

Word due soon on Watsonville post office

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Watsonville officials should get word tomorrow or Thursday on whether or not their plan for a new downtown post office has been accepted by the U.S. Postal Service.

Regional aquisition specialists for the postal service have already approved the city's offer to sell 158,000 square feet of property on the 200-Block of Main Street for \$1.725 million, information officer Jerry Reynolds said yesterday.

If the proposal is accepted by federal postal officials in Washington, D.C., Watsonville's main post office on Union Street will be moved to a new facility which will be constructed on the Main Street site.

The move is the cornerstone of the city's plans for redevelopment in that area of downtown. City officials have said a new post office will attract new commercial development in that area.

"We expect to get word this week from headquarters on the

proposal to buy the property," Reynolds said. He added that federal officials were scheduled to make their decision today.

Although the review of the city's proposal has taken nearly one month longer than postal officials said it would, there have been no major problems with the city's proposal, Reynolds said.

"There were one or two minor questions, but those were quickly answered," he said. "We're satisfied that all the information we need has been supplied."

Meanwhile, City Manager John Radin has been making arrangements with property owners in the area for the city to buy the 27 parcels within the block.

The city, acting as Watsonville's redevelopment agency, has proposed to buy the entire block (27 parcels), and then sell the parcels to developers. City officials hope the first new building on the block will be the post office.

So far, Radin said he only has

one tentative agreement among the area's property owners.

The property value of each parcel on the block has already been assessed. But Radin said he is waiting for the sale of \$2.5 million in redevelopment bonds and a go-ahead from the post office before he starts making offers.

The bond money will be used to purchase land and to relocate businesses on the block.

"I haven't gone along making offers until I know for sure if I've got bond money to work with," Radin said yesterday.

Even then, there is no guarantee the post office will move to the 200-Block.

The postal service's approval is contingent on the city delivering the property. To do that, the city must work out purchase and relocation agreements with property and store owners, several of whom have opposed the sale.

"If I don't aquire the property, we don't have an agreement," Radin said of the post office deal. "I've got 270 days (9 months) after they approve

the agreement to aquire the land."

"It's a conditional agreement," Reynolds said. "When they assemble the separate parcels, then we would buy the property from them."