

# Dominican opts to sell Aptos land

Church, developers,  
housing advocates  
to vie for property

By SORAYA GUTIERREZ  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

APTOS — The 13-acre Poor Clares property, which Dominican Hospital fought to keep off the county's list of affordable housing sites so medical facilities could be built there, is for sale and might be developed after all.

Six months after telling county leaders of plans to open a clinic at the State Park Drive site off Highway 1, Kelly Duffin, the hospital's chief operating officer, said Dominican would rather expand elsewhere in the county.

That leaves the land up for grabs among interested buyers, all with competing interests, including a church that doesn't want to lose its home, housing groups eager to build affordable homes in the Mid-County area, developers looking for their next business or residential project and neighbors who would rather see the largely undeveloped parcel stay that way.

Rebecca Downing of Aptos said Coastlands church, which rents the Poor Clares site from Dominican and uses the two main structures on the land, has been a good neighbor. She wouldn't want them to be uprooted for a housing project that could worsen traffic along State Park Drive.

"I like it the way it is," she said.

Concerns about traffic and overcrowding led neighbors to fight off a large housing development in 2006 at a 13-acre property across the highway at the Par 3 site. County leaders agreed to give neighbors until March 2009 to raise money to buy the land and keep it as open space, before reconsidering the site for housing. So far, though, no funds have been raised, according to the fundraising committee.

Coastlands was given first notice about

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LYNN SHUGART,  
EXECUTIVE  
PASTOR,  
COASTLANDS

See **PROPERTY** on **PAGE A12**

A-12 SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL Thursday, May 24, 2007

## Property

Continued from Page A1

Dominican's plans to sell, said Carol Canaris, managing broker for the Capitola office of NAI BT Commercial, but bidding is open to anyone.

A price has not been set.

County Supervisor Ellen Pirie, whose district includes Aptos, had previously tried to get the Poor Clares site on the county's list of affordable housing sites as a substitute for the failed Par 3 project.

On Wednesday, Pirie said she was unsure whether she would support a development, or what type.

"I just can't answer that," she said. "I would have to see the whole picture."

The density of a project, who would it serve, how would it handle traffic — these considerations have to be taken into account,

she said. With Dominican officials having protested Pirie's initial idea to place the site on the county's affordable housing list, Pirie said she was surprised they put the land on the market as a development opportunity.

The Poor Clares property is zoned for "visitor accommodation," meaning facilities like a hotel, and would need to be rezoned if housing plans were drawn up as well as final approval by the state Coastal Commission. "Changing that zoning may not be impossible, but it will not be easy," Pirie said.

Members of COPA — an organization of congregations, schools and nonprofits that pushed for affordable housing at Par 3 — hope the political will is there to put housing at the Poor Clares property.

"Whether or not the property is able to be rezoned residential, that is the key political issue, whether there's a willingness to make that happen or not," said Tom O'Brien,

a COPA housing strategy team member.

The organization, O'Brien said, is in a position to encourage a nonprofit developer to buy the land with county support. At this point, he said there are too many questions about what can be done with the property to say whether COPA will make a move.

The Poor Clares site has been leased to Coastlands since 1991. Lynn Shugart, executive pastor, said the church plans to put in a bid.

"It'll be an act of God for us to secure this land, but we believe miracles do happen," she said.

For Dominican, money from the sale would be invested into furthering the hospital's growth through construction in other places at smaller sites throughout the county, Duffin said.

Requests for sale offers have been sent to developers locally and statewide, he said, to help determine the fair market value and



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

The 13-acre site in Aptos now occupied by Coastlands church is for sale. Many uses have been proposed for the land.

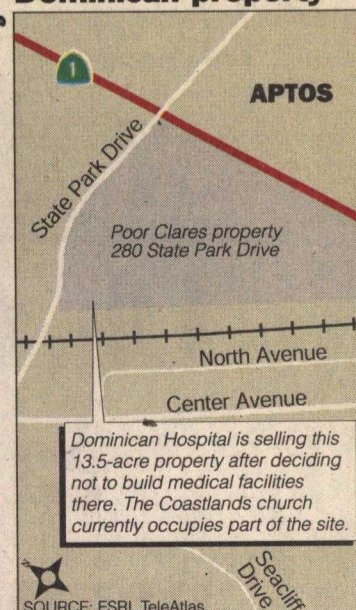
best use of the property, which is named after a convent that was once at the site.

"The possibilities are endless, quite frankly," Duffin said.

The deadline for developers to respond with an offer is June 29.

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## Dominican property



Dominican Hospital is selling this 13.5-acre property after deciding not to build medical facilities there. The Coastlands church currently occupies part of the site.

SOURCE: ESRI, TeleAtlas

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