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TWENTY- EIGHT PAGES

Convention Site Again Open For Bids

By Alan Jones

Sentinel Staff Writer

Santa Cruz' motel-convention center plan was thrown wide open yesterday as the redevelopment agency canceled the option held by Barrett Homes, Inc., on the site of the proposed center.

Barrett, which had spent more than a year trying to put together a development package, was unable in recent months to complete an agreement with Holiday Inns of America for the center.

The agency, which had granted Barrett a series of extensions dating back to October, let the contract lapse yesterday and

started proceedings to advertise for new offers on the 5.6-acre site.

The land use will remain the same—a motel with 240 or more units, and a convention center with facilities for 600 or more. First stage construction will remain at 120 units and convention facilities for 400.

The agency will hear proposals from bidders at its August 11 meeting, and agency chairman Carl Nelson said the re-advertising plus construction time for the development means the project cannot be ready for the 1967 summer season.

The agency was hopeful that at least three organizations will bid for the site. Holiday Inns will probably submit a proposal, now that they are free of ties with Barrett, and Barrett has been consulting with one or two organizations, including Hickory House Motor Inns. There also is a local group of businessmen which was interested in the project last year.

Barrett built the Villa Nueva apartments, at Ocean and Dakota streets, as the first of three stages of construction on the redevelopment site. Villa Nueva did poorly in the apartment market, and Barrett joined the agency in a restudy of possible land uses for the remaining acreage.

The study indicated more apartments were not feasible, but that a motel-convention center would be. The price of the land was boosted accordingly, and Barrett started looking for a motel client last year.

Barrett landed Holiday, and at one point last fall the two firms announced their plans

to build on the site. But negotiations finally fell through when the two were unable to agree on terms.

Robert Klein, Barrett's representative, charged last night that Holiday was "callous" and "indifferent" to the efforts made by Barrett, the chamber of commerce, and city officials in trying to make the project possible.

In talking with Hickory House officials, Klein said he had received "more cooperation in 10 days" than he had in months of talks with Holiday.

Klein said Barrett also has talked with Bruce Gelker, southern California motel man who at one time was to be Holiday's franchisee for the development here. Gelker might be interested in doing the project independently or in cooperation with a local syndicate, Klein indicated.

The criteria for new proposals submitted for the land will be the price offered on the land, the degree to which the proposal meets the agency plan specifications, the experience and financial responsibility of the bidder, the architectural and planning skills shown in the proposals, and the time schedule proposed for development.

The minimum land price will be the same as that proposed for the Barrett-Holiday project—\$1.55 a square foot for the parcel opposite Villa Nueva and fronting Ocean and Dakota streets, \$1.25 a square foot for the parcel behind Villa Nueva on Dakota street.

The agency took one other action yesterday, approving the Shell Oil company's plans for a new layout of its station at Ocean and Water streets.

Storms Texas

In northwestern Georgia, about 100 persons fled their homes today when flash floods on small creeks barreled through small towns. Residents estimated the flooding was the worst in 17 years. There were no reports of injuries or estimates of damages.

The storms pounded the South last night, sweeping across Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida. Tornadoes were sighted in some portions of the South. During a thunderstorm at Oxford, Miss., wind gusts were clocked at 92 mph.

More rain fell in Dallas, where at least seven persons drowned yesterday after a