

Wingspread hearing due Wednesday

2-14-85

By JAMIE MARKS

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — After years of study, the first public hearing on the smaller of two proposed Wingspread Beach designs will get under way at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Aptos High School.

The county planning task force for the Wingspread Beach proposal has recommended approval of the smaller plan, known as Plan A, with modifications to make the project architecturally more pleasing and to require a community park on 20 acres of the 73-acre site between New Brighton State Beach and Seacliff.

Applications for Plan A and Plan B are being considered separately; the public hearing will be exclusively on the smaller Plan A.

In its 53-page report, the Planning Department's task force has recommended that the project, for 197 townhouse units and a conference facility, be substantially modified to achieve "a more desirable project with greater public benefit."

The report makes several candid statements, including, "The site may be so valuable to the community as either undeveloped open space or intensely developed recreation and visitor serving uses, that the present proposed Plan A appears the least attractive alternative."

Conference Associates, the Palo Alto-based development firm for Hare, Brewer and Kelley, first applied to the county in 1980 to build a resort complex of condominiums and a conference center.

The original proposal for 630 units met with such controversy that it was revised down to two different proposals, Plan A, with 197 townhouse units and a conference center, and Plan B, with 295 units basic units with lockable doors which can expand it to 585 separate units. The second plan also would include three performing arts theaters, community sports fields and a conference center.

The applications for Plans A and B are being processed separately because a second environmental impact report has been ordered for the Plan B design. The first EIR, completed in April 1983, analyzed the effects of the 630-unit development.

In the report on Plan A, the bottom line is that of three options outlined, staff has recommended that the Planning Commission approve the project. The staff has determined that the project conforms with the prevailing land-use issues.

"We're generally happy with the staff report; which contains some statements in it on page 10 that Plan A meets all the minimum standards," said Conference Associates spokesman Tim Welch.

"The only other better thing is if they'd

minimum standards," said Conference Associates spokesman Tim Welch.

"The only other better thing is if they'd said go out and build it tomorrow," said Welch.

Welch said the staff's design modifications "seem mainly to deal with 25-foot height limitation on the buildings, which was a constraint we were forced to work with. By increasing the height limit, it reduces the foot path, and we're pleased with that.

"Whether or not we're prepared to donate 20 acres (to a park) is a question mark," said Welch. The plans for Plan A call for the area to be a parking space, he added.

Another dispute exists over the county's requirement for a 909-space parking lot.

Welch said the requirement is "artificial" for a 197-unit motel.

"They (staff) have arrived at this figure by adding up the county ordinance requirements for the motel, restaurant and conference center as though all three of those uses were for entirely separate populations. It's kind of an artificial figure and we don't think it will survive public hearings," he said.

Meanwhile, the Plan B application is moving forward. Plan B has garnered public support from the arts and sports communities because of its provisions for a three-theater performing arts facility and soccer and baseball playing fields.

This week, the Board of Supervisors approved a \$31,630 contract with EIP of San Francisco to write the environmental impact report for the Plan B application. The contract calls for the draft report to be completed by March 30.

Even Ryland Kelley, the developer behind Wingspread Beach, has said his heart is in Plan B.

Yet Plan B has generated tremendous controversy from people worried about the increased traffic and the loss of the bucolic meadows above the beach.

The only issue before the Planning Commission Wednesday will be Plan A. Before the meeting, commissioners have said they will tour the site.

As designed, Plan A includes 197 condominium/motel units broken into the "Sea Lodge," a series of 12 two-story buildings in a stepped configuration along the sloping topography of the land, and a "Lodge Building," with a two-story atrium, 16 units, restaurant and bar.

Each motel room is 600 square feet, including a kitchenette and balcony.

The 20,000 square-foot conference facility will hold a 200-300 seat theater. It also contains 19 motel-type units.

Tennis courts, a swimming pool, indoor recreation center, restaurant and bar are planned for the guests.

Some 909 parking spaces are planned, with a 200-space underground parking garage to be built beneath the Sea Lodge.

Although the report mentions the state Department of Parks and Recreation has expressed interest in buying the land for \$4 million, the director has told county staff that the state won't formally consider buying it until the county makes its final decision.

Under the "modified plan" recommended by the planning staff, the developer will be asked to dedicate a 20-acre parcel north of the railroad tracks as a community park.