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Newsstand 25 cents

Community Holiday Home Tour just around the corner [C1]

Sports Youth soccer ... it's tournament time [C8]

City checks on effects of rezoning 22-acre parcel into open space

By Susan Fuller
STAFF WRITER

Alameda would be vulnerable to lawsuits in the hundreds of millions of dollars if a presumably privately-owned 22-acre property is rezoned as open space,

said members of the City Council as they delayed definitive action on the Beltline initiative at the Nov. 21 meeting.

Instead, the council asked city staff to report next month on the effects of rezoning the Northside property.

The vote, with Councilwoman Barbara Kerr absent because of illness, was unanimous.

In December, with the staff report in hand, council will have two alternatives: approve the initiative outright or place it

on the November 2002 ballot. The initiative, signed by 10 percent of Alameda's registered voters, seeks to maintain the property as open space.

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ARPD asks for more use of sports field

The Alameda Park

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Motorola signs on with Wind River

Wind River Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ: WIND), a leading provider of software and services for smart devices in the Internet age, today announced a strategic agreement with Motorola in which Wind River, through its Doctor Design Services group, will develop networking and communications applications for third-party customers on Motorola's MPC8260 PowerQUICC II and related communications processor architectures.

Wind River has created a specialized design team at the Doctor Design facility to focus on providing critical microcode development solutions for customers using these Motorola architectures. This initiative underscores Wind River's strategy to provide complete, vertical market-specific solutions for the networking and communications industries.

Wind River's new microcode development services target Motorola customers who need to deliver state-of-the-art communications applications but have a limited amount of time or resources to devote to learning all of the PowerQUICC II's unique capabilities. Wind River's microcode development team specializes in implementing designs using this processor family, with a specific emphasis on developing custom protocol support for PowerQUICC II applications.

"By supporting Wind River as a specialist development center for this architecture, Motorola is able to broaden and deepen its penetration of vertical communications markets, offering a more complete service to its semiconductor customers and sys-

tem competitors."

"Wind River's Doctor Design Services is well known as a hardware and software design powerhouse with concept through manufacturing implementation capability and a growing number of engineering centers around the world," said Kamran Sokanvari, vice president and general manager of Wind River's Services business unit. "Our engineers focus on specialist markets where understanding and implementation of advanced technology, like the MPC8260, are imperative for success. This new capability leads us into exciting areas of specialist networking equipment design and expands our depth in providing solutions based around Motorola technology."

"What's especially exciting about this growing opportunity is the extent to which this project exemplifies the synergies between business units in Wind River's organization," added Curt Schacker, vice president of marketing and corporate development for Wind River. "The basic tool chain and development platform are products from the Wind River Hardware Software Integration (HSI) business unit, while critical embedded software elements such as networking protocols typically come from the Wind River Networks business unit. The combined products and services offering underscores a key strength of Wind River in this market."

Beltline

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"The owner has the right to do what he wants with the land," said Councilman Al DeWitt. Taking away that right by changing the zoning could expose the city to massive lawsuits to recover damages.

"I don't want to burden the taxpayers," DeWitt said. "There are many complex issues we've only touched on," said Councilwoman Beverly Johnson. "The huge one is that the city does not own the property."

The Beltline rail yard is located south of Marina Village, bound by Atlantic Avenue and Sherman Street on the north and east. The southern boundary is defined by rear property lines on Eagle Avenue. The Beltline narrows at its western end and has a short frontage on Constitution Way.

A purchase offer made in summer 1999 to Alameda Beltline Railroad by Pleasanton-based Sun Country Developers is reportedly in the \$15 million to \$22 million range. However, a lawsuit could seek hundreds of million based on the value of developed land.

Pending lawsuits over ownership of the Beltline complicate the ownership picture.

In October 1999, the city gave notice of its intention to purchase the property based on the 1924 agreement that created the railroad. The

Citizens asked for clarification

Plan

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about the wildlife refuge's buffer zone and what is permissible in a mixed use zone — another Estuary crossing, for example. Comments were made about housing density,

railroad sued to prevent the city's bargain basement purchase, and the city counter-sued, alleging that the railroad intends to break the old contract.

If the courts determine that Sun Country has a legitimate right to purchase the property on the open market and the city has zoned the land for open space, the developer would likely seek damages.

Twenty speakers implored the City Council to approve the ordinance immediately, basing their arguments on high housing density, lack of parks on the Northside and a need for open space for wildlife and children.

Some had fantasies of another Golden Gate Park or Central Park on the island. Even Len Grzanka, who billed himself as the candidate who would watch out for the taxpayer in his recent run for school board, spoke in favor of immediate rezoning, arguing that the city doesn't have the transportation facilities to support more housing.

Despite the enormous potential cost to acquire such a park, the advocates for the rezoning have no funds in hand, only general offers of grant-writing help.

Mike Valley of Sun Country was pleased with the council vote.

"Ninety percent of the voters have not been heard from," he said. "It's inappropriate to adopt it." He pledged to work with the city to see what can be negotiated.

Vice Mayor Tony Daysog wants to explore resources and options for

Measure A, workforce housing, alternative transportation, sustainable development, and the private vs. public golf course development debate.

After the amendment, modified through public hearings, is accepted by the City Council, the entire General Plan will be updated. Council acceptance is anticipated next March.

Making changes through an amendment will speed incorporation of the base land into the General Plan,

dividing the property between housing development and open space.

He called for a deliberate process to analyze resources, "otherwise we are wasting peoples' time and money on something we can't deliver."

Litigation on ownership of the property will be settled before the initiative could come to the voters, said City Attorney Carol Korade.

Kerr attended the City Council's closed council session but didn't feel well enough to remain for the open meeting. She would have recused herself from the Beltline vote because she lives near the property.

"We think I (live) within 300 feet of (the property) but haven't done an exact measurement," she said. "I'm currently erring on the side of caution."

In other business, the council unanimously:

■ Established a subdivision with 152 lots, 124 detached homes and 28 attached homes and related utilities, streets, open space and visitor parking for Kaufman and Broad's Marina Cove Development on the Northern Waterfront.

One neighbor complained about heavy and continuous truck traffic in the area. Traffic will be more tolerable with the housing development than with either Weyerhaeuser's operation or the current container storage, councilmembers and staff speculated. Construction at the Wind River site is also adding to truck traffic, City Manager Jim Flint said.

Councilwoman Beverly Johnson inserted language to assure that de-

allowing the city to take advantage of development opportunities.

The biggest concern of the business tenants at the former base is that they aren't forgotten in the process, said Carl Nelson of Nelson's Marine.

"We plan to be here for the long run," he said. "If (tenants) are in a facility and can fit into the long-term scheme, they should be taken care of."

The next public workshop will be held in January, on a date to be an-

orative street lamps are used and that utility boxes are below ground.

■ Approved a five-lot subdivision at 43 County Road. Drainage has been an ongoing problem on this property. The issue will be resolved before presenting the final map for approval, said project architect Mark Wommack.

■ Overturned the Transportation Advisory Committee's denial of all-way stop controls at Pacific Avenue and St. Charles Street. The committee's ruling was based on state warrants that are more applicable to large arterials than the residential streets in this neighborhood. Daysog asked for an examination of local guidelines for traffic-calming measures.

■ Approved a rating system for small capital improvement projects and the expenditure of the \$100,000 small project fund. Small projects have a total cost of less than \$50,000.

There's a sense that money goes to the large projects, while small jobs, like maintenance and parks, are ignored, Daysog said. The sort of project that local residents notice will be completed with this mechanism.

■ Accepted a combined Implementation Plan for the Downtown Vision Plan, Economic Development Strategic Plan and Housing Form.

The implementation plan will be sent out for comment from city boards and commissions, interested organizations and individuals. It will come back to the council in February.

■ Accepted the quarterly financial, sales tax and investment reports.

The amendment can be printed from the city's Web page, www.ci.alameda.ca.us. Copies can also be obtained by calling the Planning Department at 748-4554.

Comments should be sent to Cynthia Eliason, Planning Manager, City of Alameda Planning Department, 2263 Santa Clara Ave., Room 120, Alameda, CA 94501, or by e-mail to celiason@ci.alameda.ca.us.