

Capitola Mall plans move ahead

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CAPITOLA — An “enlightened” City Council tentatively approved a compromise parking-lot lighting plan Thursday night for the proposed Capitola Mall expansion plan.

The compromise pleased spokesmen for mall developer Cypress Properties of Menlo Park, which will be allowed to retain all but five of the existing 40-foot-high parking-lot light standards.

Original city conditions that went along with last month’s approval for the \$35-million expansion called for reducing all existing standards 10 feet. Cypress spokesman John Gatto said such a condition could “jeopardize” the project by adding \$300,000 in expenses.

As it stands now, however, Cypress is well on its way toward fulfilling the long list of detailed conditions of approval. Developers will return to the council Feb. 12 with specifics concerning a required

sound wall along the proposed Clares Street Loop Road. They’ll come back again Feb. 26 to deal with a new traffic analysis.

In related mall matters, the council approved a process that would lead to the city’s developing a branch library on mall property. As part of the conditions of approval, Cypress was required to donate a \$500,000 parcel near Capitola Road for a library site.

Gatto said after the meeting that construction on the expansion and remodeling of the county’s lone covered mall could begin as early as May. He estimated the opening of the two new anchor stores — J.C. Penney and Leask’s — could be as early as summer 1988.

Council members unanimously gave tentative approval to the lighting compromise after hearing a detailed lighting report from Gatto. The five existing light standards to

be reduced are all along the rear of the mall, which faces the residential neighborhoods of Lotman Drive and Sommerfeld Avenue. The council was concerned with the glare from lights intruding into the neighborhood.

However, Cypress’ tentatively approved plan calls for 30-foot-high light standards in the new parking lot at the rear of the existing mall. Gatto also said new light fixtures — that direct light downward rather than outward as existing ones do — would be installed on all light standards, including existing ones.

The council action was only tentative because it wanted details of the lights, including engineering data, for review before giving final approval.

Also to be reviewed are exterior design plans for the Penney department store. Council members sent the Penney architect back to come

up with some sort of treatment to the long, exterior walls to “break up the mass” of the building.

At the same time, however, they approved the design of the front of the mall, and materials and color for the exterior of the mall. Much of the exterior of the mall and some of the interior will be “updated” along with the expansion.

The already-approved expansion plan would nearly double the mall — adding 304,575 square feet to the existing 381,098-square-foot mall.

The 91,805-square-foot Penney and 54,000-square-foot Leask’s are to be the two new anchor stores. By comparison, the existing Mervyn’s is 75,000 square feet.

The council’s action on the proposed 7,000-square-foot branch library set the process up for the city to build a library, but have the Santa Cruz City-County Library System operate and maintain it.