

WINGSPREAD

# Officials will know by Thursday if Wingspread is to be on ballot

7-1-80  
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SANTA CRUZ — Election officials expect to know by Thursday whether an initiative aimed at blocking county involvement in Palo Alto developer Ryland Kelley's controversial Wingspread Beach project has qualified for the November ballot.

Initiative backers Monday submitted 11,394 signatures in support of the proposed ballot measure, which would bar the county from using local or state funds to participate "financially ... in any form whatsoever" in the condominium/conference center-performing arts facility Kelley plans to

build on the 66-acre Porter-Sesnon property in Aptos.

Officials said Monday that the signatures of 7,756 registered voters are needed to put the measure on the ballot. They said the initiative will be certified if a random check of 500 names turns up at least 420 valid signatures. Officials said they hope to complete the random sampling by Thursday.

If the initiative petitions fail the initial test, then election officials would check each of the signatures turned in Monday individually.

County supervisors voted 3-2 in April to authorize County Administrative Officer George Newell to negotiate with Kelley for purchase of

Kelley's 99-year Porter-Sesnon lease. The CAO was also authorized to seek state financial participation in the Wingspread project.

Newell wants the county to purchase the lease and then lease the Porter-Sesnon site back to Kelley, who would build and operate the Wingspread project there under a concession agreement with the county.

Newell believes that the purchase/lease-back arrangement will net the county more revenue and offer some protection against annexations and possible lawsuits. Wingspread opponents charge that the proposed deal is aimed at shoring up a financially weak development.