

# Controversy over Wingspread

Clay Evans

A new committee formed in support of the Wingspread development project and Measure A may spend upwards of \$100,000 in its campaign before the June election, despite little spending by the opposition and the committee's assertions that a majority of county residents support the measure.

The "Yes on Measure A" committee launched its campaign last Monday, by releasing the results of its public opinion survey suggesting general approval of the plan to develop the Porter-Sesnon property in Aptos.

"It's a hard, firm, 50 percent solidly in favor of [the measure] because of its intrinsic merit," said Rowland Rebele, chairman of the committee. The Wingspread development plan, which includes a 468-room hotel, sports playing fields and a community cultural events center, has met with serious opposition in the past.

Asked why the committee would have to spend \$100,000 on a plan their poll says is strongly supported in the community, Rebele pointed to the

"intensity of the opposition" and the high numbers of undecided voters.

"We need to convince those who are undecided," said Rebele; "if we rest on our polls I think we could lose it." The survey, conducted by the San Francisco firm of Corey, Canapary & Galanis at the behest of the committee, was well taken and professional, according to Rebele, but groups opposing Measure A and people surveyed by the poll have suggested otherwise.

"They're going to have to spend that kind of money because they know they don't have the support of the community," according to Vickie Powell-Murray of the Friends of Porter-Sesnon (FPS). Powell-Murray contends that the committee deliberately slanted the poll to indicate a favorable reaction to Wingspread. FPS supports the establishment of a state park on the land instead of the Wingspread plan of developer Ryland Kelley.

Aptos resident Lois Bennett, questioned by polltakers last January claimed that the tactics of the survey were clearly biased and unprofession-

al. Bennett said she was asked if she would support the Wingspread project if part of its proceeds were to be spent on programs for the homeless.

"It was obviously a scam. To tie in the homeless with Kelley's promotion is misleading and not professionally decent," Bennett told *The Sun*.

While FPS plans to spend money in opposition to Measure A, Powell-Murray said the "Yes on A" committee would be able to far outstrip any effort on its part. Kelley, though not mentioned in the committee's promotional materials, would be a substantial donor to the campaign, which will include radio advertising and public events, according to Rebele. Powell-Murray, however, said that even huge spending in behalf of the measure won't deceive the voters.

"I find it presumptuous of them to think they can buy and push around the community," she said. "They might have \$100,000, but we have the people and the integrity of the community."