

Landmark pulls back on plans

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The developers who planned a 150-acre industrial park at the north end of Watsonville now want to build homes instead of the first phase of the industrial project.

"There's not enough demand today" to build the 29-acre first phase of Landmark Business Park, developer Scott Johnson said this morning.

The project, which would be the largest industrial park in Santa Cruz County, has been in the works for five years, but no construction has been started.

Johnson, chief executive officer of Heritage Development Corp., told the City Council last night that he is considering seeking a change in the city's General Plan that would allow him to build 100 homes and 300 apartments on the 29 acres, south of Harkins Slough Road.

Johnson also told the council he's willing to work with other landowners in the area to see if they can cooperate on construction of roads.

Developer Norman Schwartz

has filed an application with the city to build 126 homes on 23 acres off Harkins Slough Road, adjacent to Landmark property.

The other property owner in the area, Mort Console, has about 20 acres. There are no current plans to develop that parcel.

Schwartz, Johnson and Console's representative, Frank Osmer, appeared at last night's council meeting and said the landowners would try to reach an agreement on road costs.

Schwartz introduced three projects: the construction of one new road, the widening of Harkins Slough Road and the construction of a bridge.

The new road would be Landmark Parkway, linking Main Street and Harkins Slough Road. The bridge would be over Watsonville Slough.

The three projects together would cost an estimated \$2.3 million.

"It (Landmark Industrial Park) was designed as perhaps a monument to my ego, and now we can't sell it," Johnson told the council. "Now it is raw land with cattle on it, the same thing it was 10 years ago, the same thing as two years ago. I'm interested in working with Schwartz and with everybody."

Johnson said he is not scrapping the idea of building the industrial park; he said it could happen at a later date, possibly as soon as next year. He wouldn't rule out the possibility of additional residential developments, either.

"It's all a matter of economics. We'll develop whatever the community needs," Johnson said this morning.

Johnson's firm still owns or has options on the entire 150-acre Landmark site, of which 106 acres can be built on.

If changes in the General Plan for the 29-acre first phase are to be made this year, they must be submitted to the city by Feb. 12. Johnson said he's got somebody working on the application and hopes to have it done by that deadline.

"Our target is to start this year" on the residential construction," Johnson said.

REFERENCE