

# Rispin project moves along

By CANDACE ATKINS

Howard Dysle, who wants to convert the old Rispin mansion on the banks of Soquel Creek into a senior center housing complex, inched a bit closer to his goal Thursday night as Capitola planning commissioners accepted, with minor changes, a resolution to amend the Capitola Land Use Plan (LCP) and the certification of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the estate.

Planning commissioners accepted the EIR and changes in the LCP at their April 7 meeting, following a long public hearing. On Thursday night, commissioners formalized the action by adopting two resolutions containing the legal reasons for accepting the EIR and recommending changing the LCP. Those resolutions will be presented to the City Council during a public hearing at 7 p.m. Monday at City Hall.

The Rispin mansion, a 9,000-square-foot building, was built in 1922, but has been unoccupied for more than 30 years. It has been subject to widespread vandalism, and renovation of the entire home will be necessary for its future use. Dysle has the development and purchase option from the property owner, Robert Rittenhouse, but a group of citizens who call themselves, "Friends of the Rispin Mansion"

oppose the development and want to see the building restored for public use.

For more than two hours Thursday night, commissioners argued about the need for more studies on the Monarch butterfly colony on the property, whether the density of the proposed 100 housing units was based on the gross acreage (6.2 acres) or the buildable land (4.6 acres) and whether Dysle should be required to apply to the National Register of Historic Places for nomination of the property as a significant historical site.

The difference between the gross and buildable acreage figures is the amount of land that lies under Soquel Creek and in the creek's flood plain.

Commissioners finally accepted the amendment of the General Plan for the property, and approved a density of five to 10 units per gross acre.

A "possible" limit of 65 units was added by commissioners to the LCP, plus the condition that the number of residences could be further limited, if "certain environmental features" warrant a reduction.

Although Dysle, a member of the Planning Commission, will be required to apply to the National Register, Dr.

Barry Staley, spokesman for Friends of the Rispin Estate, argued to commissioners that Dysle's proposed development would be "paying lip service to the historical significance of the site."

Staley also told commissioners that the original EIR stated that a study on the Monarch butterfly colony should have taken place "this winter."

Referring to Dysle's proposal to build a convalescent-style nursing facility on the south side of the present mansion and sell off two single family lots there, Staley told the commissioners: "There is no doubt (that development of) the southern part of the site would destroy the (Monarch) colony permanently."

Commissioner Bob Garcia also argued that a study of the butterfly colony should encompass the entire property, instead of the southern portion only, but he received no support from fellow commissioners.

Garcia was successful in adding a clause to the LCP that will now include "the possibility of public purchase and use" in upcoming studies of the property.

Other studies will be traffic, fire protection, public safety, parking, renovation guidelines, access to creek, use along creek, flood control, erosion control and monarch butterfly protection.