

Daggers drawn 2-10-87 over Wingspread

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SANTA CRUZ — Political daggers are being drawn for a fight at the Board of Supervisors meeting today over the future of Palo Alto developer Ryland Kelley's controversial Wingspread Beach project.

At issue is whether the board will accept a recommendation by Planning Director Kris Schenk that the six-year-old development proposal, which has already been subjected to two time-consuming environmental reviews, be studied still further before supervisors render a final decision on the project.

Kelley's proposal to build a condominium/conference center-performing arts complex on the 66-acre Porter-Sesnon property and an adjacent six-acre parcel in Aptos was approved "in concept" on a 3-2 vote last March.

Under Schenk's recommendation, more environmental and traffic studies would be conducted, and final action on the proposal would be delayed until at least February or March 1988.

Schenk's proposed delay — which was pronounced unacceptable Monday by Kelley's attorney, Richard Allen of Watsonville — would present acute political difficulties for Aptos Supervisor Robley Levy.

Levy cast the decisive vote when the board approved Wingspread in concept last year. Her action won her the enmity of Wingspread foes, many of whom live in her district. Outraged by Levy's vote, Wingspread opponents vowed at the time to work for her defeat in 1988.

If the planning director's timetable is adhered to, the final vote on Wingspread would come in the

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middle of Levy's re-election campaign.

Levy was tight-lipped about Schenk's recommendation Monday. "I'm extremely concerned," was all she would say. "I'll be discussing it tomorrow."

Live Oak Supervisor Dan Forbus and south county Supervisor Sherry Mehl, both of whom support Wingspread, indicated Monday that they would not go along with Schenk's recommendation.

Mehl said she was "appalled" by Schenk's call for more studies. "It's just a matter of stalling," she said.

Forbus said no more lengthy studies were needed on Wingspread. He said he wanted the board to "run this thing through without further

delay."

Meanwhile, San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Joe Cucchiara, half of the board's dissenting minority on Wingspread, said Schenk had made a "strong argument" for the need for more studies. Supervisor Gary Patton, who has consistently sided with Cucchiara in opposing the project, could not be reached for comment.

Scathing in his denunciation of Schenk's recommendations Monday was Kelley's attorney, Allen, who advised supervisors by letter that, "It would be easier to sneak a sunrise past a rooster" than to conclude that the Wingspread project's impacts on the environment and traffic had not already been "sufficiently analyzed."

"After two full years of environmental and staff review," Allen wrote the board, "we respectfully request a final decision."

In his report to the board, Schenk advised supervisors that a new Wingspread traffic study was needed because of subsequent changes in the project's design and because the first study's conclusions had been drawn from now-questionable "underlying assumptions" about the development's operations.

He indicated that design changes also would likely require a "supplemental" environmental review, a process nearly as time consuming as a first-time environmental study.

Most of the design changes referred to by Schenk involve board-mandated reductions in the project's size and, collaterally, reductions in the amount of traffic likely to be generated by Wingspread.

Allen told supervisors it would make no sense to require additional, extensive environmental review of changes which, he said, "in almost every instance ... reduce the impact

Kelley has balked at one condition imposed by Levy and the board — direct freeway access to the Wingspread site. He has asked supervisors to "detach" that condition from the "rest of the development."

Caltrans District Director Burch Bachtold has indicated that the state is unlikely to go along with the direct-access idea in any event.

In addition to deciding whether to follow Schenk's recommendation for more studies, supervisors must decide today whether to continue to insist — in the face of almost certain state and federal opposition — that Kelley build the freeway connection.

The board is scheduled to take up the Wingspread matter sometime after 9 a.m. today.