

# 200 block plan gets first scrutiny

By JOHN VIEIRA

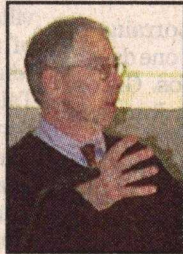
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — Plans for a new Watsonville Public Library, office space for Graniterock, retail shops, parking and housing in the 200 block of Main Street were reviewed Monday night by the city planning commissioners.

"This possibly the most significant thing to happen to Watsonville's downtown," said Planning Commission chairman Pedro Castillo. "I think it will be a monumental contribution to the downtown."

Although no vote was taken, all of the planning commissioners appeared to favor the plan.

The 200-block project is being developed through a joint venture with Ow Family Property and Barry Swenson Builders. The architectural design for the development is being handled by Thacher and Thompson Architects. Developers



Thompson

are working closely with the Watsonville Redevelopment Agency in trying to attract prospective tenants to the building.

"We are looking forward to having a beautiful high-rise building," said George Ow Jr, of Ow Family Property.

The development will include an expanded downtown library. The new library will be 40,000 square feet and will help to ease the cramped conditions evident at the library's current 17,000 square feet space.

According to Watsonville Deputy City Manager Marcela Tavantz-

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is, Soccer Central, which currently occupies the 200 block, will be relocated to another part of town as per the city's lease agreement with the complex.

The proposed 200-block development also provides office space for Graniterock, which will be located above the public library. Graniterock is currently headquartered on Walker Street in Watsonville with about 80 employees.

On the side of the block facing Main Street, developers envision a row of retail shops including an outdoor seating cafe on the corner of Main and Second streets adjacent to the entrance to the public library.

To accommodate customers, tenants and the public, a parking garage will be constructed next to the Graniterock/public library building and have up to 500 parking spaces, said Matthew Thompson of Thacher and Thompson Architects.

Housing will be built above the parking garage to meet housing demands and to add customers for downtown businesses. According to Thompson, the housing will be best suited for smaller households of single or dual occupancy.

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