

Disco plan okayed; ex-planner rebuffed on hearing bypass

By BOB SMITH

Preliminary plans for converting the old Disco building in Capitola to a multi-use commercial center that will house a bowling alley, office-warehouse, auto repair shop and retail store area were approved Monday night by Capitola planning commissioners.

But commissioners turned down a bid by a former commissioner — Robert Morton — to bypass the public hearings normally required on new zoning, and place a low-medium density multi-family residential zoning on the El Salto resort property.

"We have no confirmed tenants," Les Ley, president of Santa Cruz Lumber, owner of the Disco building, told the commission. "But there is the likelihood of a clothing importer and bowling alley."

"Negotiations for an auto repair shop and retail stores are still pending," he added.

The commission granted a use permit for the bowling alley, auto repair shop and the warehouse, and also approved architectural and site review for exterior remodeling of the structure that will include a new roof and heavily landscaped parking areas.

The city council will have to act upon the use permit, city planner Pat McCormick told the commission, since a warehouse is not listed as either a permitted or conditional use in the Community Commercial zoning now affixed to the land.

Ley said after the hearing that there wasn't a precise schedule for converting the building, but repairs on the 80,000 square feet of roofing will get underway this summer. It will be a three or four month job, he said, to write the specifications for a new roof —

the old one leaks badly — then complete the repairs.

The parking lot will be redesigned with landscaping along the rows of parked cars. Trellises will be built along the front and Bay Avenue sides of the building and tall-growing trees will be planted.

Ley obtained a major concession from the planning commission. Because the county sanitation district will be constructing a pumping station and sewage transmission line through the parking lot, he wanted to delay installation of the parking lot landscaping until after the construction is completed. The commission agreed, provided that he post a completion and maintenance bond.

Commission chairman Howard Dysle said he was concerned about the impact of the noise from some types of auto repair activity — such as a body and fender shop — would have on nearby residents.

McCormick said he had checked with surrounding neighbors about their concerns. Major complaints about the Disco operation were the noise of parking lot cleaning crews, the noise from early morning trash pickups and merchandise delivery, and the glare from the parking lot lights.

Santa Cruz Imports — a clothing distributor — is the most likely office-warehouse occupant. Responding to a proposal from commissioner Jack Nicol, Ley agreed to an operating hours limitation of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. A 7 a.m.-7 p.m. restriction was also imposed on the auto shop.

Ley said it is very likely that a bowling alley and coffee shop-bar will occupy the majority of the building's public area. But his firm is still negotiating with a

food store for the space.

There are no firm tenants yet for the retail store space or the auto shop operation, Ley said.

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Dysle referred Morton's proposal for action on the El Salto Resort zoning without a public hearing to City Attorney Richard Manning for a ruling on the legality.

Morton said he now represents Elizabeth Blodgett, owner of the El Salto resort, and Jerome Keithly, owner of heavily-wooded property in Escalona Gulch behind the resort. City Manager Max Kludt said he has also received a letter indicating that Morton is representing Z. E. Koryzma on zoning matters for the Galley restaurant and the open air deck on the Esplanade.

The city council sent the El Salto and Keithly property back to the planning commission last month, with instructions to consider zoning that would result in some uniformity in development of the two adjacent properties. Councilmen also indicated individually that they wanted some review of the property uses to ensure compatibility with existing dwellings.

At the May hearing on the zoning, the council was assured by an attorney representing Mrs. Blodgett that no development plans were pending for the resort property. Contradicting those statements, Morton briefly displayed for the planning commissioners, a plot plan drawn by Capitola architect Doug Messini.

"Rather than go through the

and showing multiple residential units on a lot between El Salto Avenue and the ocean, east of Sacramento Avenue.

very expensive procedure of holding new public hearings," Morton told the commission, "we want the commission to take the land out of the deleted area and allow what the general plan says can exist there — RM-LM zoning of 4,400-square-foot building sites."

That brought immediate protests from Dysle and commissioner Lewis Deasy, both of whom contended that a public hearing was necessary.

"I question if we can make a decision tonight," Dysle told Morton.

"If we have 12 more public hearings, you can't come up with anything you haven't heard already," Morton retorted, visibly angering. "I believe this planning commission can take action tonight."

Dysle also took issue with Morton's statement that the property carries no zoning today, and that angered the former commissioner even more.

Turning to McCormick, Dysle asked what the staff's reaction would be today to a development proposal submitted on the property.

"We would accept the density of RM-LM zoning (4,400-square-foot buildings sites)," McCormick replied, referring to provisions of an emergency ordinance making all property in the city with non-conforming zoning subject to the general plan re-

quirements until the planning commission and city council act on new zoning.

"We would expect the setbacks (from the ocean bluffs) called for in the general plan," McCormick added.

"I don't see that anything is being hurt now," Dysle told Morton, contesting his and Mrs. Blodgett's claims of financial hardship by not being able to develop the resort. "And I do want both sides to be heard."

"I'm not offering anything here tonight," Morton replied angrily. "I am demanding the rights of the property owner that we be permitted to comply with the general plan."

Dysle then instructed McCormick to contact the city attorney for an opinion on the necessity for a public hearing. If the city attorney rules that a hearing is necessary, then McCormick was told to proceed immediately with the newspaper advertising and sign posting that's required for a zoning hearing.

Morton tried to get the city attorney's opinion delivered to the city council next Monday and placed on the agenda there for discussion. McCormick told him to take the matter up with the city manager who writes the council's agendas.

At the close of the meeting, and after Mrs. Blodgett and Morton had left, Dysle told the other commissioners that he would like to see a zoning placed on the properties that would specify the acceptable uses and densities, but still require formal com-

mission review — with public input — on any plans for the sites. A possibility, he said, would be AR zoning with a stipulation by the commission that RM-LM zoning would be acceptable on the property.

In other action, the commission:

— Approved a one-year time

extension for use permits granted Z. E. Koryzma for conversion of the open-air deck adjacent to the Bandstand restaurant into an outdoor restaurant.

— Issued a variance to Dennis Syfers, 208 Sacramento Ave., for a side-yard variance that will allow him to build a bedroom

over his garage.

— Approved a use permit for Byung Chul Choi to construct a small market and two apartments on the vacant property at northwest corner of Stockton and Capitola Avenues, and also issued a variance for off-street parking, allowing smaller-than-normal parking stalls in front of the market.