

Panel rejects Davenport plan

9-16-99

Coastal Commission says seaside project is too big for area

Davenport

By **ROBIN MUSITELLI**
Sentinel staff writer



Steltenpohl
■ *Odwalla unveils new juice containers*
— Page C3

Plans to convert a former brusels spouts packing shed in Davenport into an inn and restaurant were turned down Wednesday by the state Coastal Commission.

Commissioners meeting in Eureka agreed with opponents that the project was simply too big for the

tiny Santa Cruz County town and that a parking lot on the ocean bluffs wasn't appropriate.

"I'm totally happy," said Marilyn Fravel, who opposed the proposal by Davenport residents Fred Bailey and Odwalla juice founder Greg Steltenpohl.

"I'm hoping we'll be able to work out something that fits the scale and character of the community. Everybody is supportive of something smaller," Fravel said.

The development has been the most hotly debated issue in Davenport in years.

Please see DAVENPORT — PAGE A9

Davenport

Continued from Page A1

Bailey and Steltenpohl won approval from the county Board of Supervisors to turn the packing shed into a conference center with offices, retail shops and a small restaurant.

But opponents said the project, which would double the amount of commercial space in Davenport, was too big and would set a precedent for development on the ocean side of Highway 1.

A proposed parking lot in a meadow on the coastal bluff incensed many residents.

"The idea of a 50-car parking lot on the ocean side of the highway has horrified everyone," said Davenport resident Ann Parker.

Opponents appealed to the Coastal Commission to overturn the county approvals.

In response, Bailey and Steltenpohl redesigned their project into a 10-room overnight inn, with a restaurant, two retail shops, a day spa and micro-juicery.

They also proposed recessing the parking lot to screen it from view, scaling it back to 36 cars, and using bluff-colored stamped concrete to blend with the meadow.

Coastal Commission planners recommended approval of the revamped project saying the reconfigured parking lot would preserve views, and in combination with public trails, would improve public access to the coast from the present haphazard, informal arrangement.

The redesign didn't sway many. It was still a "mega-project" for Davenport, said Susan Young, who filed the appeal on behalf of Citizens for Responsible North Coast Planning.

The Coastal Commission rejected the plans in an 8-3 vote.

Their decision means that if Bailey and Steltenpohl want to pursue a project, they'll have to start over with a new application to the county, said Charles Lester, a project manager with the Coastal Commission.