

# Porter-Sesnon task force says plan nothing new

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SANTA CRUZ. — It may not be called Wingspread any longer, but the latest development proposal for the Porter-Sesnon property in Aptos doesn't appear to be flying any better than its predecessor.

In fact, a county task force Tuesday said the 197-room lodge and conference facility proposed by Palo Alto developer Ryland Kelley for the 72.7-acre coastal bluff property next to New Brighton State Beach isn't very new.

The Porter-Sesnon task force unanimously said the proposal was similar to Wingspread Plan A, which was denied in 1985 by both the county Board of Supervisors and the Coastal Commission. Task force member Stephanie Harlan labeled it a "brand new, old project."

The task force, a 10-member citizens' committee appointed by supervisors in 1988 to lobby for state acquisition of the property for a park, hasn't given up on the state.

However, Susan Strehlow, administrative aide for State Sen. Henry Mello, D-Watsonville — who has lobbied for state purchase of the property — said Tuesday that the senator's hands are tied since Kelley's lease on the property is not for sale.

"He's (Mello) very committed to go for funding if the property goes up for sale," Strehlow said. "It's over, if it's not for sale."

Task force chairman Tony Hoffman said, "It (state purchase) is not a hopeless situation, either for Kelley or the citizens of Santa Cruz County."

Task force members refused to be openly critical of the new plan.

In 1987, Kelley proposed a 468-room lodge and a performing arts center and athletic fields. That development was eventually approved by supervisors, but overwhelmingly rejected by county

voters in a 1988 ballot initiative.

Now called "Meadowpark," the 197 room plan is a 58-percent reduction from Wingspread Beach, with nearly 86 percent of the 72.7 acres remaining in public open space.

Hoffman questioned the amount of open space in the proposal. County planner Mark Deming said it could be deceiving in since part of the 13.38 acres of public open space north of the railroad tracks and bordering McGregor Drive actually was Borregas Gulch, which is steep and unuseable.

Deming did note that the application appears to meet both the densities defined in the county's Parks and Recreation zone district, and the circulation limits required in the Local Coastal Plan.

As for traffic, the coastal plan says that the hotel units shall be "low-traffic generating," and not increase traffic on Park Avenue and McGregor and State Park drives by more than 1,300 vehicles a day. The plan estimates 1,241 daily vehicle trips generated by hotel-users. Meadowpark project manager Tim Welch said the 2,145 total projected daily vehicle trips was about a third the number projected from Wingspread.

Deming told the task force that an actual development application has not been submitted by Kelley. Instead, a "development review group application" has been filed. This gives everyone involved with the proposal — from county departments to the Soquel Creek Water District and Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District — about a month to review the plans.

In mid-March, the county's Development Review Group will review the application, and give Kelley time to revise plans before formally submitting it to the county. Deming said he thinks the application can be processed within the county timeline of six months for new developments.