

Zoning Board Passes Electronics Plant Plan

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Raytek of Mountain View plans to establish an electronics assembly plant in the former Walti-Schilling meat packing building on Shaffer Road.

The plans were revealed Thursday by Michael R. Jacobs, company president, prior to a Zoning Board hearing on an application by the property owner, Larry Wolfen, to convert a 47,000 square foot building for electronics assembly, research and office use.

The Zoning Board approved both the conversion and a proposed subdivision of the 70.66-acre site into three individual lots with areas of 2-plus acres, 8.6 acres and 60-plus acres.

The Raytek plant would be on the approximately 8.6-acre site.

The proposal must now go to the Coastal Commission, a Planning Department spokesman stated this morning.

Jacobs told The Sentinel the company would employ some 85 persons to assemble infrared components for two lines of infrared products.

One line for industrial applications measures temperatures in industrial processes without actual contact. The devices are used in paper-making, plastics, chocolate manufacture and other applications.

One of the company products was used during the Mount St. Helens eruptions. The devices can measure temperature in a range from minus 20 degrees F. to 5400 degrees F.

Another line is used for devices to detect intruders and/or burglars. The company assembles the infrared sensors for these devices. In use, the sensor detects temperature changes within a room when an intruder or burglar enters, and this triggers an alarm.

Such devices are used in larger homes, jewelry stores and the like, Jacobs said.

The plant in Santa Cruz would do no manufacturing.

"We purchase the components we need and then assemble our products," Jacobs said.

The company was established in 1963 and sells worldwide, with distributors located throughout the free world.

There will be some hiring locally, but he said a number of workers now employed in Mountain View are expected to locate in Santa Cruz to become part of the community.

The Walti-Schilling plant is a reinforced concrete structure that was built in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Wolfen said he anticipates no problems getting clearance for the plant "because anything is an improvement over a meat packing plant." The meat packing plant shut down some years ago.

The existing land use is listed by the city Planning Department as "vacant slaughter house and stockyards in a manufacturing, warehousing and agriculture area." The zoning is general industrial.

At the outset, Raytek would use some 25,000 square feet for assembly and rent the remaining portion of the building for a similar use. The first floor would house a cafeteria and assembly operations, while administration, engineering and research will be on the second floor.

While the company plans to hire 85 persons initially, the site plan calls for 162 parking spaces to accommodate these workers and future workers on the site.

One condition of the Zoning Board approval is that bus passes shall be made available to all workers upon provision of bus service to the site by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District.

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