

Builder offers 'Glenwood lite'

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Scotts Valley project scaled down from the one rejected by voters; open-space buy still possible

BY TERRI MORGAN
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Eight months after Scotts Valley residents overwhelmingly rejected a developer's proposal to build 145 luxury homes on one of the city's last remaining open space, the developer has presented preliminary plans for a smaller development on the same site.

The plan calls for a scaled-down version of the previously rejected Glenwood project, and one city council member has dubbed the new plan "Glenwood lite." The developer, Charles "Chop" Keenan, said he is seeking council reaction to his tentative plan before applying to the city.

On June 8, Scotts Valley voters

passed the first referendum in the city's history when they rejected by a 3-to-2 ratio plans submitted by the Keenan Land Co. to build housing off Glenwood Drive. While the defeat prohibits the developer from returning to the city with a similar project for the 200-acre Glenwood property within 12 months, the company is legally allowed to submit a

"substantially" different project.

Keenan indicated he was not eager to proceed with a new project that would suffer the same fate as his original proposal.

"We were very humbled by that election," Keenan told council members Wednesday night. "The voters' message was very clear; this project is just too big. We're back tonight with a significantly scaled-down plan."

Laura Kuhn, community development director, told the council that the plan was only a concept at this stage and the developer wanted re-

action. "It's just to give us direction and let the community know what's going on," she said.

The plans call for 74 homes on 10,000- to 20,000-square-foot lots. Homes would be built in the least environmentally sensitive areas, leaving about 80 percent of the property as open space, Keenan said. Acquiescing to concerns raised by community members about the previous plan, the design eliminates homes on the east side of Carbonera Creek and on slopes greater than 40 percent.

Along with reducing the number

of units, the developer reduced the number of benefits to the community. The original proposal would have contributed more than \$8 million in development fees to the city and school district to reduce the effect the new homes would have on traffic, water supplies, schools and city services. Although the developer would still pay school impact fees, use recycled water for landscaping, and donate 10 acres of land adjacent to the city's Siltanen Park to expand that recreational site, the new proposal does not include funds to help

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improve the new park land.

Park impact fees that would have been paid by the developer for each house built in the original proposal were also eliminated in the new plan. The new proposal also calls for the developer to build two miles of public trails through the open space area, instead of the four promised in the original development. A half-acre neighborhood park called for in the original proposal was eliminated, and traffic improvements were reduced.

Council members said although the new proposal included fewer houses than the original version they approved in late 1998, they found the reduction in benefits less palatable.

"It's Glenwood-lite in terms of housing, and it's Glenwood-lite in terms of amenities," said Council-

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man Randy Johnson. "You've gone a long way to make certain members of the council happy, but there are not as many benefits, like a full-fledged finished park" for the community.

The new plan would be scuttled, however, if negotiations with the Santa Cruz County

Land Trust and the State Wildlife Conservation Board to purchase the property as open space are fruitful. Community members who led the drive to successfully kill the original development project stepped up their campaign to preserve the property as a greenbelt immediately after the election.

"We stand ready, willing and able to sell that property entirely for open space," Keenan said.

If an open space deal cannot be worked out, he indicated he would be just as happy to proceed with a new development.

"Despite licking our wounds, we think Scotts Valley is a great town," Keenan said.