

Council airs options for greenbelt land

Greenbelt
Public trust,
housing outlined
for Westside site

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Another compromise may be in the wind between the council and the Bombay Corp. over how to develop a 246-acre parcel on the western edge of the city.

"We're kind of licking our fingers and sticking them up out of the foxhole to see if they're going to get shot off," said Councilman Scott Kennedy, one of three council representatives who have been negotiating with Bombay officials since January.

According to Kennedy, two of the latest proposals call for the city to allow Bombay to build either 15 single-family homes or a 25-unit townhouse complex on a portion of the greenbelt land closest to Highway 1.

In exchange, Bombay officials would turn the remaining greenbelt acreage over to a public-trust agency with the intention that it remain in its natural state.

Bombay also would turn over to the city a small parcel at the end of Grandview Street, which the council may consider using for affordable housing, said Kennedy. That would fulfill Bombay's city-mandated requirement to provide a portion of affordable housing in its building project.

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These two options, said Kennedy, were the ones selected by the council as the most promising from a list of seven offered by Bombay officials in May.

"The clock is ticking on this thing," said Kennedy. "We can't fuel this illusion that this can go on indefinitely."

The Bombay Corp. and the city have been involved in litigation since 1992 over the company's right to develop its property vs. the voters' decision that the land should be part of a protected greenbelt.

The city has been unable to come up with the \$3.35 million necessary to buy the land outright, so both sides have been trying to negotiate a settlement.

Council members thought they had worked out a deal in 1993 to allow concentrated development at the end of Meder Street in exchange for the rest of the parcel remaining in greenbelt. But environmentalists successfully claimed that the natural habitat would be significantly damaged by such a move.

Kennedy said it appears that a concentrated development on the land nearest Highway 1 would be the most environmentally friendly, and the project would not be visible from the highway.

Such a placement also would allow the developer to tap into the city's sewer system, rather than building septic tanks as would have been required if an earlier plan to build homes throughout

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Greenbelt proposal

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the site were approved.

Bombay officials are drawing up site plans for a development project. In the meantime, the City Council will conduct several public meetings to gauge support for the compromise.

At its regular meeting on Tuesday, the council will discuss the two proposals that its committee decided were the most acceptable. That meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 809 Center St.

On Wednesday, a special meeting will be conducted at the Bom-

bay site and will include a tour of the parcel. The tour, which is open to the public, will begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Highway 1 curb cut that provides access to the lower portion of the Bombay property. This curb cut is directly across from Shaffer Road, approximately one-third of a mile north of the Highway 1-Western Drive intersection.

On July 15, a special council meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at City Hall for a public hearing on the proposed site plan.

If both sides can agree on one alternative, Bombay is expected to submit a development application

to be evaluated as usual for any environmental or other problems. Such a project must be approved by both the City Council and the California Coastal Commission.

Copies of the seven alternatives, and the two options considered most promising by the council will be available at the Main Branch of the public library as soon as they are ready.

For more information on the public hearings, call the Planning Department at 429-3555. Messages for members of the City Council may be left at 429-3550.