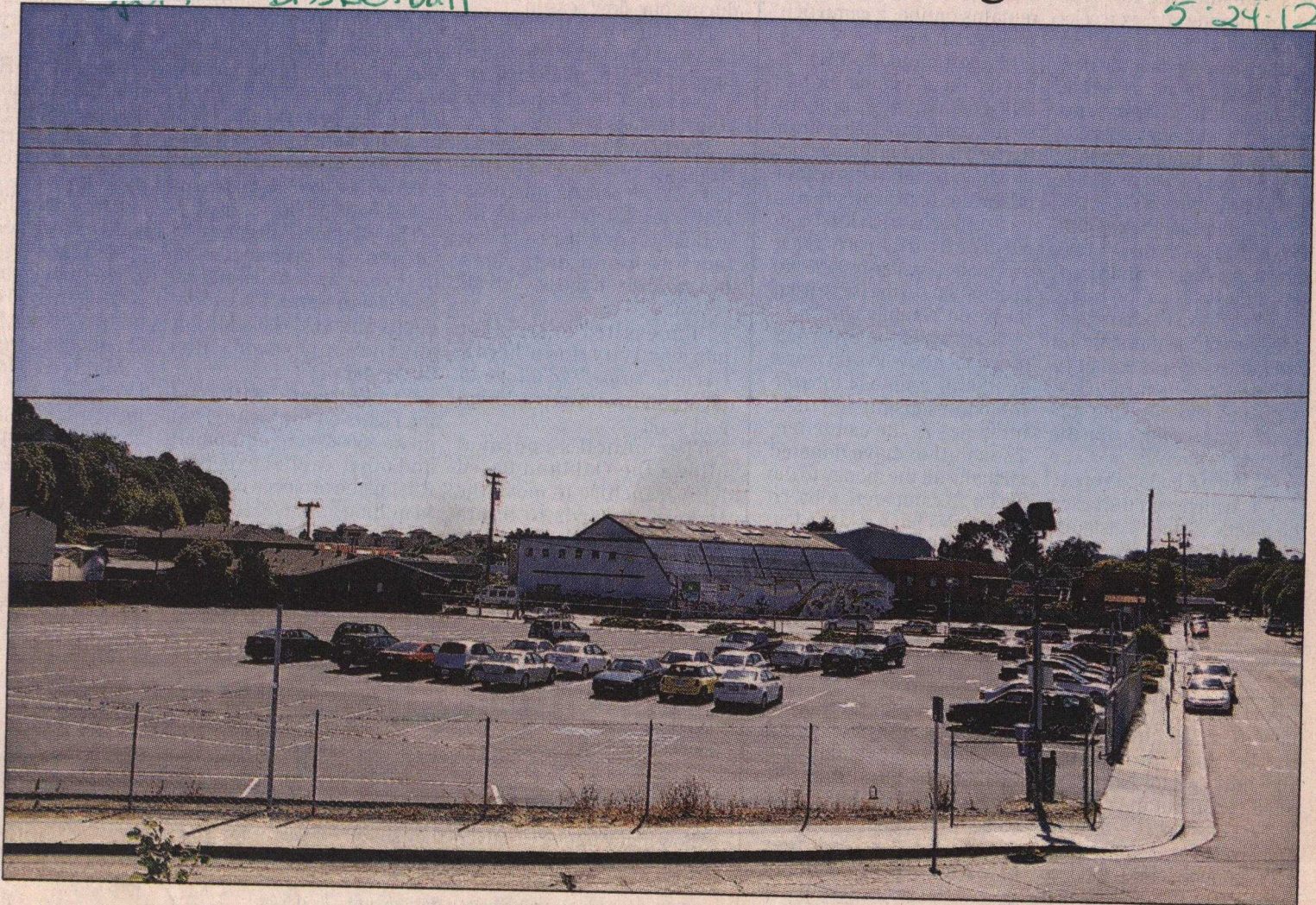


NBA DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE TEAM

Deal done, buzz builds

Warriors' affiliate heading to Santa Cruz; neighbors excited



This parking lot on Front Street in Santa Cruz is the planned new home of the Golden State Warriors Development League team.

JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

By SHANNA MCCORD

smccord@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — Firefly Coffee House owner Joe Slowik said he welcomes the Golden State Warriors Development League team to town, crossing his fingers that the basketball fans who show up on game days might need a caffeine boost.

Slowik's small coffee house, on Front Street, sits across the street from the parking lot where the pro basketball franchise's Development League team will play 25 games from December to April.

"I'm definitely supportive," Slowik, 27, said. "I'm excited for the potential

SEE WARRIORS ON A2



MORE INSIDE

■ Winning Shot: Santa Cruz moved quickly, and with due diligence, to approve Warriors deal, EDITORIAL, A7

Firefly Coffee House co-owner Joe Slowik talks Wednesday about the possible boost to his business when the Golden State Warriors Development League team moves to Santa Cruz.

JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

ON THE NET

Sentinel reader poll: What's the best name for a D-League basketball team in Santa Cruz?

Scott German of Notorious Teaze said he supports the construction of an arena near his business to house the Golden State Warriors' Development League team.

**JAMES TENSUAN/
SENTINEL**

WARRIORS

Continued from A1

business traffic and money during our slow season."

The Warriors deal, debated by Santa Cruz officials since April, won unanimous approval from the City Council in a vote late Tuesday.

Scott German, who rents the space next to Firefly for his silk-screening business Notorious Teaze, said he anticipates new bars and restaurants opening in the area to capitalize on the basketball crowd.

"I'm excited to see a lot more activity down here," German said. "We'd love to print shirts with a cool design and vend."

The council's approval allows the Oakland-based NBA franchise to move the Dakota Wizards to Santa Cruz from North Dakota to play in a temporary 30,000-

square-foot arena to be built on a Front Street parking lot owned by the Boardwalk's parent company, the Seaside Co.

"Santa Cruz, at its soul, can be the best minor league market," said Jim Weyermann, president of the D-League team, currently known as the Dakota Wizards.

The deal calls for a \$3.5 million city loan to build a basketball pavilion that can seat 2,725 before the season begins in late November.

The Warriors will construct the arena and operate it in the first year, and make at least \$250,000 in annual loan payments and \$133,000 additionally in rent payments after three years.

The Warriors, with naming rights on the facility, will make \$500,000 in equipment and other capital expenses, raising the project's budget to \$4 million.

Construction begins this summer.

The basketball pavilion will house 25 games from December to April and fit up to 4,000 for concerts and other events in the offseason.

The city will collect concessions and direct the money toward paying off the loan.

Vice Mayor Hilary Bryant made the motion to approve the deal, adding that the Warriors need to create a contingency plan in case the facility is not done on time. The motion also calls for the Warriors to keep nongame events affordable.

"It's not just a Warriors' center; it needs to be a community center," Bryant said. "I really believe that."

Marlene Machado, who lives in an apartment behind the parking lot, said she is concerned about traffic and parking on game days.

"If nothing else, it'll be a traffic nightmare," Machado, 60, said. "But it is anyway. It's

a seasonal thing, so it might not be that bad."

A consultant hired by the city determined there is enough area parking and that traffic in the vicinity of the arena won't be heavily impacted. Games are expected to generate about 900 car trips before the game and 950 afterward, but most drivers are expected to park away from the facility.

City officials are still finalizing the parking lot lease from the Seaside Co., which uses the lot for Boardwalk employee parking.

Mayor Don Lane said the city is required to find replacement parking for Boardwalk employees.

City officials have eyed a long, narrow empty lot on Pacific Avenue near Front Street for the replacement lot.

"That's the vision," Lane said.

Follow Sentinel reporter Shanna McCord on Twitter @scnewsmom.