

# Wingspread threatens to drop performing arts complex

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SANTA CRUZ — The developer of Wingspread Beach in Aptos has issued an ultimatum: Either the Board of Supervisors indicates conceptual approval of the larger of its two condominium proposals or it will be dropped.

And thrown out with the bath water would be a community performing arts and sports complex.

After 2½ years of environmental review, more than \$100,000 in studies, and organized neighborhood opposition, developer Ryland Kelley has announced he's ready to throw in the towel on "Plan B" unless he gets a go-ahead from the Board of Supervisors soon.

Without the preliminary approval for the larger project, Kelley has indicated he'll pursue a smaller plan, calling for 195 lodge rooms and no arts or athletics facilities.

The latest announcement from Conference Associates, which is developing the project for Hare, Brewer and Kelley, came on the heels of a decision by the Planning Department and County Counsel

that a new environmental impact report must be done.

"We have advised the county that we had no choice but to drop Plan B if we cannot get some direction from the Board of Supervisors," said attorney Dick Allen for Kelley, who's out of the country.

"We cannot sit back waiting yet another year for a supplemental EIR. We have, therefore, reluctantly advised the county to proceed with Plan A (the 195-unit project) without Plan B," Allen said.

Plan B either has 295 units or 585 rooms, depending on whose figures are used. Most of the rooms can be rented separately, leading some to believe the higher figure is a more accurate count of capacity.

Board Chairwoman Robley Levy, whose Second District encompasses the proposed Wingspread site, reacted to the latest news by saying, "I want to see both of those projects before the Board and the Planning Commission. The projects have been out in a vacuum for so long we need to get them into a public forum."

Wingspread Beach is proposed for the verdant 66-acre site near New Brighton State Beach known as the Porter-Sesnon property. To many neighbors, it is the last pristine open space in the rapidly developing mid-county region. Conference Associates has a 99-year lease from the UC Regents to develop the land.

The latest hurdle for the developers

came as an opinion from County Counsel Dwight Herr that the original EIR doesn't adequately cover the same issues raised in the subsequent project proposals.

Although the EIR studied the effects of a 633-unit development, with 930 "lockout rooms," it didn't include a three-building performing arts complex, sports fields, or additional parking spaces.

Wingspread spokesman Tim Welch said the developers have spent the past nine months writing supplemental studies on the original EIR to take into account the changes in the proposals.

"Our argument is that the other one (on which the EIR is based) is the larger project and that the supplemental infor-

mation should be adequate," said Welch. However, Planning Director Kris Schenk and Herr see it differently. Schenk said after reviewing all the information, Herr concluded the Plan B project is inconsistent with the original EIR.

"We have no problem with the information but with the format," said Schenk. Supplemental information to an EIR is not subject to the same public review as an original EIR would be.

Schenk said the environmental issues involved in the larger parking spaces needed for the performing arts center and sports arena, as well as the added traffic, are significant factors that need to be covered in a new report.

But Kelley is unwilling to invest the time and money unless he has a firm go-ahead.

"We want some sort of sign from us high that the concept will be approved, or else we won't proceed," said Welch.

Meanwhile, the Planning Department is ready to issue a negative declaration for the smaller project, effectively giving it the go-ahead. Schenk said the declaration will be issued Sept. 7. There is a 10-day appeal period during which an appeal can be requested. If none is received, the 195-unit plan will be declared "consistent" with the EIR and go before the Planning Commission and Board for final consideration.