote, the council instructed the city attorney to draft an ordinance approving the sale to the lone bidder, developer Roland Arnall. Councilman Marvin Braude dissented.

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Housing Project

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Anthony Rios, of the Community Service Organization, stirred an uproar when he declared that the insurance company wouldn't consider a loan "unless the zoning is changed."

Insurance firm representatives told him last Friday, Rios said, that "R-1 was worthless" and "they admitted that the loan was conditioned on a zone change."

Rios did not say what the change was, but after the council session he said it was R-2 (two-family dwelling).

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Councilman Robert M.

Wilkinson demanded to know "who made the commitments on zoning?"

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But Wilkinson demanded that Rios be placed under oath to answer the question. He failed to gain a second and the motion died.

"Then you don't want the truth," Wilkinson shouted at his colleagues.

Snyder, who came under fire at Finance Committee hearings on the issue for accepting a \$1,000 campaign contribution from Arnall, assured the council that he would "in no way support a zone change."

Council Approves Sale of Lincoln Heights Land

The controversial sale of 30 acres of public property in the Lincoln Heights area to a private developer for \$75,000 gained final City Council approval Friday.

A series of council hearings produced charges that the auction-sales price for the land north of Lincoln High School to R.E.A. Enterprises was too low, the bidding procedure was irregular and that a zoning "commitment" had been made to increase the acreage's value.

Allegations Denied

All of the allegations were denied by Councilman Arthur K. Snyder, who played a key role in arranging the transaction.

Snyder, who was cleared of any irregularities by the council, said his primary interest in the sale was to encourage a possible \$6 million low-cost housing project for the Rosehill and Happy Valley communities.

As envisioned Snyder said, the project would be privately financed without federal assistance.

Prior to the roll call,

which was unanimous, Councilman Thomas Bradley informed the council that some parents in the vicinity of the property were concerned about the sale because of the possibility of its purchase by the Board of Education.

Bradley added, however, that the board had not been heard from and he urged passage of the ordinance.

City Demands That Low Bidder Pay for Lincoln Heights Land

BY JERRY COHEN

Times Staff Writer

The successful bidder at a controversial public auction on 30 acres of city-owned land in Lincoln Heights has failed to meet the terms of his \$75,000 purchase agreement, it was learned Tuesday.

An ordinance authorizing sale of the property just north of Lincoln High School required full payment "30 days after notification" of acceptance of the bid by the City Council.

A demand for payment, which constituted that notification, was sent to REA Enterprises Jan. 7, according to A.M. Hill, director of the city's Bureau of Right of Way and Land.

REA's president, Roland E. Arnall, not only was the successful bidder on the undeveloped hilltop site but the only one.

The City Council approved his bid Nov. 4, despite intimations that a zoning change "commitment" had been made to enhance the property's value.

The site presently is zoned R-1 (one-family dwelling).

But only Monday, REA Enterprises

spokesmen urged at a Planning Department hearing that its application for a conditional use permit be granted.

Such a permit would allow REA to build a 546-unit moderate income housing project on the site.

City planner Wallace G. Pearson, the examiner, took the application under advisement after hearing objections to it by about 35 residents of the surrounding neighborhood. He must make a recommendation by March 20, and the Planning Commission will consider the matter March 27.

Hill learned of REA's delinquency from his bureau's escrow division after inquiries Tuesday from The Times. He ordered a letter sent to REA "requesting" full payment from the developer.

Hill said if payment is not received within two weeks he will consult with the city attorney's office about punitive action he might recommend to the City Council.

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LAND

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Two avenues are open to the council, Hill suggested:

REA's 10% deposit could be forfeited.

The city could sue the developer for possible loss that might be incurred if the land is sold for a lesser price at a later auction.

Pearson said REA's financial delinquency was not a consideration in Monday's hearing, since the developer had applied as "an owner in escrow."

He said it is a "common practice" for developers "in escrow" to seek zoning changes.

City Council's approval of the bid by Arnall in November stirred an uproar, chiefly as a result of a charge made by

Anthony Rios, of the Community Service Organization.

It came after Councilman Arthur K. Snyder reported negotiations were under way between Arnall and the Prudential Insurance Co. to construct a \$6 million project on the Lincoln Heights site.

Rios claimed the insurance firm would not consider a loan "unless the zoning is changed," and contended that company representatives had informed him that:

"R-1 is worthless."

"They admitted that the loan was conditioned on a zone change."

Rios did not say during the council session what change was suggested, but afterwards said it was to R-2 (two-family dwellings).

He suggested this would

"squeeze" low-income families out of the area because of "high rents."

Snyder, under fire at Finance Committee hearings for reportedly accepting a \$1,000 contribution from Arnall, assured fellow councilmen he would oppose any building plan for the site not conforming to R-1 zoning—a change now sought by Arnall's firm.

According to testimony in behalf of REA at Monday's hearing, rentals for units in the proposed project were tentatively placed between \$90 and \$150. Each unit, it was suggested, would have two to four bedrooms.

A total of 31 buildings are proposed for the project, with from 6 to 12 units per building, according to Monday's testimony.

Among the objections offered to the proposed project, Loma del Sol, was one that only a single access road off Lincoln Heights Blvd. was planned. This, objectors said, would cause traffic congestion in the area.

The proposal also was opposed on the grounds that:

No land use study had been made of the site.

The proposed development might not mesh with a master plan for the area, expected to be completed within 18 months.

It would further jam already overcrowded schools.

Petitions opposing the project, bearing about 130 signatures of residents in the surrounding area, were presented.

Arnall was unavailable for comment.

Developer Explains Delinquency in Land Bid Payment

A developer Wednesday blamed a misunderstanding for being delinquent in paying the city the balance of a \$75,000 purchase of publicly owned land in Lincoln Heights.

Roland E. Arnall, president of REA Enterprises, successful bidder on the property at a public auction last fall, said he had discussed a payment schedule with A. M. Hill, director of the city's Bureau of Right of Way and Land.

Hill was unavailable for comment, but he had said Tuesday he ordered a notice sent to Arnall "requesting" full payment of the balance of the \$75,000 after learning that Arnall was delinquent.

Misunderstanding Told

Arnall said he made a \$7,500 deposit Sept. 5 and that he received a letter demanding the balance last Jan. 7. He admitted he "goofed" in reading the letter.

"I thought I had to come up with the balance within 90 days of the receipt of the letter," he explained. "So in my mind the closing of the escrow was April 7."

Actually, he said, he was expected to produce the balance within 30 days of Jan. 7, when he received the escrow instructions.

Arnall said, however, that in discussing the problem with Hill Wednesday the official told him he would have until "a few days" before the escrow closes to make the payment. That was his intention, he added.

Snyder Asks Refund to Developer in Land Deal

Purchaser Now Wants to Cancel Out on \$75,000 Transaction in Lincoln Heights

BY ERWIN BAKER

Times Staff Writer

Councilman Arthur K. Snyder, who drew sharp criticism last year for his role in the controversial sale of 30 acres of public land, has asked the city to refund the buyer's money, it was disclosed Monday.

The disclosure came during a Finance Committee hearing on the request of developer Roland E. Arnall to cancel his purchase of land adjacent to Lincoln High School.

Arnall was the lone bidder for the property at a public auction a year ago, and his \$75,000 bid was accepted by the city although opponents charged the property was worth considerably more.

Snyder pushed vigorously for council approval, which was voted last November after he said Arnall was negotiating with an insurance company for a \$6 million 500-unit, low-cost housing project.

During the hearings Snyder came under fire for accepting a \$1,000 campaign contribution from Arnall.

Zoning Condition Disclosed

The hearings also disclosed that the insurance company's loan was conditioned on a change in the zoning of the property, which would have made the land far more valuable by permitting higher density residential units.

The "condition" indicated that a zoning change "commitment" had been made.

Councilman Robert M. Wilkinson demanded during the hearings to know "who made the commitment," but the answer was never made public, and it never was disclosed whether such a commitment actually was made. The zoning was not changed.

Snyder denied any impropriety in his support of the project, contending his sole objective had been to obtain urgently needed low-income housing for disadvantaged persons in the area.

Monday, the council's Finance Committee met to consider a request from Arnall to cancel his purchase of the land.

Currently before the committee is a proposal, supported by Snyder, to refund the money to Arnall, less \$1,867.82 to cover city costs.

Snyder recommended the procedure in a letter to A. M. Hill, Bureau of Right of Way and Land director, who handled escrow in the sale.

College Believed Interested

Snyder explained Monday that since council approval of the transaction, the state college system has indicated an interest in locating headquarters for the board of trustees on the site.

George St. Johns, on the staff of the chancellor of the state colleges, confirmed that the property was being considered.

In addition, the councilman said, a federal Health, Education and Welfare agency—the Southwest Regional Laboratory—had the property under study at one time as a possible bilingual research center for Mexican-Americans.

Also, Snyder said, the property was being considered for an experimental housing program entitled Operation Breakthrough.

"On becoming knowledgeable of these public uses, I ask the developer to abandon the project and

sacrifice what the city has put into it," Snyder said.

Councilman Thomas Bradley criticized Snyder for bypassing the City Council in asking the developer to abandon the project. Snyder replied that there was "no way" he could have made the request through the council.

Bradley declared flatly that he was "opposed to cancellation" of the sale.

Concerned Over Efforts

"I'm concerned that Mr. Snyder fought so hard to get it approved, and then speaks unilaterally for the city to get it canceled," he said.

"He should have come back to the City Council for permission."

Snyder replied:

"There is no way I could do it . . ."

Hill told the committee that after escrow was opened, the purchaser advised him he could not improve the property because a portion of it was being used for a private roadway.

Hill said Arnall then filed a notice objecting to the completion of escrow.

He did not recall, in answers to questions, the date of the request, but said he thought it was "two to three months ago."

Councilman Ernani Bernardi also raised objections to cancellation of the deal.

He noted that if the state college system is interested in acquiring the property it could negotiate directly with the owner.

Snyder, however, asserted that a decision by the state colleges probably would not be made for six months and that the developer could not hold the land for that period of time because his loan was expiring.

On the motion of Bradley, the committee then received and filed a letter from Snyder to Hill requesting that the purchase be abandoned.

The final decision will be made by the full council.

If it upholds the committee, Arnall would retain the property.

Bradley Raps Snyder Handling of Lincoln Heights Land Deal

Charges He Bypassed Council in Asking Developer to Abandon Housing Project After Purchasing Tract

BY ERWIN BAKER

Times Staff Writer

Councilman Thomas Bradley criticized Councilman Arthur K. Snyder Monday for bypassing the Los Angeles City Council in asking a developer to abandon a controversial Lincoln Heights housing project.

Snyder, however, replied that there was "no way" he could have made the request through the council.

The exchange occurred at a Finance Committee hearing on the request of the developer Roland Arnall to cancel his purchase of 30 acres of public land adjacent to Lincoln High School for \$75,000.

Arnall was the lone bidder for the property at a public auction a year ago.

Snyder pushed vigorously for council approval, which was voted last November after he said Arnall

was negotiating with an insurance company for a \$6 million 500-unit low cost housing project.

Earlier Snyder came under fire at council hearings for accepting a \$1,000 campaign contribution from Arnall.

Opponents also charged that the property was worth considerably more, perhaps as much as \$1 million.

Snyder denied any impropriety in his support of the proposal, contending his sole objective was obtaining urgently needed low-income housing for disadvantaged persons in the area.

Currently before the committee is a proposal, supported by Snyder, which would refund the money to Arnall, less \$4,867.82 to cover city costs.

Consideration Confirmed

Snyder explained Monday that since council approval of the transaction, the state college system has indicated an interest in locating headquarters for the board of trustees on the site.

George St. Johns, who said he was on the staff of the chancellor of the state colleges, confirmed that the property was being considered.

Snyder said two other potential public uses of the property also were being evaluated.

"On becoming knowledgeable of these public uses, I ask the developer to abandon the project and sacrifice what the city has put into it," Snyder said.

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BRADLEY CRITICISM

Continued from First Page

A. N. Hill, director of the Bureau of Right of Way and Land, told the committee however, that after escrow was opened, the "purchaser" advised him that he could not improve the property because a portion of it was being used for a private roadway.

Hill said Arnall then filed a notice objecting to the completion of escrow.

He did not recall, in answers to questions, the date of the request, but said he thought it was "two to three months ago."

Bradley declared flatly that he was "opposed to cancellation" of the lease.

"I'm concerned that Mr. Snyder fought so hard to get it approved, and then speaks unilaterally for the city to get it canceled.

"He should have come back to the city council for permission."

Snyder replied:

"There is no way I could do it . . ."

Councilman Ernani Bernardi also raised objections to cancellation of the deal.

He asked City Administrative Officer C. Erwin Piper if it would be to our "advantage" to take back the property.

Dr. Piper did not answer the question directly, but noted that in the past the city has found a public use for such property and called off the sale.

"It is rare, but we have done it," he said.

In answer to another question from Bernardi, Piper said he knew of no "particular use" for the Lincoln Heights property at the present time.

Bernardi said he would be inclined to support the request if there was a "specific use" for the land.

But he noted that if the state college system is interested in acquiring the property it could negotiate directly with the owner.

Snyder, however, asserted that the position by the state colleges probably would not be made for six months and that the developer could not hold the land for that period of time because the loan was expiring.

Buying and Selling Municipal Land

ISSUE: A councilman who pushed the sale of city-owned property now wants the deal abandoned. Should the City Council agree?

Councilman Arthur K. Snyder's continuing and prominent role in the sale to a private developer of city-owned property in the Lincoln Heights area is the cause of some eyebrow-raising at City Hall.

We think the unusual interest, especially of fellow councilmen, in this unorthodox land deal is justified.

Last November, Snyder pushed vigorously for the sale to developer Roland Arnall—the only bidder at public auction—of 30 acres adjacent to Lincoln High School for \$75,000 or 5.5 cents a square foot.

Now, almost a year later, he is working just as energetically for cancellation of the transaction and the return of the developer's money—less \$4,867 to cover city costs.

Snyder says he supported the transaction originally because the developer—a contributor of \$1,000 to his 1967 election campaign—planned a multimillion-dollar low-cost housing project for disadvantaged residents.

More recently, Snyder said, he learned

of interest in the site for governmental use—a possible State College System headquarters, a bilingual research center for Mexican-Americans or an experimental housing program.

"On becoming knowledgeable of these public uses," he said, "I asked the developer to abandon the project and sacrifice what the city has put into it."

It was this apparent unilateral action in seeking abandonment that angered the council's Finance Committee.

Councilmen Thomas Bradley and Ernani Bernardi sharply criticized Snyder for bypassing the council, despite his contention there was no other way to proceed.

Escrow cancellation requests are not unusual at City Hall, but normally the request to the council comes from the developer involved—not from a councilman.

We urge the council to validate the sale, even though it may be doing a favor for the purchaser of 30 bargain acres.

If nothing else, the furor caused by this controversy should serve as warning to prospective buyers of excess municipal land that the city does business like other land owners. And it should alert councilmen to the built-in dangers of meddling in the sale of municipal property.

Council Upholds Controversial Property Sale

**Escrow Complete, Snyder
Abandons His Attempt to
Halt Deal for Public Land**

BY ERWIN BAKER
Times Staff Writer

Councilman Arthur K. Snyder's request that the sale of 30 acres of public land to a developer for \$75,000 be canceled and the money he refunded was rejected by the City Council Wednesday.

The action, by a 10-0 vote and with less than a minute of discussion, ended months of noisy controversy.

It followed explanations by Councilman Donald D. Lorenzen and Snyder that escrow on the property adjacent to Lincoln High School was closed last Friday and the sale was completed.

It was Snyder who moved that the Finance Committee's recommendation for the receiving and filing of his request be adopted.

Last Sept. 15, the councilman created a dispute by asking the city to refund the \$75,000, minus \$4,887.82 in city costs, to Roland E. Arnall, head of REA Enterprises.

Claim It Was Worth More

Arnall was the lone bidder for property at a public auction last year. His bid was accepted by the city although opponents charged the property was worth considerably more.

Snyder pushed vigorously for council approval, emphasizing that Arnall was negotiating with an insurance company for a \$6 million, 500-unit low-cost housing project on the site.

During the hearings, Snyder was criticized for accepting a \$1,000 campaign contribution from Arnall, but he denied any improprieties.

In a letter to Bureau of Right of Way and Land Director A. M. Hill last month, Snyder urged cancellation of the transaction because the area was being considered for public use by federal and state agencies.

He explained at the time that on becoming aware of the possible alternative uses he urged Arnall to abandon the project and "sacrifice what the city has put into it."

Snyder was rapped by Councilman Thomas Bradley for by-passing the council in seeking to cancel the project, but Snyder maintained that there was "no way" he could make the suggestion directly to the council.

Hill, who handled escrow for the city, testified before the Finance Committee that after it was opened Arnall informed him he couldn't improve the property because part of it was being used for a private roadway.

Arnall then filed an objection to completion of the transaction, Hill said.