

Urban Renewal

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Huge Convention Complex For SC

By Alan Jones
Sentinel Staff Writer

Construction next year of a \$3 million motel and convention center here was made a certainty today with signing of a contract between Barrett Homes, Inc., and the Santa Cruz redevelopment agency.

Holiday Inns of America will develop the facility on a five-acre site at Ocean and Dakota streets, with first-stage construction of 120 motel rooms and banquet facilities for 400 or more.

Bruce Gelker, now owner-operator of the Saddleback inn in Santa Ana, will operate the center here, which will eventually be built to 240 motel rooms and convention facilities for 600 to 800. Gelker said he plans to build "the finest and most attractive hotel in the Monterey Bay Area." The complex will be built to reflect the history and natural beauty of Santa Cruz, Gelker said.

Barrett Homes, which will build the complex to the design of San Francisco architect Robert Batchelor, agreed to a total price of \$351,415 for the land, at prices of \$1.55 per square foot for one parcel and \$1.25 a foot for the other. The two parcels, which bracket Dakota street, may be joined to create a single parcel.

The construction schedule will be firmed up at a November 4 agency meeting. Tentative plans are for a start in March, with a four-month construction schedule.

Negotiations for the center started eight months ago. The

site was originally to have been developed in apartments, but the plan was changed when the demand slackened for apartments in the city.

Once the motel - convention center was decided on, the agency, Barrett, the Greater Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, city officials and business leaders joined in the effort to attract a major group for the complex.

Final action on Gelker's application for the Holiday Inn franchise will be taken within the month by Holiday's executive committee. Jere Hooper, Holiday's assistant vice president, said final plans for the complex could be completed shortly after that.

Barrett's signature on the contract was received by special delivery mail at the agency office this morning, Executive Director Mrs. Martha Gion said.

"Santa Cruzans can be assured of a facility they will be proud of, which will attract new tourist and convention business to the area," Gelker said. "I feel that our operation will enhance the existing visitor economy and result in additional off-season business for existing motels."

Chamber and city officials said that location of the convention complex has been a major goal in recent years. City Manager David Koester said the development will be "one of the best things that's happened economically in a long time." He cited increased property taxes, room tax, employment and visitor spending which he said would exceed the impact from a medium to large industrial plant.

Chamber President Keith Shaffer said the center will be "a real economic boost to the entire area."

"Efforts like this," Shaffer said, "point up the valuable and effective role played by the chamber in making contacts, providing information and compiling research material for continuing economic growth of the area."

Redevelopment Chairman Carl Nelson said he is "delighted" that redevelopment was the means of meeting "a 10-year need of the city."

"These efforts were an example of the redevelopment process at its best," Nelson said. "A local agency assembling and reconditioning the land, and the business leaders cooperating and corraling the private developers."

"Much of the credit for the accelerating success of our local redevelopment project is

due to the efforts of the chamber and increasing understanding and energies of local business leaders."

Gelker and his partner, Earl Padgett of Panama City, Florida, have extensive hotel-motel experience. Their developments include the Saga motel, which was built outside the main entrance to Disneyland in Anaheim and was the first major motel there; the Saga Pasadena, the Akua motel in Anaheim, and the Saddleback inn.

Redevelopment agency member Robert Rudolph said his early reservations about the land price had been "fully satisfied" by Barrett's acceptance of the agency's development requirements and the resulting benefit to the community. The total land price is \$181,000 more than it would have been if an apartment development had gone on the land as originally planned.

The complex is "a fine beginning," city Planning Director Neal Walton said. "It begins to put us back in the convention business."

Chamber officials have stepped up efforts to attract conventions in recent months. Santa Cruz convention business has tailed off from 25,000 delegate-days in 1955 to a low of 5000 in 1963. The chamber is trying to raise the figure to 10,000 by next year.

Whew, It's Hot-And More To Come

It was 95 degrees in the Santa Cruz area yesterday and the weather forecast to the Division of Forestry today said to expect continued warm air over California through Sunday.

Temperature reports to the forestry office yesterday at 2:30 p.m. said Empire Grade hit 82, Felton, 94, the summit area, 96, and Corralitos was understood to be 92.

Ed Pope, assistant fire dispatcher at Felton, said that the fire danger in the county is high and if the humidity continues to drop the situation would soon become critical.

He said a temperature of 77 degrees was reported from San Luis Obispo this morning at 7 o'clock.

There are no fires at present in the county, but a local truck and crew were dispatched this

oliday Inn

Proposition "B" for \$300,000 will be used to add about 10,000 square feet to the present city hall. Expansion will eliminate crowded and scattered facilities now being used by several city offices.

Proponents of the issue point out that funds to repay the bonds are available from current and projected city revenues and that no new city tax levy will be necessary.

"Despite the fact that no tax increase is necessary," Starr concluded, "we must have a record voter turnout to assure passage of the bonds. The program requires a 2-1 vote in order to pass."