

Applicant for radio station in Aptos encounters static

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By MARJ VON B

A proposal to establish a new AM radio station on the grounds of the Cabrillo Golf Course in Aptos was tuned out yesterday by county zoning administrator Henry Baker.

He denied a petition to amend a use permit for golf course owner David Morris McFadden which would have allowed him to lease parts of the property for installation of the radio station and transmitter antennas.

McFadden was accompanied to the public hearing by Grant Wrathall Jr., a partner in the Progressive Broadcasting Co., which proposed to build the 1,000 watt commercial radio station to serve "120,000 listeners in the Aptos and Capitola areas."

Wrathall said his company originally filed for a permit for the station from the Federal Communications Commission almost nine years ago for a site at Rancho del Mar shopping center. But Wrathall said his company was now in the process of applying for the transfer of the FCC permit to the golf course site.

He said the "FCC will jump up and down with joy at the news of the new site, because the other one was bad."

There were others at the hearing who were not jumping up and down with joy at the idea, and one of them was Vern Hart, a Watsonville businessman who owns a piece of property adjacent to the golf course.

Hart said, "I'm against a monstrous tower." He also scoffed at Wrathall's contention that another radio station was needed to serve the county.

"If what radio people say is true, we are overlapped about ten times in the area," Hart declared. He explained he gathered this information from the scores of advertising salesmen from radio stations who

came into his home furnishings store to solicit advertising.

Wrathall had proposed to erect initially one 160-foot "pole-like tower" and add two others later if the station was authorized to expand its broadcasting to include night hours.

He said the towers would not be required by the Federal Aviation Agency to have any lights or red and white markings on them, because they were not near either of the airports in the county.

"They would be no more intrusive on the landscape than the light standards on the freeway," he said.

One Mesa Drive resident in Aptos Terrace strongly disagreed, saying he objected to any such structures "in front of my view of the ocean."

Dick Eldridge, vice president of the Aptos Terrace Homeowners Assn., however, said he thought "a mast of this diameter would be barely visible from Mesa Drive."

He said further, "One thing we like about

the proposal is that it preserves the open space. If it helps Mr. McFadden preserve the golf course, we would be delighted.

McFadden told Baker his family had owned the property since early in World War II and that he had attempted to maintain it as open space.

"I have had many offers to sell it for bowling alleys, bars and churches, etc., which I have refused in the interests of the community . . . The radio station will help me maintain the open space," McFadden said.

Baker noted that while the county's environmental review committee had said the proposal would not have a significant impact, his major concern was "preempting use of a potential residential housing site when we're talking about a housing shortage in the county."

The proposed radio station would be a commercial use of the property and, therefore, would be in conflict with the Aptos General Plan, he said.

Additionally, Baker said the property lies in the scenic corridor along the freeway and that the three radio towers would "adversely affect the scenic corridor."

He advised McFadden and Wrathall, however, that they had the right to appeal his decision to the full planning commission.

The two men indicated after the hearing that they would consider doing this.