

1-9-59

URA Hearing Held Before Beach Owners

More than 100 beach property owners met with urban redevelopment agency officials last night for a briefing of the possible effects on them of the city's second urban redevelopment project.

As in previous meetings with agency officials, the chief question was, "How much will I get?"

Not one of the audience at the Cocoanut Grove ballroom attacked URA on philosophical grounds or argued that the beach area really does not need a face lifting.

The meeting was called by URA Citizens Advisory Committee Chairman Al Conquest with URA Director Olin Carl White fielding most of the questions.

Appraisers Charles Brunjes and Kermit Darrow were the most carefully quizzed by the property owners. Both are already in the field making their first appraisals of property in the beach area to help arrive at an estimated cost of the project. The estimated cost will be broken down into federal and local shares by the time public hearings open in the fall.

Brunjes said there are three main criteria used in determining worth of property and each beach parcel would be matched against the one most favorable to it.

Once the beach project is approved by federal and local governments, owner participation agreements will be signed up for those who want them and land acquisition will begin, White said.

White said he would favor carrying out demolition of the project bounded by Beach and Cliff streets and the San Lorenzo river over several seasons.

"This would prevent complete disruption of the city's tourist economy, if the federal government will go along with us," White added.

Under the present tentative schedule for the \$6 million beach project, public hearings will end next fall, followed by federal approval of the master plan for the beach area. Land acquisition may start in the spring of 1960. Motel and hotel owners were put on notice that they could probably rent their properties for some time after the land is sold to URA and until their particular parcel is ready for demolition.

White estimated only a very few presently existing structures would still be standing when the project ends.

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