

# Wingspread decision put off

## — swing vote's undecided

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The Santa Cruz County Planning Commission yesterday put off for a month a decision on the controversial Wingspread Beach project because the commissioner holding the swing vote wanted more time to make up her mind.

During the commission's discussion yesterday, it became apparent the decision on the smaller of two Wingspread development proposals rests with Ree Burnap, the appointee of Supervisor Robley Levy, in whose district the project lies. Commission Chairman Denise Holbert and Commissioner Myrna Britton were ready to deny the application, while commissioners Ed Banks and Skip Eberly indicated they were ready to approve it.

Conference Associates, a branch of the Palo Alto firm of Hare, Brewer and Kelley, has prepared two plans for developing the Porter Sesnon property across the freeway from Cabrillo College. The development firm has a 99-year lease on the property, which is owned by the Regents of the University of California.

Plan B, the larger of the two development proposals, includes 295 condominiums, soccer and baseball fields, and a large performing arts center. That proposal will be before the Planning Commission no sooner than the end of the summer,

because it is currently undergoing environmental review. But for the moment, the commission has to decide whether to approve Plan A, which Conference Associates' Ryland Kelley has clearly stated is only a "fallback" plan in case Plan B is not approved.

Plan A calls for 197 condominiums, a conference center, a pool and tennis courts, but no performing arts center. There is little community support for Plan A, except as a first step toward the eventual approval and execution of Plan B.

Kelley has told the Planning Commission that if Plan A is not approved, he will not pursue the approval of Plan B, because he feels there would be no hope for it if the smaller proposal — which conforms to all zoning laws — was not approved.

Planning Commissioner Burnap started to suggest that the commission delay making a decision on Plan A until it can be reviewed side by side with Plan B, but Kelley said he wouldn't accept that arrangement. Delaying a decision on Plan A for months would be tantamount to a denial, Kelley said.

Burnap then asked the commission to put off a decision until its April 24 meeting.

"What I want to do is take some time to think about it," she said.

The commission was unanimous in granting Burnap's

request. But before agreeing to put off the decision, four of the commissioners expressed their feelings about the project.

After hearing that the condominiums would cost about \$171,000, and would be sold as investments, not as vacation residences, Commission Chairman Holbert said the project obviously wouldn't provide any "affordable" accommodations for visitors — one goal of the county's Local Coastal Plan.

Holbert and Britton were encouraged by a letter from the state Parks Department saying the state still may buy the Porter Sesnon property to make it into a park, and both said they would like to see that happen.

Both indicated they were ready to deny the Plan A application yesterday.

Commissioner Eberly said the Wingspread development would benefit the community by maintaining much of the open space and by bringing tax revenue to the county. He also argued it would be more compatible with the nearby residential community than a state park would be.

"I can't imagine wanting to live around a park," Eberly said, "especially an RV (recreational vehicle) park."

Banks, the alternate planning commissioner from the Pajaro Valley, said the area would benefit from the traffic improvements that would be required of the developer as a condition of approval.

"If nothing were to happen on that property, the traffic situation as it is wouldn't go away," Banks said. He also said the property lessee should not be denied the right to develop the property.

The commission is now scheduled to make a decision on Wingspread Plan A April 24. If it is approved, commissioners will also consider lowering the parking requirements on the project.

REFERENCE

