

Plans for Aptos Village get a once-over

By CAROLYN SWIFT

Plans to build new commercial and residential development in Aptos Village were given a lukewarm approval by village property owners at a luncheon meeting last week at the Pop Inn.

Landowners among the dozen persons at the meeting emphasized they have long awaited development within the village — but insist on adherence to the Aptos Village Plan which has yet to be adopted by County Supervisors.

Jerry Tucker, land use consultant and former county planner, and Fred Hudson, of McSherry and Hudson Real Estate in Watsonville, presented their plans for two construction phases on the property of Granite Rock and Southern Pacific Railroad, about 2½ acres located between the Hopkins right-of-way and the Bayview Hotel.

An application for a planned unit development permit was filed six months ago, Tucker said, and a hearing on "phase 1," of the development is scheduled for Sept. 1. Initially, the developers planned to build a complex of 13,000 square feet, but split the development into two phases of roughly 6,500 square-feet because of traffic problems.

Phase 1 of the development plan calls for construction of an "Aptos Station," a building designed to resemble the old Aptos railroad station once located in the same general area. Construction of this portion of the plan requires no additional road alignments.

Construction of "phase 2," Tucker said, will depend on the eventual road pattern established in the village.

"We still want to pursue phase 2 as quickly as possible," he said, "That's why we are urging a complete traffic study and adoption of the village plan. If the property alignment doesn't permit construction of phase 2, then we won't build."

Among those present at the luncheon were Lionel J. Garrison, representing Hammerwell Incorporated, and Fred J. Werdmuller of Bowman and Williams Consulting Engineers. They said they are at the beginning stages of planned development for the property formerly owned by Ben Breit. This land consists of 4.3 acres bounded by the parcel to be developed by McSherry and Hudson; the land of Tom Thompson; the Bayview Hotel-Village Fair property of Fred Toney, and the Granite Rock Co. lands between Granite Way and Cathedral Drive.

Rick Sands, also representing Hammerwell Inc., said plans for this property will be for mixed residential-commercial uses, including condominiums and perhaps a neighborhood shopping center.

Some of the property owners who spoke at the meeting made it clear they intend to see development complies with the Aptos Village Plan and provides the necessary roadway system to relieve traffic congestion.

Tucker assured the group the developers originally intended to follow guidelines of the Aptos Village Plan — and

to provide the recommended connection between Hopkins right-of-way and Cathedral Drive. But as work progressed, they learned the county is studying alternative routes through the properties, and these may have a different alignment.

Susan Blair and Betty Cost of the county planning department, said there are about seven alternatives the county has studied. So far, emphasis has been on cost of the different routes and predicted impact on surrounding areas.

The planners said adoption of the Aptos Village Plan has been held up because it lacked a comprehensive traffic study. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is being prepared, and the county is able to do the traffic study that is needed before county supervisors will give approval.

Glenn Specht, member of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce and Forest of Nisene Marks State Park Advisory Committee, listed concerns of the state parks department regarding the park entrance and

proximity of the proposed buildings. She also voiced her concern for the overall traffic pattern through the village area.

"We are really concerned because we don't have an adopted plan for the village," she said, "We ask to think of traffic and parking first as you consider development."

While property and business owners have long awaited new development in the village, Mrs. Specht added, they are opposed to piecemeal construction. She asked the developers to make their plans as if the Aptos Village Plan were adopted.

Lucile Aldrich, co-owner of Granite Way along with Hudson and Tucker that at least five property owners have rights across the parcels scheduled for development. Her right-of-way through the Breit and Southern Pacific parcels has been used for 17 years, she said.

Mrs. Aldrich had also worked on the Aptos Village Plan, and said it had initially called for parking on the land

proposed for "Aptos Station," or phase 1.

Tucker said McSherry and Hudson plan to purchase the bulk of this property while the remainder will be bought by Fred Toney. They will use a portion of the property as a parking lot under a mutual agreement. This will allow expanded parking for the Bayview Hotel.

During a discussion of nearly two hours, the developers and property owners agreed they all favor the general ideas of the village plan. Tucker suggested they work together on a connecting route behind the village that will satisfy both public need and private interests.

Mrs. Specht emphasized the need for the county to relieve some traffic problems caused by construction in the canyon areas outside the village. She recommended public pressure be taken to insist on improvements such as the proposed extension of Polo Drive.

Mrs. Aldrich said the increased traffic on Granite Way by canyon residents was

the main reason she stopped filling the chuckholes on the road. She favored a route from Cathedral Drive to Hopkins right-of-way that would allow Granite Way to be dead-ended.

Toward the end of the discussion, Tucker listed some areas of agreement. The group seemed to favor the guidelines of the village plan and opposed a cut "through the heart," of the properties — directly from Granite Way past the cement foundations to Soquel Drive. Off-street parking was recommended, and Mrs. Specht emphasized that business owners should provide both parking for

customers "and a few spaces for those who use the park." Provisions for bicycles and pedestrians were also mentioned.

While it was assumed success of a roadway behind the village still hinges on a total circulation plan and a county funding commitment, the property owners picked a route that seemed satisfactory to everyone present.

This route begins along the Hopkins right-of-way below the base of the hill, and continues across the right-of-way of Granite Way, behind the cement foundations, to join Cathedral Drive at the entrance to Village Fair.

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