

Aptos chamber hears official discuss bicycle lane alternatives

By BILL AKERS

The alternatives open to the county to solve the bicycle lane problem are to do nothing and leave bike riders to their own devices, or to establish a bike lane along Soquel Drive and remove all parking from the street. That was the message Gene DeLucchi, deputy public works director for Santa Cruz County, had for directors of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce Thursday night.

The proposal for the bike route along Soquel Drive, already the subject of two public meetings, has drawn opposition from merchants along the street, particularly those in Soquel Village.

In explaining the bike route project to the chamber board, DeLucchi said there are other alternatives, but none of them is acceptable to his department. These include eliminating parking only where vacant property fronts on Soquel Drive, reduce the width of the traffic lanes to provide for both the bike lane and parking, allow parking on one side of the street, reduce Soquel Drive to two traffic lanes to allow bike lanes and parking, or pave a bicycle lane off the street along the curb line.

None of these, DeLucchi said, is feasible.

The bike lane proposal, he said, came about after the board of supervisors last year adopted a policy of encouraging the use of bicycles to a point where, in 10 years, it will represent 10 per cent of the transporta-

tion in the county. Public transportation will take up another 30 per cent, and autos the rest.

"The board said to public works, 'come back with a plan to eliminate parking (along bike routes)'," DeLucchi said, adding that "Soquel Drive is the only place we could logically do it."

That bike lane will run from Paul Sweet Road in Live Oak to Daubenbiss Ave. near Soquel Village. Along that route, all street parking will be eliminated. He explained that Soquel Village has been exempted from the no-parking requirement, and bike riders can detour around the village if they wish.

The bike lane then picks up again at Main Street, south of Soquel Village, and runs to State Park Drive. Street parking will be eliminated along that stretch also, he said. There are six properties along the route that will be given a one-year exemption from the no-parking requirement because of "hardship" circumstances, he explained.

The county's transportation advisory commission will hold a public hearing on May 19, 7:30 p.m., at Soquel High School, at which the bike lane proposal will be aired again and testimony for and against it will be heard. The commission will then make a recommendation to the board of supervisors, which will take final action on the proposal in June, DeLucchi said.

In other business chamber directors:

— Voted to support the Pajaro Valley School District bid for a raise in the tax

revenue limit after hearing Aptos High School principal Don Schwerling present his case for it. Schwerling explained that SB 90 puts a ceiling on the tax revenue per student a district can collect and that the district "is operating on a 1964 tax rate." The per pupil expenditures in the district are far below that of surrounding districts and states, he said, adding "We're really hurting and our kids are not getting a fair break. We really need to win this election." With eight of the 15 board members present, the vote to support the tax raise was 6-2, with Lucile Aldrich and Virgil Kester dissenting.

— Asked DeLucchi to have a public works department representative at the June 3 board meeting, explain a \$100,000 project to widen Soquel Drive from State Park Drive to Freedom Blvd. to accommodate a bike lane. The meeting will be at 7:30 a.m. at the Cookbook Restaurant.

— Voted to endorse the Aptos Village Urban Design Review, on which a public hearing before the county planning commission is to be held Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., at Cabrillo College, Forum building room 450.

— Voted \$5 to buy tickets to a Cabrillo Music Festival benefit concert, May 13 and 14, at Cabrillo College, the tickets to be given to senior citizens.

— Accepted the resignation from the board of Carl Smith and appointed Sherm. Unelle in his place.