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Time-share project proposed for lagoon site

By: BARBARA HENRY - Staff Writer

CARLSBAD ---- The owners of a private boating club along the north side of Agua Hedionda Lagoon are proposing to transform their decades-old, low-key operation by adding a 26-unit, time-share condominium complex.

But the proposal, which is slated to go before the city's Planning Commission on Nov. 7, isn't making neighbors or even city staff members very happy.

Neighbors say they think a three-story condo complex would be completely out of character for the quiet community made up of luxurious single-family homes.

The city's Planning Department appears to agree. Staff members are recommending that the Planning Commission deny the permit that the project will need to proceed.

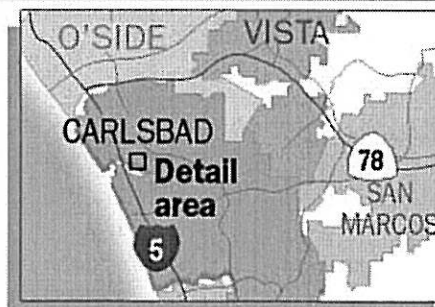
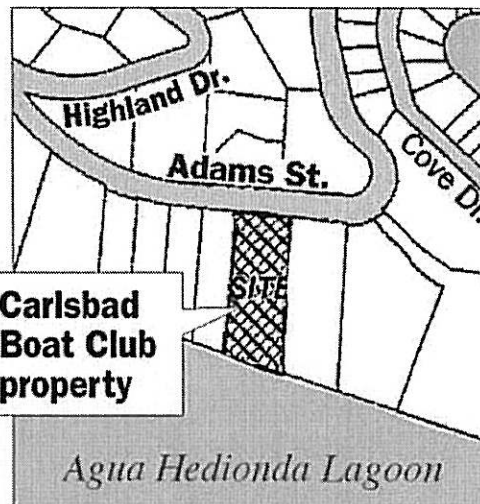
"The magnitude of the proposed building is not in the same scale and character as the surrounding residential neighborhood," a city staff report states.

Jim Courtney, who co-owns the 1-acre parcel along Adams Street with business partner Michael Pfankuch, said he believes the project works for the neighborhood and uses the best design possible.

The proposed structure is compatible with his property's unusual tourist zoning designation, yet it will look more like a residence than a hotel so it will fit in with the surrounding area, he said.

"We want to do something that's nice for the city and we feel we've come up with a compatible project," he said.

A changing neighborhood



NORTH COUNTY TIMES

Courtney and Pfankuch are proposing to put a 40,500-square-foot time-share structure and a 17,000-square-foot underground parking garage on the site, which is along the south side of Adams Street between Highland and Park drives.

The time share would cater to people who want to stay in Carlsbad longer than a few days, but would rather own a part share in a condo building rather than paying for a hotel room, Courtney said.

City staff members say the property, which is one of the few areas along the lagoon with "residential tourist" zoning, is permitted to contain time-share units as long as the developers obtain a special city conditional use permit.

The question before the Planning Commission in November will be whether this project ought to be granted a permit, given its size when compared to the neighboring single-family homes, said senior city planner Van Lynch.

The neighborhood wasn't always residential. Decades ago, the boat-launching operation was the only thing around, city records indicate. It dates back to the 1950s when Carlsbad was incorporated.

Courtney and Pfankuch bought the land some 20 years ago and created the Carlsbad Boat Club. In recent years, the club's membership has ranged from 10 to 30 people, Courtney said.

"It's always been a low-key thing," he added. "We've never advertised it."

In addition to the boat-launching capability, the property contains a former restaurant building. That business, which went by a number of different names over the years, closed in the late 1990s. By then, some of the surrounding zoning had changed and the houses started arriving.

The first home came in 1991. The last one? Well, it's going in right now, and its owner isn't pleased with the time-share plan.

Seeking compatibility

Glen Steward, who plans to move into his now-under-construction, waterfront home just west of the boat club site next year, said he opposes the time-share project for many reasons. Among other things, he said, he doesn't want to live next to a building where the occupants might change every week and the vehicle traffic could be endless.

He's not the only one. Environmental attorney Todd Cardiff, who's been hired by several property owners in the area to fight the plans, said it's the sort of project no one would want next door. Everything from its proposed roof-top observation area --- he calls it a "party deck" --- to the lack of extra parking for boat trailers is going to cause trouble, he said.

Meanwhile, a city staff report notes that the project slightly exceeds the city's height limit, finds that the intensity of the development is "incompatible" with the neighborhood and declares that noise issues "could be significant."

Asked what type of project could work on the parcel, Lynch responded that a bed and breakfast business could be an option under the site's current zoning.

But that's not what the landowners want to build --- the zoning allows for time shares and that's what they want to do, Courtney said. He adds that opponents' forecasts about parking woes and partying behavior won't become reality. For one thing, he said, the complex will have its own boats for the vacationers to use so they won't have to bring watercraft with them when they come to Carlsbad.

Ultimately, the decision on what happens next will be up to the Planning Commission and the City Council. If they back the plans, the landowners also will need to take the proposal to the state Coastal Commission, which does a final review of development plans in the coastal region.

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