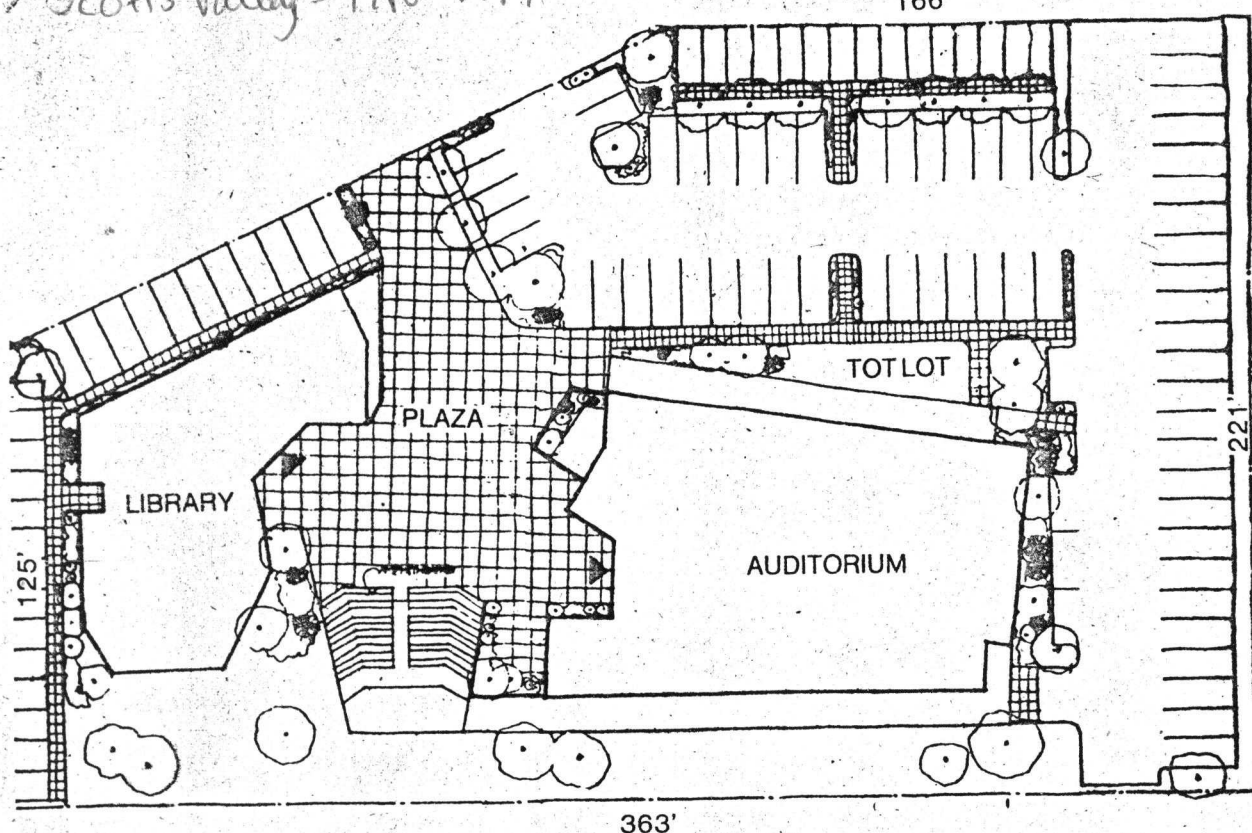


Scotts Valley Banner

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The proposed Ohlone Center includes, from left, a library, a plaza and the hub of the community center, an auditorium. Plans for an amphitheater have been scratched in favor of more open space.

Squabble Hollow project

By Scott Grant

Huddled around plans for a proposed community center in Scotts Valley, the committee coordinating the effort looks like a group of kids examining a new toy.

Its members are downright excited. Almost giddy.

That's because they would like to make their toy Scotts Valley's toy as well.

It will be called the Ohlone Center, its namesake being the Ohlone Indians which once roamed the Scotts Valley area, and will be located on Bean Creek Road, the present location of Baymonte Christian High School.

Well, maybe. There are plenty of hurdles to be crossed. Nevertheless, the 10-member committee—comprising representatives from the business, education and arts communities—talks in terms of “when,” not “if.”

“It's going to be a beautiful, fantastic, wonderful place,” said committee member Sue Krevitt.

The Ohlone Center would be part of the 15-acre “Squabble Hollow” housing development proposed by Marion Stekoll. The land is owned by Weyerhaeuser Corporation, which has agreed to set aside three acres and \$450,000 for a community center.

The money will raise the building and pay for landscaping around it. The committee is looking to raise another \$500,000 for interior painting, carpets, drapes and furnishing.

Committee members feel

enough money will be collected, through grants and donations.

The biggest hitch, however, may be whether Stekoll's proposal gets the nod from Scotts Valley City Councilmen. The developer wants to build 225 townhouses.

The availability of sewer and water hookups in Scotts Valley is tenuous, at best.

“We're waiting for that first domino to fall,” said Scotts Valley Junior High Principal Dick Bateman, the chairman of the committee. The first domino is city approval of Stekoll's housing project.

Weyerhaeuser has hired an architect, Jim Pandolfi, who has worked with the committee to devise some tentative plans for the Ohlone Center.

As revealed last Tuesday at a meeting of the committee, the plans for the proposed 10,170-square-foot center call for a major auditorium, a public library, a kitchen, several classrooms and offices, a lounge suitable for art galleries, a playground for small children and a plaza.

The multi-purpose auditorium, 4,800 square feet, would accommodate plays, banquets, concerts and dances. The 4900-square-foot library, in which the Santa Cruz City-County Public Library System has expressed interest, would be taken over by that group.

Seating up to 450, the auditorium would also include a portable stage.

The committee is emphasizing flexibility, trying to accommodate as many different types of groups that would be interested in using the facility.

It has surveyed service groups and other individuals in the city and discovered that at least 700 different types of activities would have use for a community center.

There would be 102 parking spaces.

“I think Scotts Valley, with this project, has some unique opportunities,” Pandolfi, the architect. “You can't just have a shell and let it sit there. It becomes a marvelous impetus to raise the money to finish it.”

The committee has no time frame on when the Ohlone Center, if all the hurdles are crossed, will be built. “We don't know how many years we're looking down the road on this,” Bateman said.

Committee members are trying to keep their effort an “apolitical” one, noted member Claire Hodgins.

There has been some concern, however, that Stekoll and Weyerhaeuser may be proposing the community center only to make it easier to get their housing project approved by the city.

Bateman acknowledged some feedback from City councilmen that Stekoll is “trying to grease the skids” but noted that the developer has denied such tactics.

The committee meetings, Tuesdays at 4 p.m. at Scotts Valley Junior High, are open to the public.