

Latest scaled down housing plan near Laguna well received

by Janice Drickey

A significantly scaled-down and modified version of Sebastopol's longest-running and most controversial housing development met with both kudos and concern during a first look by the Sebastopol Planning Commission last week.

In June of last year, the commission turned thumbs down on developer George Young's Saddleburrr subdivision, 71 homes and a medical office building planned for 41.5 acres bordering the Laguna de Santa Rosa, east of Palm Drive Hospital between Walker and Palm avenues.

Plans called for homes to be built on 21.4 acres of the parcel, leaving 19.2 acres of land lying below the 76-foot flood plain undeveloped. An additional lot

was reserved for a laguna center or informational kiosk. A public laguna-edge trail was also planned.

After public hearings on the project attended by overflow crowds, the commission recommended denial, citing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which identified seven conditions created by the development that would have a "significant" impact on the sensitive wetlands environment.

Young postponed review of the project by the Sebastopol City Council, originally scheduled for Sept. 3 of last year, to revise his plans.

In the one year interim, he engaged the Futrell Sonoma Corporation of Santa Rosa to re-vamp the project.

Young was conspicuously absent during last week's meeting,

when project developer Hugh Futrell, a commissioner with the Santa Rosa Housing Authority and the Redevelopment Agency, presented a modified proposal to the planning commission, all but two of whom are fashioned "neo-traditional" cottages with front porches and reduced building heights, fall in the \$300,000 to \$350,000 range.

Separate garages are situated in the back of the lots on all but five of the homes, and face a 25-foot wide landscaped alleyway. Over four of the garages, one bedroom, second unit, affordable housing" dwellings are planned, with covered parking, separate entrances, and private yards.

Although a site zoned for office use remains, any plans to "still has a relationship with the Saddleburrr people."

Concerns about the project centered around: how to guarantee that the "granny" units would be rented out by homeowners; the proximity of the secondary units to the hospital helicopter pad; where to place visitor parking; fire danger created by cedar shingle roofs; whether the new street should run between the homes and the laguna or behind the homes, away from the laguna; and whether the 76-foot flood line actually extended into the development.

Futrell told the *Times & News* he would attempt to address the commission's concerns before filing a formal application for a use permit for the Palm Terrace subdivision.

Plan. . . (Continued from front page)

develop that property in the future would be treated as a separate project, subject to city review and approval.

A 50-foot, undevelopable buffer zone has been created between the 100 year flood contour and the extension of Palm Avenue, which will separate the homes from the laguna. The buffer zone will be donated to the city or to the Department of Fish and Game, Futrell said.

Landscape architect Maisha Ruth outlined plans for planting native vegetation and adding trails, benches and a gazebo overlooking the laguna in the 50 foot buffer area.

The commissioners generally praised Futrell's work, two-

term commissioner Fran Murphy calling it "worlds above what we've seen before."

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