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Scenic Road house gets passing grade

By MARY SCHLEY

DURING A hearing that had the opposing sides accusing each other of lying, realtor Tim Allen's argument that the wrong measurements were used to determine the grade of a Scenic Road property — and that the new home there should really be 18 inches lower than designed — failed to sway the city council, which denied his appeal and upheld the planning commission's approval of Ron Corradini's plans Tuesday night.

Noting the strong feelings on both sides, Allen, who owns a house on San Antonio Avenue behind the Corradinis' property, said, "In my 30 years living and working in this commu-

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RENDERING/STUDIO CARVER ARCHITECTS

A neighbor this week lost his fight against this house proposed for Scenic Road south of Ninth Avenue.

Monning decides not to run for Congress

By KELLY NIX

STATE SEN. Bill Monning will not run against Republican Casey Lucius and fellow Democrat Jimmy Panetta for the congressional seat to be left open by longtime Congressman Sam Farr when he retires in January 2017, Monning announced this week.

On Tuesday morning in front of Monterey's Colton Hall, Monning convened a cadre of supporters and journalists — many of whom believed he would announce a run for Congress — only to tell them that he would seek reelection in 2016 for his California Senate seat.

"I believe that I can do more to protect our environment, the public health and public safety as a leader in the California State Senate than as a member of the minority party [in the U.S. House of Representatives] in Washington D.C.," Monning said.

During the news conference, Monning, 64, went over a list of his accomplishments, including the recently signed

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PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Backed by supporters, State Sen. Bill Monning announces Tuesday that he will try keep his job in Sacramento, rather than run for Sam Farr's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Council renews ban on marijuana shops

By MARY SCHLEY

BEEFING UP its restrictions on pot dispensaries and other commercial activities related to medical marijuana so the state can't step in and tell it what to do, the city council on Tuesday voted to update its ordinance in light of a trio of Assembly bills signed by Gov. Jerry Brown known as the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act. The act puts the state in charge of issuing permits for such businesses if a city or county doesn't have local rules for regulating them.

"A number of jurisdictions are doing what we're doing this evening," said city attorney Don Freeman. The ordinance bans growing, distributing, delivering, refining, labeling,

storing, processing and selling pot for medicinal use within the city limits of Carmel.

Under the ordinance, a person who has a medical marijuana card can still use pot in town, but cannot grow it.

Updating the law now is "the best course of action so the state cannot come in and tell you what you can and cannot do in the future," Freeman said at the Dec. 1 meeting.

While a 1996 voter-approved state law allows the use of marijuana by people who have "serious" illnesses, medical marijuana cards are routinely issued in California to people with minimal or no ailments. Meanwhile, federal law still

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CITY PREPARES FOR FACE-OFF WITH COASTAL COMMISSION OVER BEACH FIRES

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CITY council this week narrowly voted to ban all fires on Carmel Beach, once again designating them a "public nuisance."

The move comes as the California Coastal Commission prepares to approve the city's earlier plan to allow wood fires in 26 rings on the beach. The commission meets in Monterey Dec. 11.

While the coastal commission has control over land use and recreation laws along the coast, its hands may be tied by the city's declaration that fires are a danger to public health, and not just a way to enjoy an evening by the sea.

Councilwoman Carrie Theis, for one, did not like the change in direction, from the approval last spring of a plan created by consensus, to a move toward an outright ban.

"We're discounting public process. We're not building partnerships like we did a couple of weeks ago. We are actually polarizing our community," she said at the Dec. 1 meeting. "Whatever happened to a reasonable pilot program that the community came up with? It was to be tested; it was to be adjusted. Now what are we doing? We're putting our staff in an adversarial position with the coastal commission."

'You had multiple hearings'

But, bolstered by an email from Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District officer Richard Stedman that threatened to "take enforcement action," in the form of "sanctions and prohibitory restrictions" if the city failed to "resolve the public health impacts and nuisance conditions caused by wood fires on Carmel Beach," the city council

Dog park 'thank you' party stirs up ruckus

By CHRIS COUNTS

FIVE WEEKS after the Monterey County Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 to deny a permit for the proposed Carmel Canine Center, neighbors started complaining that it was operating anyway.

"Quail Lodge guests complained on Sunday of being awakened by barking dogs early in the morning," reported the resort's attorney, Tony Lombardo.

Another person estimated about 40 cars arrived Sunday morning at the site of the dog park-that-never-was, which is located next door to Quail Lodge. A number of the visitors were accompanied by their dogs, she reported.

But Martha Diehl, the county planning commissioner who is one of three partners who tried to establish the dog park, said the gathering was nothing more than a "thank you" party for supporters of the venture, and a "garage sale" for all the stuff she and her partners no longer need because the project won't be happening.

While the garage sale went well, some of the items are still available, Diehl said, in case anybody is interested. The remaining inventory includes a lawn vacuum (\$1,500), a ring roller (\$2,000), a spreader (\$500), a Turfmaster three-deck professional lawn mower (\$5,000), a wide variety of drought-

approved the new law labeling the fires a nuisance that must be prohibited.

Several speakers at the council meeting demanded the ban, saying burning wood fires is akin to poisoning people, while others were more reluctant supporters.

"Whatever it takes to ban the fires, I regretfully say we have to do," San Antonio Avenue resident Mary Liskin commented.

Nancy Garcia, one of the opponents of the original pilot program, said she was "really disappointed in the direction this city is taking."

"You came to the public; you had multiple hearings," seeking input on the plan, and vowing not to ban fires, she said. "It's gone from rings to a complete ban. I think you're

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Pricey lumber gets very special delivery



PHOTO/COURTESY MAGNUS TOREN

If you paid \$10,000 for this piece of redwood, you'd want it to arrive in good condition, wouldn't you? Now, even if you live in New Jersey, you can be sure it will. See page 8A.