

Cellular tower is stalled again

By DAN WHITE

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CAPITOLA — For a while, it looked like a planned 70-foot cellular tower for Rosedale Avenue had made it through its final round of public drubbing and would soon become reality.

But it's not over yet.

A week after the Planning Commission conditionally approved the tower, City Councilwoman Stephanie Harlan has appealed the decision on behalf of angry homeowner Irving Richman, who believes the tower is a cancer threat. This means the project will have to face the people, and city authority, one more time, at an Aug. 14 City Council public hearing.

The tower would go up on the property of John McCoy, who owns a 55-foot communications tower already there. The 70-foot version would replace the old one, which will be taken down. It would go up at the closed 7-Up plant on Rosedale.

McCoy wanted a higher tower to serve more communications company tenants, including the Bay Area-based Nextel. Originally he wanted it to be 90 feet tall but scaled it back, saying he was concerned about public backlash and also that it could be higher than necessary.

In the past, McCoy has expressed irritation that a small group of naysayers has swayed city government, and that the mounting list of project requirements may make it too expensive to be viable.

But McCoy, who just got back to the area this week after being out of the country, had no comment about it Fri-

day. "I don't know what to say, to tell you the truth," McCoy said.

Normally the Planning Commission has the final authority on matters like this tower unless they are appealed.

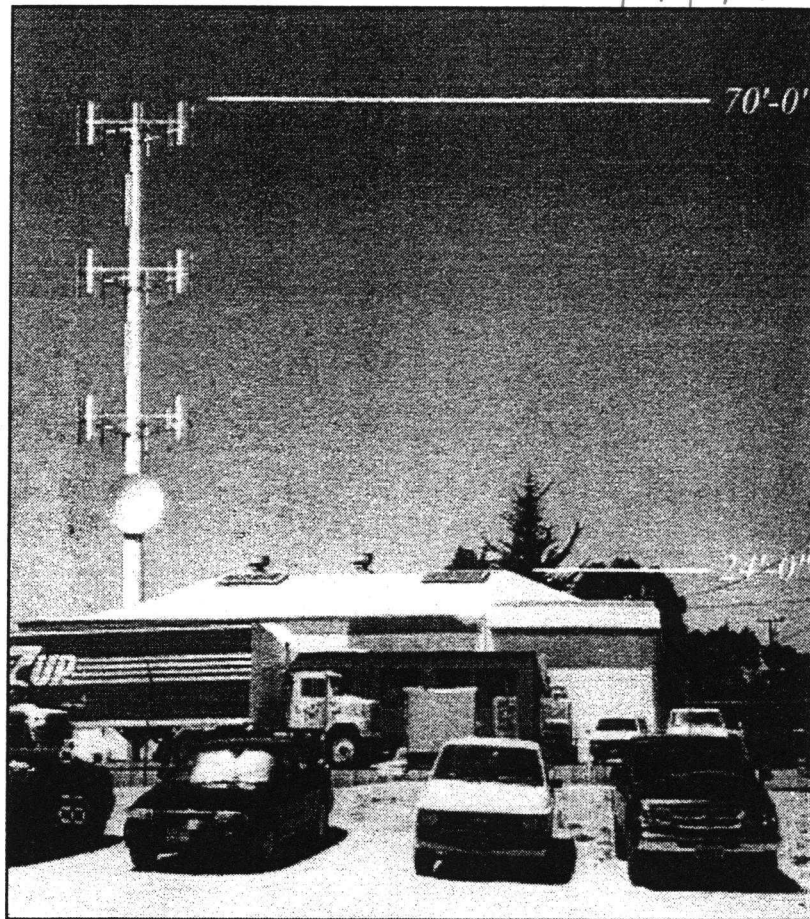
Richman angrily challenged the commission's approval of the project last week, and vowed to file the appeal. He said Thursday he was ready to go forward with this appeal. But Harlan stepped in and said she'd file it instead to save Richman the \$25 filing fee, and also because she thought it was an important community issue.

Last week, Planning Commission Chairman Rick Jones said he'd heard a lot of criticism about the project, some of it more relevant and convincing than others.

This criticism is coming, almost invariably, from neighbors who live in mobile homes close to the project. Richman, who sometimes comes to meetings holding a book called "The Great Power-Line Cover Up," has argued that these kinds of towers are part of a carefully covered-up government-sanctioned health risk that can bring cancer to children.

The planning commission assured the public last week that the tower would have to meet federal safety standards. But Richman argued Thursday that those standards were meaningless, because the government routinely covered up health problems, and kept mum about the affects of tobacco for decades.

Others, like Rosemary Renauer and her husband, Arn Johnson, have emphasized the community's apparent lack of jurisdiction over these projects, as well as their appearance.



Capitola Councilwoman Stephanie Harlan appealed the Planning Commission's approval of a cellular phone tower, citing health concerns by a resident.