

# Planners move to pluck Porter-Sesnon land plum

By BOB SMITH

Capitola planners took the first steps Thursday toward extending their sphere of influence over the 66-acre Porter-Sesnon property east of New Brighton Beach hoping ultimately to annex the land.

When the sphere of influence is sent to the county Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), it will put Capitola into direct opposition to the supporters of cityhood for Aptos — who also want the Porter-Sesnon property in their city.

The city planning commission overrode the protests from the residents of the Pine Tree Lane residential area and approved an environmental impact report (EIR) which discusses the impacts of developing the 66-acre site as a Mid-County Community Complex, the frontage along MacGregor Drive as commercial, and leaving the remainder in its present uses of either state park or residential.

But the commissioners split over the ultimate use for the Community Complex, with a majority willing to allow development of a convention center, but others wanting to limit the ultimate use to a day-use-only local recreation and cultural center.

Planning Commissioner Mrs. Terre Thomas opposed the convention center use that has been rumored for the property. "My concern is that Capitola consider this for local use (Santa Cruz County).

"It should not be a convention center that brings people in from out of the area. My concern is for the county — not overnight housing for a

convention center," Mrs. Thomas added.

But the Commissioner Robert Bucher expressed the feelings of other commissioners, saying, "leave it the way it is," referring to the county's designation of the site as a Mid-County Complex site.

A compromise was finally imposed by the commission chairman, Alvin Wilder, who told Planning Director Richard Steele, "The commission wants to see a specific plan for this area before we'll be more specific."

A motion to approve the general plan designations was adopted by the commission on a 4-1 vote with Mrs. Thomas dissenting.

Earlier, the environmental impact report was unanimously approved by the commission. Both recommendations will now go to the Capitola city council for final review and approval.

Pine Tree Lane residents attacked the EIR which will serve as a master document for any development that takes place in the area under Capitola's control.

Spokesman Jim Warnock told the commission that he and his neighbors don't want to see the Porter-Sesnon property developed.

"We feel that the property should not be developed, but kept in open space," Warnock told the commission.

The EIR says a convention center would wind up using 24,000 gallons of water a day, or nearly nine million gallons a year.

"That's very undesirable," Warnock said. "If this complex is developed, that is a lot of water. On Pine Tree

Lane (which has its own water wells) we are getting some salt water intrusion now. And for people to come from out of the county and use our water, we just don't have it."

The report, Warnock complained, also understated the traffic conditions now on MacGregor Drive.

"We have taken straw votes and polls," Warnock told the commission. "We want to stay the way we are. We are in the county and we are against incorporation into anything."

Warnock said he personally favors joining Capitola if forced to choose a city, but some of his neighbors prefer joining the proposed city of Aptos.

Gilbert Geddes challenged the umbrella approach used in preparing the EIR and told the commission he believes "a focused EIR is needed on each project.

"I don't know why you spent money to prepare an EIR on land not in Capitola," Geddes said. "If I were a taxpayer in Capitola, I would be asking why.

"So far as annexation to Capitola is concerned, I don't know how the people on Pine Tree Lane would benefit from it. We would provide a lot of headaches for Capitola and not much else.

"I'm 95 percent against annexation to Capitola," Geddes said.

A third resident from the small residential area added his opposition to the convention center. Kermit Yerkes told the commission: "A park proposes no problem. But I shudder when I think of a convention center there. I would like to see it a park."

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