

Capitola City Council votes to proceed with annexation

CAPITOLA — The City Council unanimously voted Thursday night to proceed in its attempt to annex 13½ acres behind the Capitola Mall as requested by property owners in the area.

The annexation proposal, which will

now be passed on to the county Local Agency Formation Commission which has jurisdiction in such matters, is not seen as an attempt by Capitola to get a lucrative piece of commercial property next to the mall. The area is presently zoned residen-

tial by the county, and the city is intent on keeping it that way.

The council passed an ordinance rezoning the area along Gross Road as single-family residential, with the rest of the area being multi-family high density (15 to

20 units per acre).

They also warned, however, that they had concerns about the high density and increased traffic such a build-out at that density would cause. They said they might want to reduce that density later.

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The nine individuals who own the property had requested the city annex the area, which now sits under county jurisdiction. The area is bordered by Deanes Lane on the north, Clares Street to the south, Gross Road to the west and the existing Capitola city boundaries on the east.

The high density concern was raised by Mayor Michael Routh. He pointed out that some 200 multiple family units could be allowed at existing densities and that the resulting traffic funneling through 40th Avenue could have some "real significant impacts."

The city's annexation request takes into account the traffic problem and and proposes a street plan.

Several 40th Avenue residents who are already within the city made it clear they didn't want those mitigation measures involving a "punch through" of 40th from Capitola Road to 41st Avenue.

Resident Robert Kenyon conceded that such a punch through would certainly alleviate traffic on 41st Avenue, but would also have a "devastating effect" on his small neighborhood.

The council gave assurances they would adhere to the wishes of residents. They said the future street plan would take into consideration the impacts on the surrounding residential area, as well as the impact of the future area of development from the surrounding commercial area.

In approving a negative environmental declaration, which states the annexation would not have any detrimental effects on the environment, the council agreed with a recommendation from its Planning Commission that a neighborhood park should be provided within the 13½-acre area. They also ruled that buffers should be provided between the single-family and multiple-family areas.

It is not anticipated the county Local Agency Formation Commission will act on the city's request immediately. Routh projected it could take anywhere from two months to a year or more.

— By KEITH MURAOKA