

Bus-M

Big sign would do it all for Big Mac

Design approval was given Monday night for a MacDonald's restaurant in Capitola.

The restaurant will be built on 41st Avenue between Longs Drug Store and World Savings and Loan.

But the city planning commission is delaying a decision on a streetside sign for the popular fast-food restaurant.

Commissioners approved the building design on a 3-1 vote, with planning commission chairman Howard Dysle questioning the wisdom of building the restaurant nearly 300 feet back from 41st Avenue—on a line with the building fronts of Longs and Albertson's.

Dysle refused to vote for the design approval, saying he first wanted to see the 12-year-old master plan that keeps buildings away from 41st Avenue.

The setback is the reason that MacDonald's wants the street sign.

Russ Watson of Franchise Realty Interstate Corp. — representing MacDonald's — told the planning commission that the restaurant would make almost any concession to the city in exchange for permission to erect the street sign.

The commission would have to grant a variance from the normal sign restrictions that allow one on-street sign per shopping center.

"We tried hard to get it moved up," Watson told the commissioners. "But we found Longs and Albertson's adamant against moving anything forward. The parking lot far exceeds our needs."

"Initially, it is far out of proportion but I think it will fall into place."

Watson argued that MacDonald's had radically changed the building appearance and signing and needed the sign.

"We created a different look. We added bay windows, shake roof, and reduced our signing (on the building.)"

"Overall, we are reducing the glaring impact of a MacDonald's on the community. We feel we've compromised with the city, but we need a road sign."

Watson at first told the planning commission he wanted a 14-foot-high sign.

Later, after city planner Pat McCormick came out against it and the commission hardened its tone, Watson said he would make any modifications required.

"The addition could be a blight," McCormick told the commission. "We are trying to develop 41st Avenue as a first class commercial boulevard, and a proliferation of signs could put it back to a Stevens Creek."

"We would even remove some building signs," Watson. "We feel that strongly about the road sign."

"I want to see the building moved up front," Dysle told the developer.

When Watson and McCormick said the master plan called for the massive setback, Dysle told McCormick he wanted a look at the master plan.

"We're locked in," Watson told Dysle. "It would tickle us to change it but I don't think that can happen."

"You haven't got my vote yet," Dysle told Watson.

He did get the votes of commissioners Lewis Deasy, Jack Nicol and Alvin Wilder on a 3-1 vote. The commission approved the project as recommended by the architectural and site review committee, but decided to look at the sign question at the Aug. 1 meeting.

The commission took a brief look at a proposal for 56 condominiums that Larry Vosti and ASF Associates want to build at the southeast corner of Clares

Street and 42nd Avenue.

The project is scheduled for approval at the Aug. 1 meeting.

Vosti, former general manager of the Aptos Seascape Corp., wants to build a series of one and two-story housing units in 11 separate buildings. The price range, he said, would be \$40,000-\$50,000.

McCormick pointed out that the general plan calls for a park somewhere in the general area.

"We are rapidly losing sites. At least in my estimate, it has one of the highest priorities," McCormick added, referring to the Vosti site.

"I'm greatly concerned about approving such a large project with out a place for children. So long as there is no park, it is incumbent on the applicant to provide this," added commissioner Alvin Wilder.

Vosti protested that he had planned 4,000 square feet of play area for small children.

"It's the cumulative effect," said McCormick. "We are approving a lot of sites in that area."

And then referring to the pending city park bond election in November, McCormick added: "By the time we have the money, we won't have the sites. Let's get off the ball and get something going here."

Dysle challenged the lack of recreation facilities for adults and also the scant number of parking stalls.

"We tried to come up with a plan for many single family

amenities," Vosti said. "We broke it up into 11 separate buildings. Every unit has its own parking, its own courtyard, its own ground floor entrance."

"This is a very good plan," Vosti continued. "I would be loathe to tamper with it now. If we were to provide a large open space, then we would be doing such things as eliminating individual parking, and go back to two or three story buildings."

"I wouldn't want to complete something like that — I couldn't get my heart into it," Vosti added.

"That's all fine," Dysle told Vosti, "except I live in a condominium. I hate to think there's no place for a pool here or something for the adult population."

Dysle said Vosti could get the space he needed by reducing the number of units in the project.

"That's a standard answer, that a developer hears," Vosti

said, "cut the units."

"I'm a developer too," Dysle reminded Vosti.

Vosti said he wanted to leave the decision on a pool up to the condominium owners. Addition of the pool could put the unit prices out of reach of some prospective owners.

"I'm not a hard-headed person," Vosti finally told the commission. "I get the message very easily."

The commission also continued for two weeks a request by Mrs. Dorothy Mullins, to increase the number of handicapped children she can care for in her home, 112 Cabrillo St., from 12 to 16. Mrs. Mullins has had the support of the surrounding residents in the past for her activities, but this time was faced with petitions and letters from the neighborhood opposing the expansion.

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