

Wingspread foes poised for battle against project

By KATHARINE BALL
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Claiming that Santa Cruz County can't be "bought" by a \$100,000 campaign planned by Wingspread supporters, opponents of the proposed hotel-conference center-performing arts complex will kick off their own campaign to defeat the development tomorrow.

On Monday, the pro-Wingspread forces announced they might spend more than \$100,000 to convince Santa Cruz County residents to vote for the development, which developer Ryland Kelley wants to build on the 72-acre Porter Sesnon property on the coast adjacent to New Brighton State Beach.

The proponents also said a poll paid for by the Wingspread development firm of Hare, Brewer and Kelley showed that 50 percent or more of county residents favored the project.

But Cherie Bobbe, an anti-Wingspreader, said yesterday the poll had been "terribly biased."

She noted that it included questions asking residents if they would like to see money generated by Wingspread go to help the homeless.

"To attach questions about the homeless, I think that slants it terribly," said Bobbe.

The developers and some county officials claim the project will put \$1 million a year into county coffers through a complicated lease-back deal on the Porter Sesnon property. That money, if it materializes, could be spent as the county pleased.

Bobbe also scoffed at Wingspread proponents' statements about how much money they would spend on the campaign.

"It was my impression that they felt kind of proud about raising that much money. They seem to think Santa Cruz

County is a place that can be bought," Bobbe said. "This is one place where money doesn't talk."

Bobbe declined to say how much money the anti-Wingspread forces hope to raise, or how much they have now. But she said her group, the Committee Against Measure A, already had about 100 volunteers to man phone banks, go door-to-door and dispatch mailings.

"What we lack in funds we are going to make up for in other areas," Bobbe said.

Bobbe said a partial list of objections to Wingspread included "dire" traffic problems, the current lack of Coastal Commission approval, the high cost of staying at the proposed hotel, and diminished public access to the Porter Sesnon site.

Campaign literature from the pro-Wingspread group threatens that if Kelley can't build Wingspread, he will build something tackier on the property, either a "lodge" or an RV park.

If Kelley can't build a hotel and conference center, he also won't build three performing arts halls and several public playing fields he has now promised, the campaign flier says.

"It's just like him to threaten," Bobbe said.

Anti-Wingspreaders say the performing arts halls and playing fields may be nixed by the Coastal Commission anyway, even if county voters approve them, because they are non-priority coastal uses.

Therefore, Santa Cruz County could end up with its last Mid-county coastal open space occupied by a fancy hotel and no attendant benefits, they argue.

The campaign against Wingspread will kick off officially tomorrow at noon with a press conference on the county courthouse steps.