

Planners approve AM radio towers

By WARD BUSHEE

Another obstacle in the way of construction of a small, daytime AM radio station to serve Aptos and Capitola was brushed aside last week.

The Santa Cruz County planning commission, with some misgivings about preserving a small "greenbelt" along the freeway in Aptos, approved the plans of Grant Wrathall Jr. and his brother, Lawrence, to construct three 160-foot high radio towers.

The towers would be erected on a small golf course bordering Mar Vista Drive and the freeway, a site that would permit the course to continue in operation. Grant Wrathall told the commission that the "pencil thin" towers situated on the golf links would provide a better view than if the land was developed for residential purposes.

Questioning by planning commissioners brought out that even with the towers, much of the land could still be used for housing. Nevertheless, the commission approved the idea.

Wrathall said plans to build a studio adjacent to the clubhouse have been abandoned. It will be built elsewhere. He also

said initially just one tower would be erected, and serve the station while it operated during the daytime only. Later, when the additional two towers were put up, the station would broadcast at night, also. He said the station would provide a "voice" for the Aptos - Capitola area.

The issue brought out a large number of Aptos area residents, most of whom supported the plan.

Another sizable group also turned out to speak to an issue that has arisen at Sunset Beach, a small community hanging on the cliffs above the state park.

In this case, they came to oppose plans for construction of a small house alongside a path leading down the cliff to the beach. The application to build the house was made by E. G. Bailey on behalf of Joan Black, and a side lot variance was sought to give more room for a house on the small (and steep) lot.

Neighbors complained that the house would spoil the view, and that construction would endanger the structure of the sand dunes. They opposed any variance being granted.