

Capitola Motel-Shopping Complex Is Delayed

By MARK BERGSTROM

Sentinel Staff Writer

The Capitola City Council won another major concession Monday night from the developer of a proposed motel-shopping complex at Bay Avenue and Hill Street, but that still wasn't enough for its stamp of approval.

In other action, councilmembers approved a draft environmental impact report for a proposed 53-unit condominium project on Wharf Road along Soquel Creek, but indicated that the best development of the land may be no development at all.

Motel project developer Larry Vosti agreed Monday night to include two buildings (32 units) of the motel in the first phase of his development plans to calm Council fears that the motel might not be built until three or four years after the first offices and shops.

The Council had indicated from the start that the motel is the key to Vosti's project and is the most appropriate use of the land.

In an earlier meeting with the council, Vosti agreed to redraw his plans and eliminate a do-it-yourself building supply store from the complex and substitute another office complex with shops. The Council indicated the building supply store was not compatible with the motel.

In announcing the change at a special meeting with the Council and city Planning Commission last week, Vosti said he intended to phase in the revised project, but did not indicate which buildings would be built first.

He also presented landscaping plans for the project at that time, which the Planning

Commission approved with 13 conditions attached.

Those landscaping plans Monday night came before the Council, which has final say on the project.

Despite the pledge of building the motel first, Vosti still couldn't get approval to begin work on his project.

Councilmembers were not pleased with what they termed "vague" landscaping plans, nor with the conditions imposed by the Planning Commission.

After an hour and a half of discussion, the council and Vosti mutually agreed to another presentation at the May 22 Council meeting.

Vosti is to return at that time with more detailed landscaping plans, including Council recommendations about tree sizes and locations.

The Council also indicated it wants to work out what it termed problems with the conditions imposed by the planners to make sure they're enforceable.

Councilman Robert Garcia said he will also return with recommendations on traffic problems on Bay Avenue, calling a study done for the project "inadequate."

The proposed condominium project on Wharf Road, between Poor Clares property and Highway 1, appears likely to be headed for even larger problems that the motel complex.

The Council approved the environmental impact report on the project, which means only that the EIR adequately addresses all environmental concerns.

City staff's response to the EIR, however, notes that many of the negative impacts on the sensitive creekside environment cannot be mitigated.

The staff report recommends that the Council could approve the 53-unit project as planned, a scaled down project or approve no development at all and purchase the land for use as a city park and open space.

In approving the EIR, the council told developer Robert Huckel of American National Development Corp. of Los Gatos it would be willing to take a look at plans for a scaled down project with all buildings situated on the upper level above the flood plain.

But three councilmembers, Carin Mudgett, Garcia and Mayor Mick Routh, told Huckel they are in favor of purchasing the land for a park to preserve the creek area and its biological significance.

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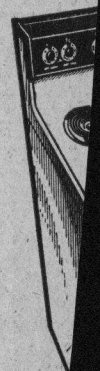
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Mountain School Wins Walkathon

Mountain School students won a modular stereo unit from Haber's Furniture for having the highest number of students, by percentage, in the recent March of Dimes Walkathon.

Nancy Snow, assistant coordinator for the walkathon, said in a letter to Administrator Bob Herse, "I cannot begin to tell you how much pleasure it brings me to have a school such as yours have the highest percentage of walkers in our