

Developers introduce a pared-down Glenwood

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Glenwood

The controversial 195-acre Glenwood development may be downsized enough to win City Council approval, but opponents say the project still features "too many homes."

The latest version, presented by developer Kerry Williams to the City Council Wednesday, features:

- Forty-eight instead of 65 homes. The first proposal called for 233 houses.

- A string of smaller lots — 6,000 square feet — along Glenwood Drive across from Scotts Valley High School. Before, lots were 8,000 and 10,000 square feet.

- Setting aside 184 acres, including the northern meadow and the area where horses graze near Canham Road, as open space. These areas had been slated for development before.

- Providing the city with a park of 2-3 acres, enough for two or three ballfields, next to Siltanen Park. Previously the city had been offered a 10-acre park.

- Reserving 1.4-1.6 acres for future use by the city.

"What a difficult balancing act this has been," said Williams, calling the latest revisions the "final" ones.

The changes pleased council members Paul Marigonda and Randy Johnson, but not council members Cliff Barrett and Stephany Aguilar, which meant Mayor Sheryl Ainsworth would break the deadlock.

"What I've been looking for is what I see," Ainsworth said. "Do I think this is good plan-



Dan Coyo/Sentinel

Opponents of the latest Glenwood plan say additional traffic from the development, added to Scotts Valley High School traffic, above, will make Glenwood Drive a motorist's nightmare.

ning? Yes, I do."

The council didn't actually vote, but with a majority in favor of the revised project, the developer promised to work up detailed plans for review by the city Planning Commission. The commission will make a recommendation before the council takes a vote.

Ainsworth's position disappointed two dozen neighbors and others active in the Friends of Glenwood coalition.

Nick Van Bruggen, whose anti-Glenwood stance failed to win him a City Council seat last November, said the developer was "moving in the right direction — just not quite far enough."

Building 48 homes is "too many," he said, pointing out the high school is expected to grow from 300 to 1,200 students.

Alecia Biddison, a city planning commissioner, argued against compromising with the developer.

"Our concern should be general land use, not horse-trading units," she said.

If the proposed development doesn't shrink further, "we will solve this with a referendum," promised Laura Anne Dapper.

Development opponents used the referen-

dum process to shoot down a 145-home project approved by a different City Council. That project was rejected by 61 percent of the voters.

Others came forward to support the downsized project.

"I would prefer you spend my money on improvements, not attorney fees," said Jackie Heald, another city planning commissioner.

Bob Koche, a T-ball coach, cited the need for more playing fields and commended the developer's willingness to set aside 95 percent of the land as open space.

"We won," he said, surprised to find "so many angry people" in the audience.

Jeff Ringold, an environmental consultant to the opponents, contended that the developer isn't saving 95 percent of the land as open space because the high school campus took 20 acres from the Glenwood site.

He said opponents would try to make their case when the revised project comes before the Planning Commission.

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ideas and creative solutions," he had little interest in participating.

Mary James, executive director of the county Housing Authority, said with so little developable land available, the real issue on the table was increasing housing density.

"The only way to go is up," she said. "But I don't know if we would all sign on to that."

Rent control was a hot topic. Michael Schmidt, chief executive officer of the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce, said rent control has reduced the number of low-cost units in some cities. He suggested incentives for landlords who keep rents reasonable. But rent-control advocates said without it, low-income residents are at the mercy of profit-driven landlords.

Michael Warren, legislative aide to state Sen. Bruce McPherson, R-Santa Cruz, said while the group was focused on creating more housing, the reality was different outside the room. He said the challenge is to persuade the bulk of county residents who oppose additional growth.

"If we can't do that, we're just going to bat our lips around," he said.

Sentinel Editor Tom Honig said taking on affordable housing is a "loser" for elected officials because there are no easy solutions.

"But sometimes we have to give the politicians the strength to say this is what we want," he said.

Privately, some participants wondered if the Sentinel, which is perceived by some residents and elected officials as pro-growth and conservative, was suited to lead the group.

In an interview after the meeting, Regan said the Sentinel editorial board, made up of Regan, Honig and Managing Editor Don Miller, is more interested in bringing groups together than leading them. After a few meetings, he hopes someone else will take the reins.

"As far as I'm concerned, they can set the agenda," Regan said.

As for its position on development, the Sentinel editorial board is interested in "smart growth," not wholesale development, he said.

Honig invited the public to take up the affordable-housing issue on the Sentinel's op-ed pages and the newspaper's online forums.

For information on an opinion piece, call 423-4242. The Web site is www.santacruzsentinel.com.

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