

Mall developer sees red over new costs

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A developer of the Capitola Mall expansion apparently felt he was pole-axed last night by the Capitola City Council.

John Gatto, of Cypress Properties, was visibly angry as he left the meeting, after council members agreed the mall developers should spend an estimated \$40,000 to move a utility pole.

The pole is standing in the way of modifications to the main driveway entrance to the Sears store from Capitola Road. One of the conditions of the mall expansion was that the developers would modify that entrance to align it better with 38th Avenue on the opposite side of Capitola Road.

Widening the driveway, which would create two traffic lanes in either direction, would

simply add to the developers' financial burden, Gatto said.

"That becomes just one more extremely onerous requirement that serves no functional benefit other than satisfying the desire for symmetry at that intersection," he said.

Of two plans drawn up by Public Works Director Larry Perlin, Gatto strongly favored one to widen the driveway to 35 feet now and 40 feet later on

when Capitola Road utility lines are placed underground, which will happen at some unspecified time in the future. The drive would taper back to its existing 30-foot width.

Traffic on the driveway is minimal, he said, and is not expected to increase more than 10 percent with the expansion.

"There's absolutely no need for that road to be widened within the site," he said.

Council members disagreed, however, voting unanimously for a plan to widen the driveway to 40 feet all the way back to Sears.

The pole that must be moved under that plan carries lines supplying a large portion of the city's power and providing telephone service to many 41st Avenue businesses, Perlin said.

City Manager Steve Burrell recommended moving the pole now.

"Keep in mind that the reason there are no sidewalks along 41st Avenue is because undergrounding was going to take place," he said. "And that was 10 or 15 years ago."

Councilwoman Stephanie Harlan said, "I hate to add any additional cost to the project, but I think we ought to have 40 feet now and have a good, wide safe entrance with two lanes on either side."