

First hearing on annexation tonight

By DAN YOUNG

The first in a series of public hearings leading up to the possible annexation to the city of a portion of the Freedom area will be held during tonight's Planning Commission meeting, set for 7:30 at City Hall.

Watsonville has already held several meetings with residents of the affected area — which includes the Green Valley and Colonial Manor mobile home parks, and several neighborhoods bordered roughly by Green Valley Road Extension on the south, Airport Boulevard on the north, Loma Prieta Avenue on the east and Holm Road to the west. Tonight the city planners are to decide whether to recommend that the City Council proceed with the annexation process.

The move to include the area within the city limits began earlier this year, according to the Planning Department, when the owners and residents of the Green Valley Mobile Home Park requested the annexation.

An ensuing survey of area residents resulted in several more petitions for annexation, and the Planning Department was directed by the council to consider expanding the area of possible annexation to take in most of the finger of county land extending to the city limits from just below Freedom Boulevard.

The commission tonight must also set down zoning designations for the area, which is already predominantly residential.

Following tonight's action,

three more public hearings on the matter will be held — two in front of the City Council and one before the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) — before a vote is held among residents of the area in question.

Should the council and LAFCO approve of the annexation, the election will probably be held in June, by mail, City Manager John Radin said.

The application for annexation would be abandoned at any time if written protest is filed by more than 50 percent of the registered voters who live or own property in the affected area.

The annexation could proceed without an election if fewer than 25 percent of the owners of the total assessed value of the

land within the area, and fewer than 25 percent of the registered voters living in the area, protested, but the Planning Department in a memo to the commissioners indicated that "it is anticipated that an election will be required."

Also tonight, the commission will hear a request from a developer to build a 175-unit apartment complex on the corner of Green Valley Extension and Hope Drive.

The location is on the site of the previously approved but never built 96-unit Green Valley Highlands townhouse project. That project was originally approved by Santa Cruz County, and the area annexed into the city in December of 1980. But the developers ran out of financing.