

Scotts Valley - 1990

Glenwood project stirs public debate

By **DAN WHITE**
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — A public hearing Wednesday night on the Glenwood meadow development plan turned into a no-holds-barred community debate, with supporters, opponents and even fence-sitters speaking out.

Supporters of the 148-home upscale project on undeveloped meadowland spoke of landholder's rights and economic gains. They also argued that Glenwood, by leaving 70 percent of its land as open space, was the best possible option for an area zoned for development.

The majority of the 25 speakers opposed the project, but the one-third minority accused critics of ignoring open access to the meadow and the city's economic health.

"It's unconstitutional, it's un-American to say you can't build there because I don't want you to," said Janine Charlton, a Glenwood supporter whose comment set off a flurry of reactions. A bank currently owns the land but Palo Alto developer Chop Keenan has an option for development.

At the same time, critics called the project everything from a water-waster to a permanent blight and an ineffective solution to the city's financial worries. Some expressed regret and anger they hadn't known earlier the property was for sale.

It was a night for everyone, including the undecided. Dudley Joselyn, who lives near Glenwood, said the project would bring good money to the city, but he wanted to see a detailed graphic showing how it would affect traffic.

Former ranger and open space proponent Michelle Sanguinetti said she would like to see Glenwood remain open space but acknowledged that simply wasn't feasible. She said rejecting the proposal would be "throwing out the baby with the bathwater ... We need to realize it is private land. It isn't up to us to put our feelings on private landowners."

The project is moving fast toward a final decision, now that it has gained majority approval from the

Planning Commission. The City Council will continue its deliberations Nov. 4. A decision is expected the first week of December.

The open space that would be left in the project is heartening to some local recreation staffer. It would allow another three miles of trail in a city where hiking and recreational opportunities are limited.

But opponents say the Glenwood space is a hollow offer because the project would harm local wildlife and split habitats, while creating an excessive visual impact.

They also challenge the assertion the project will bring much-needed money to the city of. "If growth is the answer to the city's economic (troubles) then why hasn't growth paid its way up to this point?" asked resident Duker Dapper.

Often the debate returned to the issue of inevitability.

"Is it really realistic that the parcel won't be developed?" asked Pam Lawson, who said current Glenwood users are effectively trespassing. "Let us all please remember that at one time we were all in someone's back yard, in someone's view, and more than likely killing some bug that wasn't environmentally correct."

The reference was to the Ohlone tiger beetle, an insect that lives in the Glenwood meadow. UC Santa Cruz environmental studies doctoral student Grey Hayes said the insect is extremely rare.

Hayes, who is trying to get the insect listed on the federal endangered species list, told the audience that developing the meadow would fragment the beetle's habitat since the meadow's coastal prairie is extremely rare.

"You spoke of meadowlarks singing in the meadow, but there won't be any" he said, referring to a speaker who described Glenwood open space with idyllic imagery.

Don Devito said Keenan's assertion the project will bring \$6.5 million to Scotts Valley shouldn't sway the vote. "What will your legacy be?" he said to the council. "Please don't tell me your legacy will be \$6.5 million. That's really not that much money."