

PALO ALTO DAILY NEWS

Group pitches Belle Haven housing plan Nonprofit Habitat for Humanity to meet with residents tonight

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Now that a longstalled subsidized housing project in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood is back on track, nonprofit developer Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco is holding a meeting tonight to gather public feedback. The nonprofit wants to build 22 three-bedroom homes on a barren strip of land along Terminal Avenue. Arranged in duplexes, the homes would be sold to low-income, working families.

Built with the help of donations and volunteer labor, Habitat's homes in that area regularly sell for about \$250,000 to \$300,000, spokeswoman Jennifer Doettling said. Proposed in 2001, the project was delayed for years after the site was found to be contaminated with diesel fuel. Just last year, fees from a marketrate housing development elsewhere in the city were set aside to clean up the land.

Council Member Heyward Robinson said he's excited about the project, which would increase the supply of inexpensive homes in a city where housing prices remain exorbitant. But the developers say they will first have to assuage the concerns of nearby residents, some of whom are worried about the quality of the development and the type of people who will move in.

"Our homeowners are hardworking, local working families," Doettling said. "They actually do purchase the homes and have a mortgage payment. They're contributing citizens, it's just that they can't afford a mortgage" at market rate on the Peninsula.

Tonight will mark the second in a series of public meetings on the project. After that, Habitat for Humanity will apply to the city for the right to build it. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at the Menlo Park Senior Center, 110 Terminal Ave.

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