

Capitola - 1970-1979

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Solomonic council cuts neighborhood zoning baby in twain

By BOB SMITH

Faced with the question of what to do with the underdeveloped portions of Depot Hill, the Capitola city council split the issue in two Monday night.

The council approved residential zoning for the westerly two-thirds of the neighborhood, but decided to send the El Salto Resort property and the Escalona Gulch areas back to the planning commission for further study and a new recommendation.

The planning commission had recommended low-medium density, multi-residential zoning for the neighborhood, including the El Salto resort property. Automatic Review (AR) zoning would be applied to the Crest Apartment area and the Escalona Gulch property now owned by Jerome Keithly of Glendale.

The commission also recommended Public Facility (PF)

zoning for the city-owned mini-park at Escalona and Monterey Avenue, and also for the city and county-owned land below the Crest Apartments, including the city restrooms and parking lot, and the sewage pumping station owned by the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District.

The possibility of developing portions of the El Salto resort to maximum density of 11 units per acre disturbed resident Dave Athenour and Councilman Ron Graves.

"I'd like the council to consider AR zoning on the vacant property in the resort area," Athenour told the council. "This is a highly sensitive area.

"The present zoning allows 11 units per acre but because of present and future traffic flows and the bluffs, it should be in A-R zoning."

Athenour indicated that residents in the area have been told an 11-unit development is being

planned for a parcel east of Sacramento Avenue, between the cliff and El Salto Drive.

Attorney Timothy Ward, representing the El Salto Resort owners, denied there were any plans for such development.

Ward, who also represents Keithly, said the proposed AR zoning "is wholly irreconcilable for ther Keithly property."

And then speaking for the resort, he said, "there are no immediate plans for development and hence, no need for A-R zoning."

City Manager Max Kludt reinforced Ward's statement, saying he had received a telephone call from Keithly from Glendale.

Kludt said Keithly "opposes rezoning of the property. He now has an option to sell the property (the Escalona Gulch) area, and doesn't want A-R zoning on the property.

"He also wants confirmation," Kludt reported, "that the property could be built upon if feasible plans are presented.

"I've got no problems with that," the city manager said, "because the slopes aren't as drastic as shown (on an aerial topography map)."

The city has a topography map of the area, drawn several years

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ago from aerial photographs. And although the map is very accurate in open areas, the map makers had difficulty in determining the exact slopes in heavily wooded areas like the Escalona Gulch property. The city staff admits it doesn't know where the gulch now lies in relation to the lots owned by Keithly adjacent to an 1888-plotted extension of Escalona Drive that was never developed.

"I'm not completely compatible with the A-R zoning," Councilman John Dixon told the council once the public portion of the zoning hearing had been closed.

"I'm told my fears about it are unfounded, but it'll place property in the area in limbo.

"At the moment, I don't see that the owners would have trouble getting approval, but down the line, there will be difference in thinking."

Dixon opposed the A-R recommendation on the Keithly property, but a short time later,

when considering the zoning land along Park Avenue from Escalona northward to New Brighton Beach, voted in favor on A-R on the Antigua apartments and the surrounding residential areas.

"If this is what the property owners wants, fine with me," Dixon commented at that time. "Their desires are my wishes" Councilman Hill Nelson agreed with Dixon about the A-R zoning on the Hill, saying he was "a little leary about A-R zoning."

Councilman Ron Graves also said he had problems with the A-R zoning concept.

"I don't think the answer is A-R zoning for the whole area," Graves said, referring to the El Salto-Escalona Gulch areas.

"There are other planning tools that can be used to protect the area, and the planning commission can come back with a recommendation for the entire area."

But earlier, Graves wondered why residents in the level part of Depot Hill weren't asking for R-1 zoning. "It seems foolish to place RM-LM zoning on the part that is already developed. It needs R-1.

"But the development of the remainder of the area (El Salto) hinges on another access.

"The traffic from that kind of development (multi-family residential) should not impinge on the rest of the neighborhood. We can give the developer the kind of zoning that he wants but make him provide access," Graves said.

Councilman Michael Routh differed.

"I can't support another access to the hill knowing what I do know about the residents there," he said, adding that a second access would encourage more traffic in the area."

Planning commission chairman Howard Dysle told the council that he couldn't support the RM-LM zoning voted by the commission for the El Salto resort, and suggested that "the whole area needs another look."

Dysle also suggested that A-R zoning on all of the vacant property at the east end of the Depot Hill area would make it possible for the city to trade the

undeveloped Escalona right-of-way for an access across the Gulch, saving the city some money if it decides to construct the second roadway.

A motion to accept the original planning commission recommendations, made by Nelson, and seconded by Mayor Tom Mason when no other councilmen would do so, was defeated on a 2-3 vote.

Graves then made a motion to rewrite the proposed ordinance, approving the zoning recommendations for the area west of Sacramento Avenue, and send the sensitive areas back to the planning commission.

In other business, the council: —Approved an agreement with Sutter Hill to allow the city to add another left-turn lane to the proposed 41st Avenue median strip. The approval allows the developer to obtain a building permit and start the 41st Avenue shopping mall.

—Set June 14 as the public hearing for rezoning land bet-

ween the freeway and Bay and Monterey Avenues.

—Gave preliminary approval to an ordinance allowing county health officers to issue citations and make arrests for violations of health laws occurring in the city. The County Health Department now acts as the city's health officer.

—Accepted a treasurer's report showing a city clerk's balance of \$513,063.41. Expenditures totalling \$143,094.14, were also approved.

—Filed an amended rate increase application from Pacific Gas and Electric, requesting a 5.4 per cent, or \$75,051,000, increase in electric revenues. The state Public Utilities Commission will act upon the increase.

—Told Kludt to report back at the next meeting on a proposal by Cliff Avenue residents to construct a required safety fence on the street from a combination of chain and rope, or all chain, rather than a city-proposed redwood slat fence.

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