



Agenda Item IV(f)  
MRCA  
8-23-2010

## Overview

*In light of the negative impact of recent construction in the Dell, and specific objections to the owner/developer D. Fitzgerald, a group of concerned neighbors have organized towards the goal of purchasing the 10 lots along La Rocha currently owned by Fitzgerald, so they may be donated to the Mountains Recreations and Conservation Authority and preserved forever as a public greenspace.*

## Supporters

Hollywood Dell Civic Association (HDCA) board and the Committee to Preserve La Rocha have gathered support for this project from the following:

- Councilman Tom LaBonge (LA City Council District 4)
- Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations (Joan Luchs, President)
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Paul Edelman, Chief of Planning & Natural Resources)
- The Trust for Public Land (Rosemary Carroll, Regional Director of Development)

## The Numbers

- \$233K (+ annual maintenance, fees paid) = total Daniel Fitzgerald paid for the 10 lots (34 – 43)
- \$950K (\$95K per lot) = current official listing price for all 10 lots
- \$318K = total assessed value for 2009
- **\$550K** = rumored (to be confirmed) price DF would be willing to take from us
- \$6,500 amount committed so far from concerned neighbors

## Key Dates

- April 26<sup>th</sup> Cahuenga Peak saved from Development!
- May 5<sup>th</sup> Next MCRA monthly meeting
- May 12<sup>th</sup> Next HDCA monthly meeting
- May 13<sup>th</sup> Baseline Hillside Ordinance Meeting, 8:30 am, 10<sup>th</sup> floor City Hall
- **May 16<sup>th</sup> Friends of La Rocha Rally for the Trail!**
- July 2010 City Council will vote on the proposed Baseline Hillside Ordinance

## **What we CAN do together to prevent development along La Rocha Trail**

### **I. Shine a bright light on Daniel Fitzgerald and specifically his activities in the Dell**

- Ask neighbors on Deep Dell and Weidlake to write letters about their experiences with construction by Fitzgerald there in recent years
- Compile a timeline of his offenses, and infractions
- Compile photos and video that document his activities

*Action Step: We need someone to take charge of this part of the project.*

### **II. Letter writing campaign - Letters should emphasize:**

- 1) Our commitment as a community to preserving natural greenspace
- 2) Our objections to irresponsible, runaway construction practices by big developers in our neighborhood

*Action Step: We need people to go door to door in the neighborhood asking people to write letters. We would like to compile a list of "letter writers," that we can call on.*

### **III. "Red Flag" construction on all undeveloped lots in the Hollywood Dell**

While it's not possible to "red flag" a specific developer (no matter how objectionable) we CAN have all undeveloped lots in our area designated with a "red flag."

This would simply mean that if there is any action (permit requests, variance requests etc.) by a lot owner to begin work on an undeveloped property, our liaison at LaBonge's office would give us a "heads up."

Without the "red flag," neighbors are not advised of construction unless they are adjacent and variances are being requested (Weidlake is an example where there were no immediately adjacent neighbors to be notified before DF began that travesty).

*Action Step: We must provide LaBonge's office a map of our area with undeveloped lots highlighted ASAP! (Judy)*

### **IV. Oppose any and all variance requests vehemently**

Once our area has been "red flagged," we must be poised to act when we are alerted of permit or variance requests. We must mobilize and send letters and emails, make phone calls and let city officials know that there is NOT support for this type of building in the community. If hearings are scheduled for variance requests, we need to turn out and attend them to get our point of view heard.

*Action Step: We need a point person to be the primary contact when "red flag" alerts come in, to organize the response from our community.*

## **V. Make construction along La Rocha unattractive to develop, for Fitzgerald or anyone he may try to sell the property to.**

Make it logistically difficult (and expensive) to develop by holding the builder to maximum street widths, drainage requirements and by reporting any activity that violates ordinances (work times, haul routes, parking vehicles etc.)

Prevent contractor access to down slope properties for road building (retaining walls)

Make sure the city requires the infrastructure (road/sewer/drainage) to be completed BEFORE ANY homes are built along La Rocha.

Note: once the Baseline Hillside Ordinance is in place (July 2010) the excavation and size of homes allowed will be dramatically reduced (and therefore less profitable for developers). As a neighborhood we can request “overlays” that add restrictions to development in our area.

*Action Step: Adjacent neighbors, and those at the east entrance to the trail should alert a point person whenever they see any activity.*

*Action Step: We need someone to compile a list of phone numbers and contacts at key city departments and several people willing to make the calls when needed.*

## **VI. Purchase the properties and donate them to MRCA to conserve them as a permanent greenspace.**

Once the purchase price is officially agreed upon, we need time to fundraise. We will try and negotiate an option to buy and get 3-4 months to collect the funds.

## **VII. Fundraising**

It is important to demonstrate support in the community with \$\$\$'s. Even if the donated amounts are small (\$25 – 100) we should collect money from as broad a cross section of our community as possible to show the groundswell of support for the project.

All donations are tax deductible and will be returned if the deal cannot be made. Checks should be made payable to the MRCA (Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority) and earmarked “for La Rocha Trail” in the memo line.

We need ideas of who (individuals and companies) to approach for bigger donations.

We need to follow-up with LaBonge and SMMC AND TRUST to find funds in their budgets to contribute.

*\*Note: SMMC has a regular meeting the first Wednesday of each month. We need someone to volunteer to attend.*