

SV's war of words

Developer's newspaper-like brochure adds to debate over Glenwood project

By DAN WHITE
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SCOTTS VALLEY — A new small-town newspaper has surfaced in Scotts Valley, complete with color photos of residents smiling for the camera, playing soccer and practicing yoga.

But while Our Town looks like a community paper, it is actually a paid advertisement for the 145-home Glenwood Meadow development proposed for north Scotts Valley.

It is the latest chapter in a public debate that is still flaring five months after the City Council approved the project on a 3-2 vote. Soon after the decision, opponents gathered the signatures of enough registered voters to force a public vote, scheduled for June 8.

The newsletter, and fliers being distributed by Glenwood opponents,

show that people in both camps are taking nothing for granted.

"Thousands of people have not yet made up their minds," said Fred Zantotto, a 28-year Scotts Valley resident and co-owner of the Zantotto's food markets in Scotts Valley and

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Glenwood

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Santa Cruz. Zantotto supports the Glenwood project and is listed as one of the monthly newsletter's editors.

The newsletter looks like a newspaper, except that there are no opposing views.

Kerry Williams of the Keenan Land Co, the Glenwood project developer, is listed as an editor.

Both sides say they are armed with the facts. Both sides warn about misinformation. And both sides are looking over their shoulders, knowing they have plenty to gain or lose over the next two months.

"We believe that unless we communicate with one another about the future of our town, we're at the mercy of insiders and outsiders with other agendas," reads an editorial on the front of the pro-Glenwood newsletter.

"We expect the developer to do everything possible to get you to vote for his lucrative project," reads a flier put out by Glenwood foes.

The proposed project would be built in the north of town on a meadow that once was home to a dairy farm and is now a pasture for a few horses. A Dutch bank foreclosed on the property after a previous project fell through.

Supporters say the upscale development would be tastefully done and blend into the hillside while leaving 70 percent of the land as open space. Another selling point is the expansion of adjacent Siltanen Park, opening up playing fields for a city short

on recreation space. Others say it will increase the consumer base for small businesses.

Opponents say the project would be a visual and environmental blight, a drain on city resources and source of traffic snarls, compounding the effects of a new high school that is going up across the street from the project. They also say the project will lead to water shortages and school overcrowding. They want to scale the 145-home project back to only a dozen or so units and set most of the land aside as permanent open space.

They also dispute the developer's claim of 70 percent open space.

"The only land that would remain open is undevelopable anyway," reads the latest opposition flier.

The propaganda from both sides is aimed at knocking undecided voters off the political fence.

The pro-Glenwood newsletter touts project supporters, including Mayor Randy Johnson, City Councilmen Bart Cavallaro and Chuck Walter, three planning commissioners and two school board members, along with four former Scotts Valley mayors and a slew of business owners.

The publication's address is listed as the Yes on Glenwood Headquarters on Scotts Valley Drive, but it also lists the Palo Alto address of the project's backers, American Dream/Glenwood L.P.

The publications have changed the nature of the debate. A few months ago, the city held loud public hearings. Today most of the discussion seems to be going on in print.

It is unknown how much the slick, professionally done pro-Glenwood newsletter cost. Virginia Allender, a Scotts Valley resident listed in the newsletter as a member of its editor-

ial board, said the Keenan group paid for the brochure. The company did not return calls for comment.

The anti-Glenwood group, Save Scotts Valley, knocks Glenwood for spending large sums of money to put out its newsletter. But Save Scotts Valley is also striving to get more money to spend.

"I am enclosing the following contribution to help STOP urban sprawl and to help PRESERVE Scotts Valley's quality of life," the insert reads, with spaces reserved for \$20, \$50, \$100, \$200, \$500 and \$1,000 contributions.

Save Scotts Valley is setting up a "David and Goliath" framework for the debate.

"Obviously you can tell from the mailers that we are facing an extremely well-funded campaign from a Palo Alto developer ... working to push their perspective in Scotts Valley," said Jeff Ringold, a consultant working for the opposition.

Reading both papers in one sitting can be confusing.

A vote for Glenwood is a vote for Scotts Valley's children, schools and open space, if you read one letter. A vote for Glenwood is a vote for sprawl, threatened water supply and tract-house sprawl if you read the other.

"We hope this paper will help you make a more informed, public-spirited decision," says the pro-Glenwood paper.

"We must rely on you to use your own judgment," says the opposition.

The debate also shows how much the Glenwood situation has shifted.

Once it was in the hands of the City Council.

Now it's in the hands of 6,000 voters.