

Freedom annexation

Watsonville - Annexation WRP4.2598

City will add 141 more acres, including 24 which are vacant

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WATSONVILLE — The addition of 300 more homes in Watsonville will be one step closer Tuesday evening if the City Council adopts a resolution which will ease the way for the annexation of 141 acres, currently in the unincorporated Freedom/Carey area.

The area is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the City of Watsonville. It lies to the east and south of the Watsonville Municipal Airport. The northern boundary is formed by Gorrallitos Creek, and Struve Slough lies adjacent on the southwest.

Last September, city staff was directed by the Watsonville Planning Commission to begin the com-

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plicated process of adding new territory to the city. That process requires four steps. The first of those steps, the adoption of an environmental review for the annexation proceedings, will be decided during the regular city council meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Deputy City Manager Marcela Tavanztis said the environmental review uncovers all potential environmental impacts and identifies mitigation for each. A negative declaration of environmental impacts states that there may be environmental impacts, but those are correctable.

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"You cannot have a negative declaration unless you have identified a correction for every potential environmental problem — everything from socio-economic impact to noise pollution," she said.

The next step will be to make an amendment to the city's General Plan to bring it into conformance with Santa Cruz County's. Once this is done, all 141 acres will be pre-zoned with zoning specifications that become effective once the area has been annexed. The final step will be application to the Local Agency Formation Commission.

Other items on Tuesday's agenda:

- A resolution approving an agreement with the consulting civil engineering firm of Bowman and Williams for preparation of plans and specifications for sewer system improvements at Pajaro Dunes. The city may spend up to \$72,000 for these services.

- A resolution approving a lease

option agreement for low-income housing on Rodriguez Street between the city and the Evergreen Apartments. The 36-unit complex of three-bedroom apartments is located on land owned by the city. The 20-year lease, if approved by the city, will enable the apartment's owners to transfer from a partnership to a limited-liability company.

- A presentation by Willie Elliott-McCrea, director of Second Harvest Food Bank, regarding a hunger study released last month.

- A resolution approving a \$50,000 award to Goodwill Industries' Shoreline Occupational Services and Santa Cruz County Office of Education Regional Occupation Program for a retail merchandising and customer service training program.

A diagram of the Freedom Annexation area centered around the Freedom shopping center.

City of Watsonville

