

'They're horizontal hotels'

## Builder seeks ban exemption

The developers of the Wingspread Beach development on the Porter-Sesnon property off McGregor Drive in Aptos made a pitch for water connections for the project Monday night, but got a cool reception from the directors of the Soquel Creek County Water District.

Willard Morris, of Conference Associates, the developers, appeared before the water board to press his argument that 497 "horizontal hotel" units that are proposed to be built are not residential units and are therefore not affected by the district's ban on new residential water connections.

Because of an overdraft of the water supply in a major portion of the water district, directors in January passed an ordinance banning new water connections. Ex-

cepted from the ban were several categories of permits, including "visitor-serving and commercial enterprises." Morris argued Monday night that the 100 hotel units, 170 lodge units and 227 condominiums are in reality "horizontal hotel" units and fall within the visitor serving provisions of the connection ban ordinance. The units, Morris said, will be privately owned and all the units will fall under a 29-day occupancy limit, administered by a non-profit organization.

Conference Associates is already in receipt of a letter from the district which states the project falls within the district's service area and would be served if water is available when the project is built. This was the form letter the district sent all applicants after the overdraft was discovered

and it became apparent that some kind of a connection ban would be likely.

"I am trying to get out from under that letter for service," Morris told the directors, arguing that the 447 units fall under the visitor service or commercial provisions of the ordinance. Pointing out that the hotel, lodge and condominium units will all be privately owned, Morris said, "selling off the rooms individually is just another method of financing."

Saying that the 29-day occupancy limit would not contribute to a permanent population increase, Morris further argued that a survey at Pajaro Dunes showed water use in this kind of development is only 150 gallons a day per unit as opposed to 400 gallons a day in the average residence. He also said that a plan to use

"grey water" for some uses would decrease the water consumption by "40 to 50 percent."

But the directors weren't buying Morris' arguments.

Board chairman Ken Izant said, "Our worry is not population growth. Our worry is the demand for water."

And Director Dan Kriege added: "We have to go back to the intent of the ordinance. We have a water problem, and the demand for additional living units creates a demand for more water. Even if you change occupancy every 29 days, years' normal growth in the area.

"We would be remiss in approving something like this that would add another

two years' demand on the water basis. I couldn't go along with it."

Director Larry Bargetto told Morris, "Even at 150 gallons per day, you would increase the overdraft by 10 percent. You are asking for something that's very substantial."

"We would be condemned for using subterfuge if we approved this," declared Director Mervin Garibotto.

The discussion ended with Izant declaring, "We are in a bad bind. To allow something like this would be sticking our necks out."

The directors took no action on Morris' request, indicating they would await a recommendation from District General Manager Robert Johnson after Morris argues his case further with Johnson.