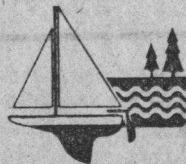


# Local



## Money approved to purchase Porter-Sesnon

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SANTA CRUZ — The state Parks and Recreation Commission has approved a \$4 million appropriation to purchase the Porter-Sesnon property near Aptos, but the question still remains whether that would be enough to buy the property.

Commission Chairman Robert Trent Jones Jr. of Palo Alto warned he sees the "fight as just beginning." Vice Chairman Trusse Norris of Gardena called the commission's action "ridiculous" since there is no willing seller.

To the delight of a faithful crowd, however — many of whom had waited up to 10 hours for the commission to finally get to the item late Friday afternoon — Commissioners Victoria Gibson of Carmel, Martha McLean of Riverside and Victoria Araujo of Bakersfield voted for the appropriation to expand the adjacent New Brighton State Park.

Now the official purchase is up to the state General Services Office. To get to this point, however, the Legislature had to move up the appropriation from the 1980 state park bond fund and the commission had to agree, under terms of the bond act.

The development firm Hare, Brewer and Kelley holds a 99-year lease from UC California on the desired 66-acre mid-county

property. They are currently proposing the controversial Wingspread Beach development, the largest-ever convention center/performing arts complex in the county.

Developer Ryland Kelley, in a letter to the commission, called the state acquisition "unnecessary," saying there were "far better uses for these funds." He also said the \$4 million appropriation was "inadequate for purchase of the entire parcel."

Following up on that, Norris asked state Parks Director Peter Dangermond: "If the guy has his lease, why would he sell it to us? Is \$4 million enough, anyway?"

Dangermond replied that the state doesn't know if it will be enough, either. "My personal opinion is that it will be enough or fairly close to enough."

Norris then asked about the possibility of condemnation procedures if the developer refuses to sell. Dangermond said that is allowed, but would be up to the state Public Works Board.

"We're not suggesting that at this time at all," he added, saying such proceedings hardly happen anymore.

Deputy Attorney General Walt Wunderlich told The Sentinel afterward that the general policy does not favor condemnation. He cited the time and extra expense, in also saying, "There's a lot of property out there that the state wants to buy

and has willing sellers."

That sentiment was expressed back in July by Assemblyman Sam Farr, D-Carmel Valley. He told the Capitola City Council that if Hare, Brewer and Kelley refuses the state's \$4 million offer, the state probably would not pursue the matter.

An alternative not broached at the hearing involves a partial acquisition of the Porter-Sesnon property by the state.

Sen. Henry Mello, D-Watsonville, who was a key factor in pushing the appropriation through the legislature, first suggested a partial acquisition in April to The Sentinel. At the time, he said it was merely a possible alternative if state parks did not get the \$4 million appropriation.

While Kelley told The Sentinel as early as May that the lease was not for sale "at any price," he reportedly made an unofficial offer to the state in August to sell a portion of it.

Dangermond told The Sentinel that such action would primarily be a county decision and not up to the state. He said that for his office to consider a recommendation for partial purchase from state park bond money would mean the state had entered the planning process.

The commission was only to make the determination Friday of whether the park bond money should be spent on the parcel.

Commissioners were helped with the de-

cision by the obvious pro-park audience. Of the 10 persons who testified, only one did not want it for park land.

Supervisors' Chairman Robley Levy urged the state appropriation, saying the "usefulness of it as potential park property is clear."

She added that the county Board of Supervisors had rezoned the property to "park, recreation and open space" — a zone supported by the state Coastal Commission last week. It would allow 115-130 recreation campsites or the same number of housing units.

Vickie Powell, spokeswoman for Friends of Porter-Sesnon, told commissioners that park use of the parcel had been supported by not only supervisors and the Coastal Commission, but the city of Capitola, the Sierra Club, Save Our Shores, the Environmental Council and residents.

"We ask you to support the wishes of the community," she said. "We want the coastline of our county to be for all, not just a select few."

Speaker Kim Tschantz noted the favorable park sentiment of several speakers. He called it "quite unique" for neighbors to actually favor a state park with recreational vehicle campsites.

Glenn Specht was the lone speaker against appropriation. She said the money could be better spent elsewhere.

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