

Commission OKs Target for Capitola

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CAPITOLA — The Planning Commission approved plans for Target to take over a vacant space at the Capitola Mall on a 3-1 vote Thursday.

Target will claim the space formerly occupied by Gottschalks on 41st Avenue. Plans for the 104,000-square-foot building include remodeling the interior and exterior, including new landscaping. No space will be added, according to the plans, and therefore

no additional parking is required.

Commissioner Stephanie Harlan was the lone dissenting vote, preferring to wait for another meeting where some of her concerns could be more thoroughly addressed.

"I love the project but can't sup-

port it because there are too many signs and logos," she said. "We've never let anyone have that many signs."

The commission allowed Target an exception to its sign ordinance, which stipulates two signs per busi-

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ness, because the location has visibility problems and a two-level garage blocks sight lines.

Commissioners Mike Termini, Ron Burke and Gayle Ortiz were

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comfortable approving the permits after certain conditions were added. Commissioner Ed Newman was absent.

Target, the nation's second-largest retailer, has a big-box store in Overlook Shopping Center in Watsonville, and spent two years trying to build a similar store on 18 acres next to the Scotts Valley Hilton. The retailer dropped the plan last October, citing the high cost of developing the property and the down economy.

The store expects to employ between 200 and 250 people, and will be open from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sundays. The Capitola store will be two levels, and include 10,000 square feet of grocery space.

The store will be about 30,000 square feet smaller than the Watsonville branch, and most likely would not open until 2012, said Target regional development director John Dewes.

"It will take a year just to do the interior improvements," he said.

Before the commission approved the project, changes were made to reduce the number and visual impact of the signs. Additionally, no truck deliveries will be allowed outside the hours of 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., and the commission

asked for more bicycle racks.

Some residents expressed their opposition to the project, either in its entirety or specific details of the plan.

In a letter to the Planning Commission, Capitola resident Ali MacBird said a Target would "cheapen" Capitola.

"Imagine it in our mall where Gottschalks once was selling seniors walking shoes, teenagers shopping with parents for a prom dress and kids buying a tie for their father. I remember being excited to go to Gottschalks as a kid with my mom — it seemed like a treat not just going to buy toilet paper for a discount."

Capitola resident Cheri Trebbien attended the meeting, and while she supported finding a new tenant for the space, she implored the commission to consider reining in the store's hours.

"My neighborhood is concerned with trucks backing in and the noise it produces," she said. "Eleven at night is a lot of for our neighborhood. We are impacted heavily."

The project was found to be exempt from a full environmental review because the space will be used in the same manner as with the previous tenant with negligible changes.

The Planning Commission has final say on the project unless the approval is appealed to the City Council or a council member wants to bring the issue to the council, Termini said.