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P.G. City Council urges county to move P.B. housing project

By KELLY NIX

THE HOUSING project in Pebble Beach that would provide homes to two dozen middle-income families hit another stumbling block when the Pacific Grove City Council this week decided to urge the county to build it somewhere else.

Council members voted 6-0 Wednesday night to send a letter to county planners and to each member of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors informing them that the affordable housing project, according to nearby residents in P.G. and Pebble Beach, will cause a host of problems and isn't suited for the area.

The housing is being proposed by the P.B. Co. to satisfy a state law requiring that new housing include affordable units. The site was picked because it's right next to a neighborhood containing shops, schools and public transportation.

"Several hundred trees will have to be cut," according to the council's letter. "There are issues of parking and increased traffic. Pacific Grove homes in the area feel that the character of that neighborhood will be radically changed.

'Major change' to the neighborhood

The housing project on Congress Court would be primarily for employees of the P.B. Co. And while the council conceded that affordable housing would reduce travel time for the company's workers, save gasoline and "provide benefits of a good and generous employer," it wants the housing built somewhere else.

The concerns include traffic, noise, "encroachments of privacy," loss of forest canopy, and a "major change to the tranquility and character of their neighborhood," according to the city council's letter. The 24-unit apartment complex would back up against several dead-end streets in the Del Monte Park area of Pacific Grove.

"The project could be moved to other areas on the Pebble Beach footprint that would not cause the negative conditions listed," according to council, which does not offer an alternative location in Del Monte Forest it feels would be best suited for the development.

Teen who died in fall from cliff identified

By CHRIS COUNTS

A YOUNG woman who died Aug. 13 after falling from a cliff at the Mill Creek Day Use Area in Big Sur has been identified as Brianna Victoria Stevens of Ventura. She was 18 years old.

Stevens was visiting with several of her relatives when she fell, according to Monterey County Sheriff's Cmdr. Bill Kaye.

"She was climbing on the rocks without any safety equipment, and she fell about 30 feet and landed on her head," Kaye told The Pine Cone.

Responding to the incident were emergency workers from the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade, a Cal Fire unit from San Luis Obispo County, the United States Forest Service and American Medical Response, volunteer fire chief Martha Karstens reported.

Emergency workers "were able to access and transport the victim," according to the sheriff's office. Sgt. Keith Wingo said the girl was airlifted to Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, where she was later pronounced dead.

A spokeswoman for the Santa Clara County Coroner's Office said Stevens suffered "blunt force injuries, a skull fracture and an intracranial hemorrhage," according to a preliminary autopsy report. Toxicology results have not yet been released.

An Aug. 20 article in the Ventura County Star by Jean Cowden Moore identified Stevens as a student at Ventura

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Woman rescued after hit-and-run on Carpenter



PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

Firefighters had to remove the windshield from this SUV to free the driver after her car rolled when it was hit by a Mini Cooper, whose driver kept going — for a little while. The woman was taken to the hospital, and the Mini driver was cited. See page 5A.

In a council agenda report, Pacific Grove City Councilman Ken Cuneo cited the "motivated and organized" group of residents opposed to the project. Though the city doesn't have any authority over the project, Cuneo said it's important "to convey the concerns of its residents, particularly those in Del Monte Park" during the public comment period and public review after the environmental report is released. A group called Del Monte Neighbors United has opposed the idea through its own website and Facebook.

The city council also urged a public scoping meeting set for Aug. 28 to be moved to another date because it conflicts with Forest Grove Elementary School's Back to School Night. While Monterey County planner Joe Sidor told The Pine Cone Wednesday that the

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A week after he was due back from hiking trek, Big Sur man is still missing

By CHRIS COUNTS

AN EXTENSIVE search was launched this week to find a local man who disappeared in the Ventana Wilderness while backpacking.

Arvin Nelson, 55, was expected to return Aug. 15 from an eight-day solo hike through the Big Sur backcountry. Described by blogger Big Sur Kate as "a tall black man with a sweet smile," Nelson is a longtime Big Sur resident who works as a server at the Big Sur River Inn.

Dropped off by the friend, Nelson began his trek Aug. 6 at China Camp, which is located on Chews Ridge along Tassajara Road. From there, he is believed to have taken the popular Pine Ridge Trail, which leads 25 miles west to Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park.

The Monterey County Sheriff's Office is coordinating the search after being contacted Aug. 16 by one of Nelson's friends. According to the sheriff's office, "he told his friends if he didn't make contact with them by Aug. 15 to report him missing."

Air support

Numerous other law enforcement agencies and volunteers are assisting the sheriff's search and rescue team. MCSO Cmdr. John Thornburg said as many as 32 people were "on the ground" searching for Nelson.

The search has been aided by California Highway Patrol, United States Coast Guard and National Guard helicopters. The Carmel Valley Airfield is being used as a staging area for the helicopters.

"There has been extensive emergency activity with helicopters and a large amount of equipment at the airfield since Saturday," Carmel Valley resident Paul Ingram reported.

Because Nelson planned to "hike the eastern side of the Ventana

See MISSING page 23A

City launches its own news service

By MARY SCHLEY

"WE ARE really excited," city administrator Jason Stilwell said in an email to all city employees Thursday morning. "For the past two years, we have all worked together to make progress in the City of Carmel."

He was announcing the launch of www.CarmelCityNews.com, the city's effort to convey the good deeds it's doing to the public, and to offset some of the damage officials have done to their relationships with their constituents during the past couple of years by firing longtime employees and withholding public records. In the wake of a march on city hall and petition drive earlier this month, Mayor Jason Burnett said the city would try to do a better job of communicating with residents, and a blog by city workers was one component of his plan.

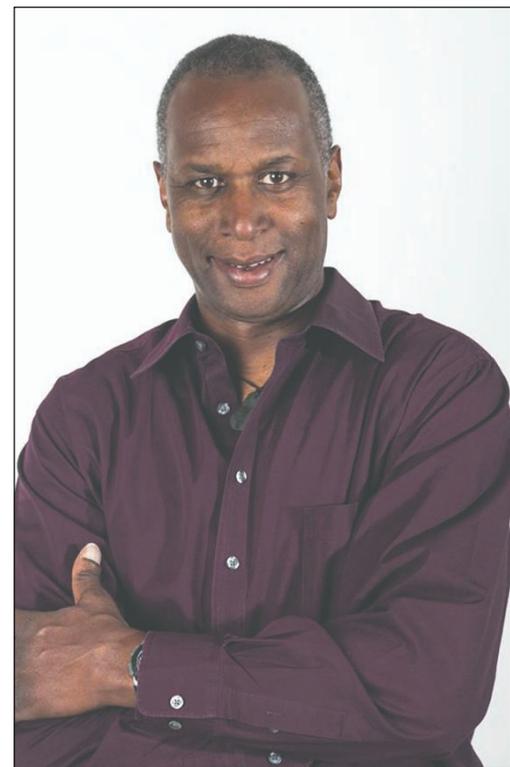
"As a team member, you know about the changes and the progress. However, outside of city hall, not many really know about what has taken place," Stilwell continued. "We've been a bit too focused on getting things done and not focused enough on sharing that progress with our neighbors in Carmel."

The blog, he said, will keep locals "informed on everything that's happening in our community," including updates and changes in the city, arts and events, and goings on at the police department.

"It's clear to us that residents of Carmel consistently want to know more as we work to make the necessary changes and fix the problems we face," Stilwell wrote.

He asked employees to provide information about their departments for inclusion on the blog, and said it also includes a "Pic of the Week" competition "and a section dedicated to dogs and dog lovers called 'Wags n' Tags,'" to

City wants to keep locals informed on how it's 'getting things done'



PHOTO/PATRICE WARD

A search has been launched for Arvin Nelson of Big Sur, who failed to return from a backpacking trip.