

Redevelopment Agency Moves To Solve Courthouse Problems

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The county didn't show up at yesterday's Santa Cruz Redevelopment agency meeting, but agency directors nonetheless started wheels moving to resolve the county's courthouse problem.

Plans for the new courthouse, to be built on redevelopment land, call for a five-story building which may be raised to eight stories later. But it was recently rediscovered that the agency's general plan for the site lays on a three-story height limit for the building.

The directors, acting on advice of agency attorney Lewis Yapp, started proceedings to amend the plan and allow the greater height limit. The agency will hold a public hearing at 4 p.m. October 24. The agency's recommendation will then go to the city council for action, and the council will set a public hearing to consider amending the plan.

The agency also made a ruling yesterday that the height change does not affect the city's master plan — a ruling that shortens the amendment process by eliminating the city planning commissions from the chain of events.

Barring complications, the amendments could be made in about 60 days, leaving the county a comfortable time margin on its building plans, which are expected to be six months on the drawing board.

The Ocean Plaza group, which plans a motel-restaurant development on Ocean street, was granted an extension until October 10 for a land purchase agreement and presentation of a site plan for agency approval. The agency set a public hearing for October 10 for the disposition of the Ocean Plaza parcel.

The agency also moved to solve the fire district problem confronting the Ocean Plaza group. The site is in fire district 1, which has stiff construction requirements, because the site is zoned for general commercial use. Architects Burde and Shaw estimated motel construction costs would be some 10 per cent higher in fire district 1 than in fire district 2.

The agency passed a resolution requesting the city council to allow a variance on the site and put it in fire district 2. In a long-range action, the agency decided to initiate a zoning review of the entire redevelopment area east of the San Lorenzo river.

The aim is to put the area in a "planned development" zone instead of its present commercial and apartment zoning. The planned redevelopment zone did not exist when the redevelopment area was formed.

Burde and Shaw presented a preliminary study for the Ocean Plaza development showing a two-story, 58-unit motel and the restaurant. Cost estimate on the project is about \$430,000.

The council combined the October 10 hearing to include a land disposition hearing on the Wilson Brothers and associates parcel on Soquel avenue. Planned for the Wilson site, adjacent to the Bundox restaurant, is a \$150,000 building for the Colonial Title company. Construction plans are to be sent to the agency next week, and the company hopes to start construction November 1.

The agency also approved construction drawings submitted by Ted Alveraz for a four-office professional building to be built on Soquel avenue at the San Lorenzo bridge.

Clowns

