

# Planners OK Skypark development

By JOHN BESSA

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SCOTTS VALLEY — New development at the former Skypark airport should include some high-density housing, the Planning Commission said early Thursday as it approved a 200-home subdivision at the site.

It was one of more than 100 conditions placed on the Kaufman and Broad-Monterey Bay Inc. proposal for the land north of Mount Hermon Road.

Commissioners sought to create more open space for improved views and groundwater recharge by requesting clustered or attached homes and larger gaps between buildings. Commissioners, however, couldn't agree on how many homes should be built together.

It may mean some redesigning, said Norman Schwartz, development consultant for Kaufman and Broad.

Planning Commission approval sends the plan to the City Council, which could ignore the recommendations or concur with them in its final decision, said Planning Direc-

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## The Planning Commission sought to make 15 percent of the homes affordable to low-income Scotts Valley residents.

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tor Bob Hanna.

"It will really be up to the City Council whether there will be redesigning," Schwartz said.

Some conditions included:

- Relocating four lots away from the proposed 21-acre park area to make the space more usable.

- Making 15 percent of the homes affordable to low-income residents.

- Diverting storm runoff to a collection basin, such as a sports field, to recharge groundwater.

- An electronic gate for police to access a park planned to encircle the subdivision.

Several other conditions placed on the approval of the 23-acre development are routine and applied to any project, Hanna said.

Several residents spoke at the public hearing on the development, some for, some against.

Sue Roth, president of the Mañana Woods Mutual Water Co., the commission that the project would create a new drain on the region's underground water supply and block storm water from percolating back into the ground.

The part of the aquifer beneath the development has had the greatest groundwater pumping, dropping well levels more than 100 feet, she said. Skypark is "perhaps the only area left that will deal with the recharge (needed) for the Camp Evers area," Roth said.

Schwartz responded that the development is projected to use about 64 acre-feet a year of water. An acre-foot is the amount of water that an average family of four uses in a year.

Natural and artificial groundwater recharge will put about 66 acre-feet a year back, Schwartz said.

Resident George Ow Jr., owner of King's Village shopping center, told the commission he supports the project.

"(It) is vitally important to our shopping center and other shopping centers on Mount Hermon Road," Ow said.

The commission requested affordable housing in the project after being warned by resident Ed Davidson that plans to offer some lower-cost homes in an adjoining high-density development in the future may fall through.

"If you're not doing it on this property, where are you going to do it in Scotts Valley?" he asked.

Ow said he thought the expected price of the homes, \$250,000, was affordable in a community like Scotts Valley.

Davidson said the price was "not affordable to the people who work at Kmart," he said.

A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday's council meeting, but changes to the proposal may leave the council with an incomplete plan to discuss, Hanna said. Since the hearing has already been advertised, the council will still take comments, he said.