

## Angeles Fields developer fails to comply with terms

By MARISELA SANTANA, Staff Writer

LYNWOOD — Angeles Fields Partners had until Monday to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the exclusive negotiating agreement it received from the previous City Council back on Nov. 9, 2006.

After the city of Lynwood won its case against the developer last month after Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Judith Chirlin declared the actions taken during a special City Council meeting Oct. 2, 2007 by three recalled City Council members were "void, invalid and of no force or effect," the city issued a "notice of default" to Angeles Fields Partners.

That action gave Angeles Fields Partners 30 days to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the original exclusive negotiating agreement, not in the amended agreement approved Oct. 2, 2007.

While the court's decision was cause for celebration by residents who opposed the huge development that would have displaced more than 1,000 families from the eastern corner of the city, attorney Royce Jones, who represented the city in the case along with former city attorney Raul Salinas and Bruce Gridley and Gustavo Lamanna of the law firm of Kane, Ballmer & Berkman, reminded the public last month that the negotiating agreement former council members granted to developer John McDonald for his Angeles Fields Partners and Solie Gracie project wasn't completely dead.

The judge ruled that the Oct. 2 amendments were invalid because council members who voted on them had already been officially recalled by voters, but it wasn't to say that any previous agreements they made with the developer were also null and void.

The city had to send the developer a notice pursuant to the first agreement that they were in default of the agreement, giving the developer 30 days to respond. Part of the response would have included depositing \$500,000 with the city \$500,000 as promised in the original agreement.

City Manager Roger Haley said Wednesday morning the city had not received anything from Angeles Fields Partners.

"They had 30 days to comply with the elements of the [agreement], there were certain elements associated with that agreement," Haley said. "It has been 30 days that we notified the developer, not actually the date of the ruling, but 30 days since we notified the developer that items were needed within 30 days otherwise the city would move forward."

Any actions on the Angeles Fields Partners agreement will be brought before the City Council during its regular meeting Tuesday at 5 p.m.

Haley said that he didn't want to get into too much detail until after the meeting.

Haley said McDonald, did try to initiate some contact with him prior to the deadline. However, based on the notice sent to the developer, "I was uncomfortable in terms of having a conversation with him, based on the last directions given to me from the Redevelopment Agency."

As to what happens now, Haley said he couldn't divulge further because the item had not technically gone public, and was still being reviewed before it actually goes before the City Council.

Haley said he encourages members of the community to attend that meeting in order to voice any concerns they may have regarding the matter.

In an interview last month, longtime resident Joannette Guitierrez, who joined Aide Castro, the city's current mayor pro tem, in successfully filing a legal injunction against the former council's actions last Oct. 2, said she is glad the fight is over.

"It's like this huge amount of pressure has been lifted off my shoulders," said Guitierrez, who lost count of the hours and days she put into helping to recall the former council members for their support of the

Angeles Fields development. "It's like this huge dark cloud is finally gone and the sunshine in Lynwood is back."

After the court made its ruling last month, a secretary in McDonald's office said that McDonald was "not taking any interviews" at the moment.

McDonald could not be reached for comment regarding the Aug. 11 deadline.

Castro said if the former council done their proper homework, they would have realized that the proposed Angeles Fields development was not going to happen.

Castro also wanted to state the current council is not against economic redevelopment in the city.

"We are all in favor of economic development," she said. "What people who think we've been against this because we don't want that need to understand is that this contract never made sense from the beginning. It was just a big scam in my opinion."

Not only was the project going to require the use of eminent domain on single-family homes, but the entire area between Imperial Highway, Atlantic Boulevard, the Glenn Anderson (105) Freeway and the Long Beach (710) Freeway was not zoned for redevelopment.

"There were a lot of things that were not considered when the former council members [reached] this agreement," Castro said. "Had they looked at all of the things that were against this project from the beginning, we wouldn't be here now. But they didn't."