

Wingspread Plan B wins planning staff endorsement

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The Wingspread Beach "Plan B" proposal for the Porter Sesnon property has won a positive recommendation from the Santa Cruz County planning staff.

In a report to the county Planning Commission, the staff recommends approval of a modified version of Wingspread Plan B. Plan B is the larger of the two proposals submitted by developer Hare, Brewer and Kelley, and includes a performing arts center, along with condominiums, a conference center, a restaurant and shops.

The smaller proposal, Plan A, calls for fewer condominiums and no performing arts center, shops or restaurant.

Both proposals have been adamantly opposed by neighbors of the beachfront Porter Sesnon property that lies across the freeway from Cabrillo College.

Even with the modifications recommended by the county staff, the developer is pleased with the staff recommendation. Hare, Brewer and Kelley spokesman Tim Welch said they "can hardly quarrel with" the approval of a modified Plan

B, although they do question some of the recommended modifications. "We generally feel positive about the recommendation," Welch said.

The staff recommendation says, "Wingspread Plan B offers to the county and its residents a number of public benefits through policy amendments which would allow a greater intensity of use on this site than now allowed under existing county policies.

"With changes, Wingspread Plan B could be a very desirable development for this site."

Specific modifications recommended by the planning staff include:

—A large public plaza and scenic overlook area across the bluff.

—The lodge (condominiums) should be moved to the center of the building site, to make room for the plaza.

—Redesign of the main entrance to make room for more parking.

—A public transportation plan to serve Wingspread, and to be worked out with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District. If public transportation is arranged, the developer may be allowed to provide fewer park-

ing spaces.

—Reducing the height of the lodge, which could in turn reduce the number of available units for visitors.

—Implementation of all the mitigation measures outlined in the environmental impact report on Plan B.

The planning staff also recommends that Hare, Brewer and Kelley be required to enter into an agreement with the county to cover the issues of management of the performing arts center, the enforcement of operating restrictions to prevent events from increasing traffic during rush hours, public participation in developing a plan for public recreation on the site, security and traffic control.

The staff report explains that the recommendation for approval of the modified Plan B was arrived at in part because the county's Local Coastal Plan lists visitor accommodations as an alternate use for that site.

The preferred use is a state or regional park, but the state has indicated it will not take any action on whether to purchase Hare, Brewer and Kelley's lease on the property until after the county has acted on the Wingspread applications. A regional park would have to be developed by the county, but the county can't afford to do that now, the staff reported.

Another reason for recommending the approval of the Plan B, the staff reported was that "Plan B, if modified, and successfully carried out, will provide a special facility and substantial public benefits to Santa Cruz County — a project

different from anything now available in the county."

When the Planning Commission meets next Wednesday night, it will review the report on Plan B, hold a public hearing on Plan B, and also review Plan A and continue the public hearing on Plan A. The commission has already held hearings on Plan A, but deferred action until it could review the two plans side-by-side.

Wednesday's meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the County Governmental Center, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz.

REFERENCE