

# LOCAL

## Planners rap Davenport plan

### Davenport Coastal Commission to consider residents' appeal on Thursday

By **ROBIN MUSITELLI**  
Sentinel staff writer

DAVENPORT — The fight over a proposed parking lot and visitor center in Davenport will go before the state Coastal Commission this week with a recommendation from planners to shrink the project.

Plans by Fred Bailey and Greg Steltenpohl to turn a former brussels sprouts packing shed into a restaurant, retail shops, and juice bar with meetings rooms and overnight accommodations are not in keeping with Davenport's character, and the project should be substantially reduced, according to the Coastal Commission staff.

The recommendation goes before the commission Thursday in Santa Rosa. The coastal panel will decide whether to take jurisdiction in an appeal by Citizens for Responsible North Coast Planning. The neighborhood group is fighting project approval by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. If the Coastal Commission takes jurisdiction, a public hearing will be held in July.

Steltenpohl, a founder and former owner of Odwalla juice company, and Bailey want to renovate and expand an old packing shed on the ocean side of Highway 1. The expansion would increase the square footage of the building from 13,127 to

22,918, primarily by adding a second story. The height of the building would increase three to six feet.

The proposal includes a 66-car parking lot on a blufftop field that is used by people who stop to visit Davenport or watch the whale migration.

The project has divided residents of Davenport, a town of 200. Supporters contend that any disruption will be minimal and that the community will benefit from the innovative project.

Opponents bitterly oppose commercial development on the ocean side of Highway 1, which they say will set a damaging precedent for development along the coast, and the parking lot.

Commission staffers agreed that the project would intensify the character of Davenport and that the parking lot would detract from existing seaward views from Highway 1. The field proposed to become a parking lot is "part and parcel of Davenport's rustic character," according to the staff report.

"The foreground of the view at this location will be dominated by a mass of automobiles and will inevitably alter the dusty informality of the existing lot," the staff report said.

Planners recommended limiting new parking on the blufftop to one-third of that approved by the county, and said the park-



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ing lot should be lowered and screened. Steltenpohl said he had yet to prepare a response to the staff report.

Opponents were buoyed by the findings. "We basically agree that it's out of scale for Davenport and that it should be substantially downsized," said Susan Young, a member of Citizens for Responsible North Coast Planning. She said the group will ask commissioners for several other conditions, including a left-hand turn lane on Highway 1 and relocation of the parking lot from the bluff to a lower area.

Davenport residents opposed to a proposed visitor-serving complex west of Highway 1 hope a strong showing at Thursday's Coastal Commission meeting will push commissioners to their way of thinking.

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