

# Incorporation: Proponent cites benefits

By BOB SMITH

Why incorporate Aptos?

"I think one basic reason is the idea of preserving the entity of the community," replies Mrs. Glenn Specht, chairman of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce's incorporation committee.

"The best example of what happens when you don't see what has happened in Live Oak — bits and pieces have been taken by Santa Cruz and Capitola," she said.

The committee has been circulating incorporation petitions in Aptos for the past 2½ months. Mrs. Specht isn't sure how many signatures have been collected yet — the committee will count them Thursday morning — but she figures the group has more than 1,000 of its goal of 3,000.

"It's not as good as I would like, but it's not a lack of response from the people we talk to either. The problem is people power — people who know how to petition and who have done it before. The process is slow."

Right now, Mrs. Specht and the other committee members figure Aptos isn't getting its fair share of tax dollars and representation under county rule.

And the thought of Capitola

annexing the Porter-Sesnon property east of New Brighton Beach doesn't make them very happy either.

"The city of Capitola is so concerned about what happens to Porter-Sesnon, and yet it is going so far into Aptos. And Aptos doesn't have a voice about it.

"Consider the reaction you would get if you tried to annex La Selva Beach," she added, referring to the very compact, insular community on the south side of Aptos. "Identity is very important to people."

"One of the oldest reasons for incorporation is 'taxation without representation.' This is particularly true in the post-Prop. 13 and Prop. 4 era. Everyone now pays the same taxes but doesn't get the same service.

"Neither are they allowed the same representation. Why do you ask the 6,000 people in Capitola about the coastline and not the 27,000 in Aptos?"

"My biggest 'pro' for incorporation is self-determination. We can leave the county free to handle the rest of the unincorporated area and provide a higher level of service to residents here.

"For a community to continue to have freedom of

choice about the services they receive and the level of services, I think incorporation is a necessity," she added.

A lot of her reasons for wanting incorporation, she says, are subjective.

"I believe a city will have a better chance of having a good, coordinated, responsive planning department to serve the community than what it is getting now from the county planning department. That is subjective — it may or may

not occur. But if things do not improve, we can blame ourselves.

"We are allowing decisions to be made here by people not elected from the Aptos community. The decisions at the county level are being made by four people (four of the five county supervisors) who were not voted on by the Aptos people.

"There is no continuity (in the planning department) of who is working on the Aptos planning. It took three years to get a general plan and zoning is still not in conformance. It took two years for a village plan and we have no traffic plan. The county simply has too many areas of responsibility," Mrs. Specht charges. "I don't know that the Summer Avenue thing would have turned out any better, but at least those who lived in Aptos would have felt they have a better input into the decision process.

"Another example is the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park. The county is always making an agreement on what must be done to the entrance road (by a land developer). They never talk to state parks people who don't want anything done with that road." The fire department must go to the Board of Supervisors now for the bulk of its operating funds. "The Aptos community has always chosen to support its fire department. We don't have that choice anymore. Money to support fire and paramedic services will be very difficult to come by. But a city would have within its discretionary powers the right to supplement the fire district if it wanted to. Aptos has no guaranteed representation, as does Capitola, for example, on many of the boards, commissions and agencies that rule its lives. "The county," she adds, "has no mechanism for taking care of urban problems. You can't deny that 27,000 people living five and six to the acre aren't going to have some problems. That is one reason the funding mechanisms for cities provide more money for cities to take care of those problems. A sheriff's department isn't set up to handle urban traffic. The highway patrol isn't a city police department either. "There are a lot of things left uncovered by the county. "But I hope incorporation has made the county aware of how many people are in Aptos." Referring to the numbers of registered voters in the proposed city limits, she said the number is far more than the 14,000 acknowledged by the county to be living in Aptos and the La Selva Beach area. "It's pretty sad we have all these people out there whose existence they don't recognize." If Aptos incorporates, the county growth limitation measure — Measure J — would be nullified in the area. Is that a reason the Chamber of Commerce backed the incorporation effort? "Looking at the Seascope agreement, it doesn't seem that the county is doing a very good job of administering Measure J," Mrs. Specht said. "I don't think the county can do as good a job as the community in controlling growth.

choice about the services they receive and the level of services, I think incorporation is a necessity," she added. A lot of her reasons for wanting incorporation, she says, are subjective. "I believe a city will have a better chance of having a good, coordinated, responsive planning department to serve the community than what it is getting now from the county planning department. That is subjective — it may or may

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## Others see it differently

Citing a lack of information, the Aptos Council of Improvement Associations Saturday formally said it cannot support the current Aptos incorporation movement.

"The Council is not opposed to the idea of incorporation," said chairman Emmett J. (Joe) Lynch, "but believes that the effort was motivated without the detailed research that should accompany a movement of this nature. "Many of the basic facts and figures remain unexplored," the Council chairman said. "Mid county residents have not been properly informed as to all of the ramifications

involved in incorporation.

"The lack of attendance at meetings held to discuss incorporation indicates a lack of public interest at this time. This may be attributable, in part, to the failure to deal in specifics but rather in generalities that fail to establish a firm basis on which to justify a positive conclusion. Estimates of income, a portion of which were admittedly "guesstimates", did not reveal the sources of these figures, nor how the 'guesstimates' were arrived at. Similarly, the expense estimates were generally

lump-sum figures, apparently allocated without sufficient substantiation.

"The Council of Improvement Associations (which is comprised of the officers of the Rio del Mar, Seacliff, Aptos Terrace and Seascope improvement associations) is of the opinion that the lack of specific data does not give the public sufficient information to determine whether incorporation is, or is not, feasible.

"Until more complete information is made available," Lynch concluded, "the Council cannot support incorporation."

"Measure J was a 50-50 vote in Aptos. Aptos is a community where people who are concerned about preservation of their lifestyles are also concerned about preservation of property rights.

"Aptos needs to have the type of planning that plans for low and moderate income housing and gets very deep into what kind of community Aptos will remain with reasonably controlled growth.

"The incorporation committee is an Aptos Chamber of Commerce committee with no backing from the Board of Realtors, the recall or anti-recall movements. We want to give the community its choice of pro- or no-growth. I believe Aptos is concerned about property rights and the quality of life being maintained. You won't see any car dealers in downtown Aptos. You won't see any downtown Aptos, she adds.

"I think Aptos will stay the way it is — growing very slowly and carefully so we don't lose the flavor of Aptos.

"We have been supportive of controlled growth, aware of the public philosophy and want to make government more responsive."