

'Quality' motel planned in Aptos

The Aptos Chamber of Commerce today endorsed plans to build a 140-room motel, restaurant and meeting facility near Seacliff this morning.

But a environmental planner working on the proposal told Chamber members that it could be another 18 months before construction begins on the project — even if county planning commissioners and supervisors approve it this spring.

John Gammon, of Gammon and Associates in Santa Cruz, outlined plans for the motel complex, which would go in between the KMFO radio towers and the Crown Center on State Park Drive across from Rancho del Mar. The land is now owned by Aptos realtor Jeff Baird and Keith Pearce.

Gammon said the project will consist of a motel in six two-story buildings and one single-story public building clustered around a central court that, among other things, will include a golf putting green.

A small restaurant and bar plus two 600 square foot meeting rooms will be included.

Gammon told the Chamber members that the County Planning Commission will take their first look at the project on Jan. 26, and if the commission approves it, it will then go to the Board of Supervisors in April. Final approval for the project could be obtained by late spring, he said, and construction under way in the summer.

But realistically, Gammon added, construction may not start until the following summer.

The motel will be a "high quality" operation, Gammon said, mentioning four major chains as possible operators — Hilton, Quality Inns, Rodeway Inns and Red Lion.

Each would be able to give regional or national exposure for the motel through its marketing organization.

Room prices would be comparable to rates in large cities: \$55 to \$70 a night, with 12-15 double room suites going at a higher price.

One of the major stumbling blocks for any development proposed for the 5½ acre parcel, Gammon said, has been the traffic.

A previous proposal called for a 90 unit motel, a Macdonald's restaurant, and an athletic club.

Gammon said the first thing he advised when seeing the proposal was to scale it down because the intersection of Old Dominion Court and State Park Drive couldn't handle the traffic volume.

Gammon said the developers are prepared to do approximately \$250,000 in off-site improvements including a left-turn stacking and right-turn-only lanes on State Park Drive, closure of the current Resurrection Church entrance on State Park Drive (with construction of a new church access onto Old Dominion), and a new entrance-exit for church traffic onto Soquel Drive.

With those improvements, Gammon said, rush hour traffic conditions at the intersection will remain at a "C" level.

In other business, Chamber president Brewster Burns named the chairmen of several committees:

Bob Hoffman is chairman of the education committee, Lou Chalone will head the Chamber Enhancement Committee, Bob McKenzie, governmental affairs; LuAnn Sullivan, social, and Steve Manousos, Seacliff State Beach reopening.