

Capitola will buy 5-acre site near Rispin Mansion

By JENNIFER KOSS
STAFF WRITER

Capitola is buying five acres of land across from the Rispin Mansion on Wharf Road for \$1.45 million.

A resolution to start purchase proceedings was unanimously approved last night by the Capitola City Council. Mayor Bob Bucher called the property "the key to the Rispin Mansion."

Councilman Ron Graves said, "This has been on our list for acquisition for a long time."

The parcel at Wharf Road and Clares Street is basically open space, having only a dilapidated barn in an advanced stage of deterioration. The rest of the land is rented out for farming crops such as alfalfa.

The city has been negotiating for some time to buy the land, City Manager Steve Burrell said. Its owner is an elderly San Francisco woman who grew up in Capitola and inherited the land.

Money to buy the property will come from a variety of sources, Burrell said, including sale of a city-owned parcel on 38th Avenue slated for low-income housing. The housing

will be built instead on a half acre or so of the Wharf Road parcel.

The reason the parcel is so important to development of the Rispin Mansion can be summed up in a word often bandied about in Capitola: parking. A portion of the acreage remaining after the housing will be turned into a parking lot for Rispin Mansion visitors, Burrell said.

Once the opulent summer home of San Francisco oil millionaire Henry Rispin, the 65-year-old mansion was purchased by the city of Capitola for \$1.35 million in late 1985. Restoration is expected to cost at least another \$1 million.

A volunteer Rispin Mansion Advisory Committee has studied possible uses and come up with several suggestions, but one drawback has always been that there's no way to create parking on the grounds without detracting from the beauty of the estate.

Acquisition of the five-acre parcel across the road would seem to solve that problem.

How the rest of the land will be used has not been decided. Asked for his preference, however, Burrell said he would like to see a park on the land.