

Urban expert: Wingspread will more than pay its way

Wingspread Beach, the resort project proposed on 67 acres overlooking Monterey Bay just south of New Brighton State Beach, would more than pay its way if it's built.

John W. Cone, a specialist in urban development, told an audience of more than 100 in Aptos last night that the development of Hare, Brewer and Kelley as now conceived would generate \$2 million a year in revenues for the county, while costing public service agencies, such as fire, police and schools, about \$330,000.

The money would come from the transient occupancy tax, amounting to 8 percent of the charge for a room, and property taxes.

In addition, Cone said, the project would pay millions of dollars in fees for permits and in other charges to the county during the initial stages.

Cone, who prepared the part of the Environmental Impact Report dealing with the fiscal impact of

Wingspread, was one of a panel at a hearing held at Mar Vista School and sponsored by the Council of Improvement Associations.

Cone said the Wingspread venture involved major financial risk for its developer. But he said it was one of the most "interesting" projects he's ever seen. He called it an "ingenious way to finance cultural facilities."

Wingspread's plan calls for a 100-room hotel with conference and meeting facilities, a lodge with 170 studio hotel rooms, clusters of 200 two-to-three bedroom units and 27 houses for use by small vacation or conference groups.

The carrot in the Wingspread plan is a proposal for a performing arts center north of the railroad tracks that run through the property. It calls for a 1,000-seat theater, a 500-seat theater, a rehearsal theater and a commercial area for restaurants, shops and art galleries. The performing arts center would be owned and

operated by a foundation and receive financing (as well as audiences) from the hotel-conference operation.

Other panelists were Darrell Kelly, president of Terra-Sol, who did the portion of the ERA dealing with geology, soil and water, and Michael Meyers, an engineer who studied the impact of traffic expected to be generated by the project. Scheduled to appear with the panel, but absent, was Geary T. Coats, in charge of preparing the EIR for the county.

Most of the hearing was devoted to questions from the audience on various aspects of the project, many of them of a technical nature. Panelists were challenged on such issues as the possibility of the project creating a water overdraft or a sewer overflow, guarantees of continuing support for the performing arts center, the "viewshed" impact and where dirt left over from construction would be dumped.

Harry Bright was moderator.