

to  
1985

# Aptos cityhood

## petitioners rarin' to go

After more than a decade of on-again, off-again talk, a petition drive to incorporate Aptos is finally ready to begin.

Mrs. Glenn Specht, head of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce committee planning the drive, said Wednesday the petition drive is scheduled to begin next week.

"We'll be circulating the petitions any place there are people," said Mrs. Specht. "We'll be in shopping centers, and we'll also be going door-to-door."

"We need about 2,250 signatures of registered voters to get the issue on the ballot," she noted.

The chamber committee hopes to get approval for creation of a city of about 25,000 people. The proposed

and property tax, because it's impossible to determine now what those figures would be. However, Mrs. Specht said the budget would probably go above \$2 million when the three items are added in.

She noted that incorporation would not mean an increase in the total taxes paid by residents. "Because of Proposition 13, no new property tax can be added. The new city would receive a portion of the property tax already being collected by the state legislature for return to cities," according to a committee budget summary. This would cause a slight decrease in the amount the state allocates to all other cities.

The proposed budget drew a mixed response from the 20

Wrathall said. "But if we incorporate, (local elected representatives) will decide where funds will be spent."

"Local representation is a key," Wrathall said. "We'd have representation on regional organizations."

If Aptos is incorporated, sales tax revenue in the city limits would go to the city, instead of the county. Otherwise, county government income would not be affected.

Dave McFadden, a resident of the area for 49 years, said with incorporation, "We'd have the ultimate decision on whatever comes up," he said to a man who questioned the need for incorporation.

Another man questioned whether the city could get by with a planning staff of one

area is bounded by the east end of the Aptos Seascapes property, Monterey Bay, Park Avenue and a line across the hills north of Soquel Drive.

Although the committee has six months to gather the signatures, Mrs. Specht said the committee hopes to finish the drive by October, so the issue can go on the ballot in June, 1980.

The committee began working on the incorporation drive about 18 months ago. There have been several efforts toward incorporation in the last 10 years, but none got as far as this one.

If the committee is successful in gathering the 2,250 signatures from registered voters in the area proposed for the city, the Local Agency Formation

people attending Wednesday night's forum. Some defended it, but others questioned whether the funds would be sufficient.

One man in the audience questioned whether law enforcement would suffer if the new city contracts with the sheriff's department for coverage. The incorporation committee is recommending a \$260,000 contract with the sheriff's department.

This amount would provide service which would be "at least as good" as is currently provided, Mrs. Specht said. She noted that the new city council could vote to buy added protection.

Another man noted that if the city is formed, most public services will be provided by outside agencies — law

full-timer and one part-timer.

Mrs. Specht said more planners would probably be needed in later years, but said the city could make it with the one and a half positions, since there's already a general plan for the area.

A man in the audience called the proposed budget "utopian," noting that Santa Cruz, with a population of more than 30,000, has a budget above \$20 million.

Santa Cruz provides many services that Aptos would not, Mrs. Specht said. When such things as sewer, fire, water, the golf course, wharf, parking, garbage and airport are taken out of the Santa Cruz budget, it's comparable with the proposed figures for Aptos, she said.

Commission (LAFCO) will have to approve the budget for the city before an election can be approved.

Mrs. Specht said she doesn't expect any problems in getting the proposed budget approved if the required signatures are gathered.

LAFCO would hold public hearings before the election, at which boundaries for the proposed city could be adjusted. The hearings would also determine if the council-manager form of government proposed is what the people want.

At a forum at Aptos High Wednesday night, Mrs. Specht said the City of Aptos could operate on a first-year budget of as little as \$1,653,000.

The figure doesn't include revenue sharing, utility taxes

enforcement, sewers, water, fire, and garbage, leaving only roads and planning as the major areas for city government to deal with.

Larry Wrathall, a member of the incorporation committee, agreed, but said having control of planning is a major consideration for forming a city.

"This is a pivotal time for Aptos," he said. "If we ignore the opportunity (to incorporate), we'll pay the price as other entities encroach on Aptos."

If the city stays unincorporated, decisions for the area will continue to be made by the county government, Wrathall said.

"There's no threat or bonfire that says we have to incorporate tomorrow,"

GREEN SHEET

August 25, 1979